



Michael Furnival  
15<sup>th</sup> Bromley Scout Group  
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## **20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

Dear Parents, Carers, Explorers, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers,

I hope that you and your family are all well.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Michael Furnival, and I was elected as Chairman of the 15<sup>th</sup> Bromley Scout Group in October of this year. Previously I was a Parent Representative on the Executive Committee. My children, Dominic (Explorers) and Ben (Scouts) have been members of the Group since they were in Beavers.

2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year for most people and organizations. The 15<sup>th</sup> Bromley Scout Group and the wider Scout Movement have also had to deal with their share of the challenges and misfortune that this year has delivered.

In August our Group Scout Leader, Keith Adams, tragically passed away following a short illness. Mine, and no doubt the rest of the Group's thoughts are with Keith's family, especially at this time of year when we should have been enjoying a mince pie and a mug of mulled wine with Keith after the Carol Concert.

The Covid Pandemic resulted in the suspension of Scouting activities for the majority of the year. This has been a huge loss for our Young People who get so much out of all the fantastic opportunities that Scouting provides. As many of you will have seen from the news, it has also affected the finances of the Scout Association, resulting in the sale of Baden Powell House and Downe Activity Centre.

2021 is set to start with many of this year's challenges still in place, but, especially on the back of yesterday's announcement by the Government, I wanted to let you all know that there is room for optimism next year.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Bromley Scout Group is in good health, both financially and with regard to our membership. We have approximately 80 Young People who are members and an incredible team of Leaders. Lee Hawley has been appointed as Group Scout Leader and will remain as Explorer Leader. Paul Stevenson has become the new Scout Leader; Nicola Sills will become the new Cub Leader and Jason Tinklin will continue as Beaver Leader.

All the Leaders have worked extremely hard to get Covid risk assessments written up for all sections. This means that as soon as restrictions are lifted sufficiently, all Sections will be able to return to face-to-face Scouting.

Explorers have been having regular Zoom meetings over the past month including an online investiture! Virtual Scouting is not what any of our Young People want to be doing but in the interim, I hope that our Young People can enjoy these meetings for what they are, a way to remain engaged with Scouting and a welcome distraction from the current restrictions.

The postponed trip to Chateau Du Baffy is expected to happen next July, the numbers attending have even increased to 39. This will be a fantastic opportunity for all involved and something for everyone to look forwards to.

The Scout Association have had to make some tough choices this year. The decision to sell Downe Activity Centre came as a shock to those of us who have seen our Young People enjoy camps and activities there, but the steps being taken are to ensure that Scouting can continue, even if there is further disruption from this Pandemic or any more in the future.

So, there are reasons to be hopeful for 2021 but if any of you, including our Young People are struggling to cope please don't hesitate to contact myself, Lee or any of the Leaders. The Scout Movement is a big family and we are all in this together.

I know that many of your plans for Christmas will have been disrupted by the lockdown announcement yesterday, but I genuinely hope you can all find some cheer over the coming days. As such, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind Regards,

**Michael Furnival**

Group Chairman, 15<sup>th</sup> Bromley Scout Group

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