



Dear Scouters,

It gives us great pleasure to announce that in the summer of 2020 we will be once again hosting a group of Scouts and leaders from The Pony Express Council, Missouri, USA as part of our District exchange programme.

The exchange programme was started by Jim Trout (The Pony Express Council) and Ken Hoe (Belper District) back in 1985 and continues to go from strength to strength. It is a real privilege for our District to be able to witness how the lives of Scouts, on both sides of the Atlantic, have been enriched by it.

For those unfamiliar with the programme, during the Peak Camp years Belper District host up to 15 Scouts and their leadership team. Typically, they will arrive in the UK a few days before the start of Peak and stay for a couple of nights with host families, together with our District Scouts they then head off for the week-long camp at Peak before returning to host families, this can be up to a week dependant on the contingent's itinerary. After that the contingent will head off on their own to do whatever they want before returning back to the USA.

In return, two years after Peak, Scouts and Explorers will have the opportunity to travel to the Missouri, attend Camp Geiger for a week where hopefully they will be inducted into "The Tribe of Mic-O-Say" a honour society used by two local councils of the Boy Scouts of America, Heart of America Council and Pony Express Council, following the Camp they will be hosted by families from Missouri before the contingent come together for their final week, which is chosen by contingent members. For example, in 2017, the last time we visited the USA our members travelled to San Francisco and Yosemite National Park.

Whilst the summer of 2020 seems a long way off, plans by The Pony Express Council have already begun and the selection for their lucky contingent will take place this coming Spring, their contingent leader, Brandon Keller is already in place and working towards the visit.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for an expression of interest from Scouting families within the Belper District who would be interested in hosting Scouts and or Leaders during the summer of 2020, subject to the below criteria. At this time no firm commitment has to be made, it is just an expression of interest.

For anybody wishing to attend the USA in 2022, hosting a Scout from the USA is an extremely beneficial way of building new friendships, learning about The Pony Express Council and Tribe of Mic-O-Say and having a sound knowledge of the exchange programme should you apply for selection for the 2022 trip.

As with everything, the Scout Association is governed by policies and rules and hosting Scouts from overseas is no different. If you are considering hosting then you must be able to satisfy the following criteria.

- To be available 22nd July – 7th August 2022 **These dates are not yet confirmed and are subject to change, however Peak 2020 is 25th July – 1st August**
- Be part of Belper & District Scouting
- All adults who will be present overnight in the private home at the time of the hosting must hold a valid disclosure (DBS) and sign a hosting agreement.
- Hosted Scouts must be hosted in at least pairs
- A suitability assessment will need to be completed prior to hosting
- Ideally the UK hosting family should have a child in Scouting who is of a similar age to those they are likely to be hosting, 13yrs – 16yrs.

This really is a fantastic opportunity to take part in a very special exchange programme which will celebrate it's 35th birthday at Peak 2020. Over the years many lifelong friends have been made, opportunities created and has been the topic of many successful employment applications.

There are now many people in our District who are part of this programme and would only be too happy to talk to you about how the programme works, hosting, expectations, visiting the USA and much more, if you know them and would like more information please do so, it may well be that you would like someone to give a talk to your whole Section, if that is the case then please let us know.

Should you like to express an interest in hosting International Scouts please do so by completing the attached "expression of interest" form and returning it to me via email to gsl1staltonmanor scoutgroup@gmail.com

Yours in Scouting

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