

# Press Release

Released 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016

## **Women and girls now form a quarter of the Scouts' membership**

- *A quarter of the Scout Movement is now female at 144,000 members with 1,084 in Hereford & Worcester.*
- *It's 25 years since young women and girls were welcomed into all Scout sections (Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts and Explorer Scouts)*

**14 April 2016:** Scouting is continuing to grow in popularity in Hereford & Worcester with more young people joining the Movement, according to The Scout Association's latest annual membership figures released today. The figures reveal that the increase in young women and girls is especially strong, with 142 additional female young people joining the Movement in Hereford & Worcester in the 12 months up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016. This female growth complements a further growth of 33 young men and boys and 59 additional Leaders in the year in Hereford & Worcester.

The total number of girls and young women in Hereford & Worcester now stands at 1,786. Including adult volunteers, there are now 1786 females in Hereford & Worcester altogether – 24.5% of the total membership of 7,302. This is the highest proportion since the Scout Movement first welcomed women and girls into all of its sections 25 years ago.

The impressive growth in young people joining Scouting means that there is a greater need for adult volunteers than ever before. Despite 59 more adults joining in Hereford & Worcester in the past year, there is still a huge need for more volunteers to cope with increased demand from young people.

**Nationally** the figures reveal that the increase in young women and girls is especially strong, with 5,500 joining the Movement in the 12 months up to 31 January. This is well above the average figure over the last 25 years and complements a strong growth of 2,200 young men and boys.

The total number of girls and young women in Scouting now stands at 92,000. Including adult volunteers, there are now 144,000 females in The Scout Association altogether, which means that females now represent over quarter of the Movement's membership. This is the highest proportion since the Scout Movement first welcomed women and girls into all of its sections 25 years ago.

The Cub Scouts (8–10 years) is the most popular Scouting section among girls joining, which is a welcome boost as Cub Scouting celebrates 100 years of Adventure in 2016. Some parts of the UK have seen particularly high numbers of girls join up, for example Kent has seen an additional 321 and girls and young women join the Movement.

The Scout Association's membership figures reveal that 7,900 young people joined the Scouts in 2015. This means that there are now 452,000 young people involved in Scouting across the UK – up 2% on 2014. Including adult volunteers, total membership today is up by 5% and now stands at 573,000. Scouting continues to be the largest co-educational youth movement in the UK with eleven consecutive years of growth in its youth membership.

The impressive growth in young people joining Scouting means that there is a greater need for adult volunteers than ever before. Despite 14,000 more adults joining in the past year, there is still a huge need for more volunteers to cope with increased demand from young people.

*An Explorer Scout from the County said:*

"I love Scouting and I always enjoy the adventures that Scout volunteers have helped us plan. I've picked up some really helpful life skills along the way like team building, planning and how to

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communicate with people. Scouting has also helped me grow in confidence and I have enjoyed learning new skills alongside my male friends. I have been to camps and events in the last year and I have had great fun and learned loads of skills every time I do something Scouting. I'd definitely encourage young people of all ages and both genders to join."

## **Chief Scout Bear Grylls said:**

"I am super proud to see so many young people and adults learning new life skills, and achieving personal rewards through Scouting in the UK. I am excited to see Scout numbers continue to rise across the UK, especially the numbers of girls.

What I'm most pleased about is that Scouts across the UK are putting their time in to helping their local communities. Through our A Million Hands campaign we are pledging one million hands to supporting four of the biggest social issues currently facing the UK and the wider world, but we can't do it on our own. We want all young people to come and give Scouting a try and to get involved. This is how we can all play a vital role in shaping tomorrow's world for the better."

The record growth in young women and girls joining Scouting is a testament to the Scout Association's commitment to fostering diversity and social integration within our local communities.

**-ENDS-**

## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About Scouting**

- The Scout Association was founded on 1 August 1907.
- Adventure is at the core of Scouting, and the Association passionately believes in helping their members fulfil their full physical, intellectual social and spiritual potentials by working in teams, learning by doing and thinking for themselves.
- Over 200 activities are offered by Scouting around the UK, made possible by the efforts of 100,000 voluntary adult leaders. This has helped make Scouting the largest co-educational youth Movement in the country.
- Worldwide, Scouting has over 30 million members – both male and female – and operates in nearly every country in the world.
- There are 250 Scout activity and challenge badges. These require participants to achieve a level of understanding and skill determined to be realistic for their age group.