

Press Release

COVID-19 causes Scout numbers to drop by 25% in Nottinghamshire

The impact of Covid-19 has been felt across the world, and this is no different for Scouts in Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire Scouts has lost 25% of its total members since March 2020 as a direct impact of COVID-19. Beaver Scouts have been hardest hit, losing almost 40% of its membership. But they are not on a path to extinction and exciting plans are in place to allow many Nottinghamshire youngsters aged 6 and 7 years old to experience Scouting.

Throughout the pandemic, Scouting has continued, not in its usual format, but often in the online world.

“The key focus during the pandemic has been to both keep in contact with our young people at the same time creating a sense of purpose and fun. We used social media for communicating with parents and Zoom meetings for the young people. We asked the Beavers to wear their uniforms each week to create a sense of normality and to emphasise that they belonged to a Group and that they were not on their own.” – Paul Neal, 2nd Bramcote Beavers.

The young people have also been able to learn new skills, have fun and catch up with their friends using Scouting. Maryann, a Beaver in Nottinghamshire, said “Beavers is really fun, we play lots of games and do fun stuff. It makes me laugh!”

However, the reality is that online activities are not possible for everyone. We have seen this in other areas such as schooling, working from home and other social activities. The demands on volunteers balancing new working patterns, illness, isolation etc have been immense. So, Nottinghamshire’s Scouts were delighted that from 29th March face to face-to-face Scouting across the County can resumed.

There is a huge opportunity to welcome new Beaver Scouts (aged 6 & 7 years) to join the country’s largest co-educational youth movement. Over the last year, lots of Beavers have moved into Cubs creating immediate vacancies for youngsters to join. The Scouts in Nottinghamshire are going to fill the vacancies to save their Beavers from extinction!

From May an exciting and ambitious campaign launched to rebuild Beaver Scout Colonies across Nottinghamshire. Postcards are being sent out, through most Nottinghamshire schools, to all children that are Beaver aged inviting them to their local Scout Group to give Beavers a go.

According to Steven Tupper, Head of Nottinghamshire Scouts, “It’s fantastic that once again we can start to provide face to face Scouting across Nottinghamshire. This is a great opportunity for Scouting and especially the Beavers, to grow and adapt as they have done throughout the pandemic. We’ll build back their Colonies even stronger than before.”

Mr Tupper continued “Whilst we accept numbers have decreased during the pandemic, we understand that some people have had to leave Scouting for many reasons, but of course, we would welcome young people back, in fact, over time we would love to be in a position to offer a place in Scouting to every boy and girl who wants to join”.

Notes to editors:

- Powerful case study interviewees are available by contacting Jack Beresford at jack.beresford@notts-scouts.org.uk
- Beavers are young people aged 6 to 8 who:
 - Master new skills and try new things
 - Have fun and go on adventures
 - Make friends
 - Are curious about the world around them
 - Help others and make a difference, on their doorsteps and beyond
- Every week, they gather in groups called Beaver Colonies to hop, skip and jump their way through lots of different games and activities – achieving anything they set their minds to, and having lots of fun along the way.
- Face to face scouting in Nottinghamshire has resumed on a gradual basis, from the 29th March, as the adult volunteers feel able to commence meetings in a Covid secure manner and in line with guidelines from the Government and National Youth Agency.