

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

19 November 2014

SUPPORT FOR WINCHESTER'S SCOUTS

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES)

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In 2013, the then Leader of the Council offered support for the Scout Groups of Winchester following discussions with the District Commissioner about the significant growth projections and the associated challenges. Officers have been providing assistance and continue to look for opportunities to provide practical – if not financial – support.

This report summarises the progress of initiatives currently being supported across all the Scout Groups in the Town area, and seeks Member views on what additional help might be desirable given the availability of appropriate resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Town Forum notes the activities already in hand to support the development of scouting in the Town area, and considers any additional support which Members feel might be desirable given the availability of appropriate resources.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In the wake of discussions with the 8th Winchester Scout Pack at Stanmore as part of the Stanmore Planning Framework project, Scout Groups across the Winchester Town area have made a variety of approaches to Council officers and Members to raise the profile of their current activities and future challenges.
- 1.2 A number of Town Forum Members have been invited to presentations by their local packs, or to view developments at Pinsent, the Winchester Scout campsite on the Clarendon Way. During these sessions, it has been made clear that the scouting movement is growing and the need for appropriate facilities – as well as new volunteers - in growth areas would be critical to meeting demand.
- 1.3 As a result of approaches to the last Leader of the Council, a commitment was made to the District Commissioner for Winchester to assist the Scouts in furthering their ambitions. Whilst it was not possible to offer funding, it was agreed that there were a number of practical opportunities for assistance. Since this time, officers have been liaising regularly with the District Commissioner.
- 1.4 This report provides an update for Members on key issues for the Scout groups of the Town area, together with an outline of support that has been provided by the Council. It also seeks Member views about any additional support that might be considered, given the availability of adequate resources.

2 The Scouts in Winchester

- 2.1 The discussions between community organisations on the Somers Close 'campus' in Stanmore arising from the Planning Framework project caused other Scout Groups in the Town area to review their current and future needs. It also prompted the District Commissioner to begin a series of conversations with officers and Members of the Council, based on a well thought-out document charting the projected growth of the movement locally (see summary presentation at 'Background Reading'.)

- 2.2 There has been a resurgence of the scouting movement across the country, fuelled by television celebrities such as Bear Grylls. The movement has responded, creating more adventurous opportunities and aligning itself with the employability agenda. It has, for example, adopted challenging schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which is recognised by universities and potential employers as an indicator of physical and mental skills, as well as leadership and team-working attributes.
- 2.3 Winchester is one of the biggest and fastest-growing Scout Districts in Hampshire, and some of the local groups have impressive levels of 'market penetration'. For example, the District Commissioner's Five Year Plan from June 2011 showed that 'the 1st Winchester Group (Weeke and Littleton) has a membership of 141 out of a possible 500 young people living in the catchment area, equivalent to over 28%. The 3rd, 5th and 9th Winchester Groups all have penetration of over 15%. The waiting list for Winchester Groups runs at over 17 (mainly from would-be Beavers, the youngest element of the Scouting family) and reflects limits on current facilities and volunteer power. However, County-based growth targets suggest a further 4% per annum increase in potential membership.
- 2.4 The fundamental needs of a successful Scout Group are volunteer leaders (each Group being run as an independent charity) and appropriate facilities for meetings and activities.

3 Council Support for the Scouts

- 3.1 As an outcome of the discussions in Stanmore, and knowing that Members were sympathetic to the objectives of the Scouts, the former Leader of the Council offered in writing his support for Winchester's Scouts in preparing for the future. Whilst he felt this was unlikely to take the form of capital funding and urged the Scouts to consider the advantages of collaboration and co-location, he tasked officers to seek other practical means of assistance in furthering their aims.
- 3.2 In broad terms, this assistance has tended to take the form of:
- a) professional advice, particularly in relation to planning and community consultation;
 - b) introductions and contacts (e.g. the Early Years Team at Hampshire County Council);
 - c) invitations to participate in relevant discussions and meetings (e.g. for Barton Farm and Abbots Barton);
 - d) grant aid, through the Council's small grants and project grants which were previously under-used by the Scouts;

- e) the long term renewal, extension and/or enhancement of Council leases, where Scout Huts are sited on Council land (usually at a peppercorn rent).
- 3.3 The table at Appendix 1 records the progress of each of the Winchester Scout Groups towards its aims. In some cases, this is slow.. One of the key issues for the scouts is their wish to have primacy of their buildings, which is for very practical and understandable reasons but which does preclude some of the partnership working which might lead to additional external funds.
- 3.4 However,– there are some encouraging developments and some very helpful ongoing discussions taking place which may well yield further success in the future. This is mirrored by reports from the District Commissioner published on www.winscouts.org.uk which chart progress against the challenge of meeting volunteer recruitment and training targets, for example.
- 3.5 Officers are now interested to hear feedback from Members which may influence the nature of support providing to Scout Groups in the Town area in future.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- 4 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):
- 4.1 The work of the Scouts supports delivery of the Active Communities outcome of the Community Strategy, particularly around access to sport and recreation, and the promotion of community cohesion. Their increasing focus on skills and employability also aligns with the Economic Prosperity outcome, particularly the promotion of education and training.
- 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:
- 5.1 Other than a modest commitment of officer time, there are no resource implications arising from this report, on the basis that any grant funding would have to be from the existing grants budget and programme.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

More information on all aspect of Winchester Scouts can be found at www.winscouts.org.uk/

Winchester District Five Year Strategy at www.winscouts.org.uk/strategic-initiatives/documents/winchester-district-5-year-strategy-3june2011.pdf

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Progress and Support for Winchester Scout Groups

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Group	Issues and Updates
<p>1st Winchester (Weeke and Littleton) Scout hall at Fleming Road in Weeke (SO22 6EE).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC agreed a new and extended lease. • Introduction to HCC Children's Services officers has led to funding being secured in March 2014 to develop building for inclusion of early years facilities – c £120k. This will allow limited growth but would not meet predicted demand in full. • Planning consent for extension of the building and change of use to also allow pre-school activity – case reference 14/00151/FUL. • Construction started.
<p>3rd Winchester (The Worthies) Pax (Scout) Hall, Wesley Road, Kings Worthy (SO23 7PX).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hall unfit for current demands. • Suggestion of a new Scout Hall on possible development site, but the site ultimately wasn't preferred in Local Plan Part 2. • Estates currently investigating whether WCC owns any land that might be suitable.
<p>5th Winchester (Compton and Shawford) Reeves Scout Hall at Martin's Field in Compton (SO21 2AZ).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hall serves a wider community need. • Replacement plot and building wanted.
<p>6th Winchester – PROPOSED new pack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion regarding a green site in Abbots Barton intended to provide amenity space to mitigate for loss of space to Council housing. • New Group established with 12 leaders and 24 children, operating at present from Holy Trinity Church in Upper Brook Street. • Scouts consulted the wider community to ascertain the level of support for a Scout building at Abbots Barton.
<p>8th Winchester (Stanmore) Scout Hall at Somers Close (SO22 4EJ).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC has facilitated discussions with all three organisations at Somers Close to encourage collaboration. However, the Scouts' need for

Group	Issues and Updates
	<p>primacy of their building has limited the potential for collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scouts discussed with HCC potential to host a pre-school and secure capital funds to improve the building, but the funding was ultimately allocated to The Carroll Centre following scrutiny of three potential options.
<p>9th Winchester (Colden Common) No building – use Methodist Hall and Community Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site for a dedicated Scout building is desired.
<p>11th Winchester (Hyde and Fulflood) Log Cabin at Stockbridge Road (SO22 6RH).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scouts secured approx. £90k funding from Veolia to improve facilities in January – likely to enable increased community usage
<p>12th Winchester (Green Jackets) Scout HQ at Garbett Road, Winnall (SO23 8NY).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building fine for the long term.
<p>13th and 15th Winchester – PROPOSED new packs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scouts had discussions with WCC and Cala Homes regarding provision of site(s) on Barton Farm development. Agreed in principle for ‘community’ use, with further consideration required before specific uses are identified.
<p>14th Winchester (Royal Army Pay Corps) No building – uses venues in South Wonston.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historically the group started at Worthy Down, but now meets in various venues – South Wonston sports pavilion, School and at Worthy Down. Scouts investigating option to secure use of a MoD site.