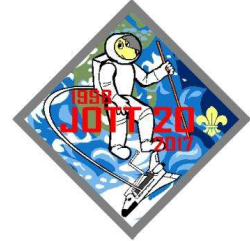




To All Leaders

9 April 2017



Dear Leaders

Jamboree On The Trail ("JOTT") 20 - Saturday 13th May 2017

An Event For All Sections, Leaders & Families

Following the huge success of previous years' JOTT's, I am pleased to now give details of this year's event. I can first confirm that we are retaining last year's format of finishing at Dartford Park and providing all walkers with a snack/chocolate bar, crisps and hot/cold drink at the finish.

Our Route

As usual, our walk will be based on the Darent Valley Path ("DVP") and as in the last few years we will be starting at Otford, heading to Sevenoaks on one branch of the DVP and then following the other (main) branch all the way from there to Dartford Park. The full route is some 21 miles but everybody is of course free to choose their own start point from the list attached. The route options start from as little as just over 2 miles and so are suitable for almost anyone! Please choose your section's/members' start point based on your knowledge of your own and their wishes/ability. Of course, you don't have to have all your members starting at the same point as long as you can still organise adequate supervision. On the day, we will again be doing all registrations on arrival at the finish. On registering, participants will receive their official JOTT badge and a voucher to exchange for snacks and drink. ***N.B: Please ensure ALL participants register and pay for their participation whether they want badges/ food or not, it is not an expensive event after all! We're pretty sure we are easily the largest UK JOTT event and one of the world's largest but our official numbers rely on everybody registering so please help.***

As has been the case for some years now, there are 2 earlier start points than the original route we used when we started from Sevenoaks station. This, together with the finish back at Dartford Park, means the full route is very arduous so please make sure anyone undertaking this is adequately prepared and equipped. Specifically, I would remind everyone that it is crucial that anyone attempting this section is able to map read themselves. It is also even more important that any young people on this section are accompanied and adequately supervised throughout. You can see the full route on the Map attached to the emailed version of this letter or I can supply it on request. Because of the distance, those doing the full route will start at 7:30am again this year.

For the many who prefer the shorter routes, there are alternative start points to suit all and the finish for everybody will be just inside Dartford Park as you arrive there through the tunnels under Princes Road, as last year.

Dartford District Scout Council

Assistant District Commissioner (Activities): Andy Gray 51 Truman Drive, St. Leonard's On Sea, East Sussex, TN37 7TH

Tel 01424 584107 **Work** 020 8370 7260 **Mobile** 07717 828680

email andy@grayfamily.biz **website** www.dartfordscouts.org.uk

Patron HM The Queen **President** HRH The Duke of Kent **Founder** Robert Baden-Powell OM **Chief Scout** Bear Grylls

A Registered Charity

I am attaching to the emailed version of this letter a GPX file showing the full plotted route for those with GPS devices or GPS enabled devices. If you don't have it, please drop me an email and I will supply it.

Ending the routes at the Park eases problems with parking of vehicles near the finish but please do still try to arrange to be picked up if at all possible.

Can We Get Record Numbers Again?

Please promote the activity amongst your fellow leaders, section members and their families. The event as a whole is now in its 20th year and this is the 18th consecutive year that Dartford has taken part. It is a fantastic opportunity to get as many members and supporters involved as possible, from all sections, and to beat our previous years' superb totals for participants (around 750 or more for many years!) and miles walked (thousands!), whilst at the same time enjoying a fine walk in the lovely local countryside. It is also a great opportunity for extensive publicity. It can only happen with your help!

Supervision

Section leaders (or parents if present) are responsible for ensuring that their members/youngsters are properly supervised and accompanied throughout, e.g. that adult/young person ratios are correct at all times. This is essential to everybody's safe enjoyment of the event, so please ensure you provide adequate supervision. In addition, every year some people still get lost so please make sure that, if you don't know the route well, you either have and can use a map or stick close to others who do/can.

Finish

Once we arrive at the finish (scheduled for 4pm), your snack/chocolate bar & crisps will await, along with a hot or cold drink, which are all included in the participation fee. It is hoped that there will be the usual free transport shuttles to ferry drivers back to their start point so that they can collect their vehicles, if necessary. However, please note that these are necessarily for drivers only, not whole parties. Minibuses are still to be confirmed so an email will be circulated to confirm availability shortly. N.B. These shuttles will run from after 4.15pm when the event finishes so, if you require to leave earlier, you will need to make alternative arrangements. This is to ensure that our volunteer drivers get to enjoy their refreshments before beginning their driving duties. Pick up/departure time from the finish should be from 4:30pm onwards for all participants, so as to enable us all to mingle, enjoy the atmosphere and recount our day's adventures. No vehicles will be allowed inside the Park to collect walkers and so arrangements should be made to meet your transport locally to the Park's various exits.

Souvenir Badges

We aim to order plenty of badges in advance again this year to try and ensure that everybody gets their badge on the day and these will be given out on your arrival at the finish when you register. As mentioned earlier, please inform all members, families and other participants that they must register and pay the entry fee, whether they want a badge or not - some people are walking but not registering and this should not be permitted.

Equipment

All participants will need to be equipped as follows:

- * Strong footwear with a decent sole (rugged trainers are acceptable – wellington boots are not!)
- * Clothing (as dictated by weather conditions – including waterproof outer layers just in case)
- * Day sack (containing sufficient drink & food for the length of route chosen)
- * Scouting ID (e.g. Group T-shirt, neckerchief, etc)

Please do not carry any bags that restrict arm / hand movement.

Fee / Registration

The participation fee is £2.50 per person again this year, payable on the day when registering on your arrival at the finish. This fee includes the official JOTT badge plus the refreshments at the end and use of the free shuttles if required. We are not taking any pre-registrations and all participants must register on arrival, although forms are attached herewith so that they can be completed in advance or on route for convenience.

A common problem at registration is that walkers are listed on a registration form along with other people who they end up not arriving with, either because they have gone ahead of or fallen behind that party. This considerably complicates and holds up the registration process whilst the rest of the group catches up. If you think this will affect your group, it is better to use more registration forms, covering smaller walking groups that you know will stay together, so that this issue can be avoided.

Assuming enough volunteer helpers, I am again intending to have a "fast track" registration desk at the finish but this will be solely reserved for those arriving with fully completed registration forms, the correct money and all the people listed present.

Marshalls / Refreshment Staff / Transport

As with any event of this size, much help is needed to run it smoothly and the relatively few volunteers we normally get are stretched very thin. Please consider if you are able to volunteer to marshal (e.g. at the railway crossing at Eynsford, with group control at the more popular start points, etc) or to help at the finish with registration or serving refreshments. Similarly, if you can provide a minibus and/or driver, please let me know as soon as possible. No offers will be refused!

Subject to enough volunteers coming forwards (hint!), it is intended to have 2 or more refreshment collection points operating, so as to speed up the queuing process and let everyone relax and enjoy their snack and the company of their fellow walkers quicker. Please note that volunteering does not mean you cannot enjoy the walk first! If you know your young people and fellow leaders can cope without you once you've arrived at the finish, grab a drink for yourself then come and assist/relieve our other staff.

If anybody can help in any way or has any queries about the event generally, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or via my mobile.

I look forward to seeing you all tired but still smiling at the finish after another huge day for Dartford Scouting!

Yours in Scouting

Andy Gray