*****Dave Briscoe***

***DofE Ambassador for The Boys’ Brigade***

***DofE Team Leader / Advisor for***

***The Boys’ Brigade Wolverhampton & Shropshire Battalion.***

***3 Fern Leys, Finchfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 9EJ***

***01902 762551 & 07974 256823 Email*:** [**mail@davebriscoe.co.uk**](mailto:mail@davebriscoe.co.uk)

***The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award – Expedition Section.***

***Update for Bronze & Silver 2020 / 2021 Participants***

***5th March 2021***

**Dear Participant, Parents / Carers & Group Leader**

**We hope that this letter finds you and your families safe and well in this continuing situation that we all find ourselves in.**

As we all, continue to be affected by the pandemic situation across the country, and the ongoing information and guidance that we are receiving from the government, both nationally, local level and the information with the local restrictions that we are being asked to comply with are changing week by week, and it looks as though the restrictions may continue for the next few months.

When I wrote to you in October of last year, we had made the difficult decision to cancel the “One Day Expedition Get Together” planned for Saturday 17th October 2020 for Silver Participants.

As we now enter into 2021, we are now facing the question, on what your DofE Training Team can offer you in guidance, training & physical support for you to hopefully continue on **“Your DofE Challenge”**.

Unfortunatly, each time that we put our New 2021 Programme together, within a month or so, we are forced to re-address it. However, we now look into a programme that will start within the next few months & hope that we can start creating your Expedition Training & hopefully in the future complete your Award at whatever level you are on.

I will go though ***“Our Plan”*** for both Bronze Participants & then onto our Silver Participants.

***Bronze.***

For those of you that joined the Award in 2020 or before, you obviously will now be transferred onto our 2021 Programme, along with any New Participants that traditionally would be coming on board in this year.

In the past, for over 20 years, our New Bronze Participants have come together & have been invited & welcomed to a weekend training course at our training facility at Birchfield, near Tenbury Wells.

The problem that we now face as this is a **“Residential Weekend Course**” with camping on the Saturday night, at present both The Boys’ Brigade, The DofE Award & National Youth Agencies are not happy that this can take place with overnight stays at present.

Due to the location & the travelling distance, it would not be fair in asking your parents / carers to bring you out on the Saturday morning, return to collect you on the evening & likewise the same on the Sunday.

So, moving forward, we plan to hold a ***“One Day Course” on Saturday 15th May 2021***, at a local church hall within the Wolverhampton area. I will be sending out ALL details of this event soon, as we have a lot of work to put in place with COVID – 19 Enforcements, Health & Safety Regulations, to ensure the venue will be safe for both you & your Training Staff.

In the event that we are not allowed to meet ***“Face to Face”,*** then we will meet via a ***Zoom Online Session***.

However, prior to this, our intention is that we send out again Training Material via Google Classroom for you to look at before this one day course. With probably “Hard Copies” in the post again.

*It is vitally important that you look at this material before the event*.

***Silvers.***

Your first ***“One Day Training”*** should have been taking place on the 13th February 2021. This obviously had to be cancelled.

The next planned training session would be on 24th / 25th April. This may have been a One Day or a Weekend.

Unfortunatly again, we can’t be sure if these dates will be allowed under the regulations at the time.

So, we are looking to invite all the Silver Participants to join together with a “***Zoom Meeting on Saturday 24th April”***, or possibly to have an actual ***“Face to Face***” get together, then we can discuss an up to date “Plan” & issue some new guidance for you for the rest of the year. The latter dependant on local legislation.

***Please Help Us.***

So that your Training Team know exactly who is prepared to continue with the **Expedition Section**, being at **Bronze or Silver**. We would like you to confirm your interest & then we can set wheels in motion to keep you on board for 2021*.*

***Please, Please****. I ask that you return contact to me, with the required paperwork if you intend to join us through Zoom Sessions or Face to Face Sessions*

***Please note****: That Participants under the age of 16 years must have a* ***Zoom Online Consent Form*** *completed.*

A copy of our Safeguarding policy can be found on [www.boys-brigade.org.uk](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk)

***Finally.***

Can I remind you that the Expedition Section is one of the four sections that goes towards your Bronze or Silver Award. During this present COVID-19 situation, there is no reason why you can’t be looking into the other section. Obviously, The DofE Award know that this could be difficult for each of you & have altered some of the requirement for you to gain those sections.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you or your parents/carers may have.

Just because we are in a “Lockdown” situation, doesn’t mean that your DofE has to stop.

So, let’s try and move forward with your DofE. Accompanying this letter is also a ***“Plan” with Proposed Dates / Venues***. Also a copy of the ***Zoom Parental Consent Form*** & a ***Participants Booking Form / Cost Information***.

Please return these back & then we can get you Booked in with your DofE Expedition Training / Assessment.

***(N.B: Those of you that made payments in 2020 have been transferred into this year)***

**As we ALL look into meeting together in The Great Outdoors, it is only right that things maybe very different from past years. *Things like our overnight camping will probably now be enforced that you now use “Single Occupancy Tents & Individual Cooking*”. However,** ***WE WILL GET AROUND ALL THESE CHANGIES***.

If you have **ANY QUESTIONS** on any aspect of the above, however small or silly you think.

**PLEASE ASK** & I will be pleased to answer your concerns

***So, until we all meet later in 2021, please take care, Stay Safe & look after yourself.***

***Dave Briscoe. Team Leader.***

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