



PRESS RELEASE

Ottery St Mary Scouts announce the end of the annual Jumble Sale

For more than 40 years, the Ottery St Mary Scout Group Jumble Sale has been a much anticipated event in the town's calendar. Each January the scout group have run the event over two weekends, across three separate venues selling books, electrical items, clothes, furniture, household items and bric-a-brac, with buyers coming from far and wide to attend the event, which was reputed to be the largest in the South West.

In recent years, however, the group have found it increasingly difficult to operate the event as the number of volunteers has been decreasing, costs increasing and changes in the regulations for recycling led the executive committee to evaluate the continued operation of the event. After a lengthy review process the group have decided that the event will not take place in 2017. Instead the group will evaluate other options of running an event for 2018 onwards.

"The fact is that many things have changed over the past 40 years' says Ottery Scout Group chair Nick Johnson. "The town is now much bigger and our ability to collect door to door from all homes in the timescale we have is no longer possible. Changes to recycling requirements mean it is proving more and more difficult to dispose of the unsold items cost effectively and the number of people volunteering to help with the event has been declining for many years."

"Over the past 40 years the event has raised in excess of £150,000 in funds which has been invested in the young people who have been or are currently members of the scout group", says Group Scout Leader John Green, "On behalf of the group we would like to place on record our gratitude to the many hundreds of people who have been involved in the jumble sale in any capacity over the years. There are still a dedicated few people who still help 40 years later which is a tremendous achievement." John went onto add "The fact is that the event requires an enormous amount of time to organise and run. Something in the order of 3,000 man hours goes in to the event and fewer volunteers willing to participate in the running of the event we simply have to take the very hard decision to stop."

The logistic behind the event are impressive. The collections have traditionally started in the outlying village of West Hill the weekend prior to the event. The Scout group then organise two collection nights in the run-up to the event involving 80 Scouts, 10 Scout leaders and about 40 parents who run, walk and drive around town collecting donations. Large items are then booked in for further van collections later in the week. All the Jumble is gathered at the Scout hut on Winter's Lane where it takes a team of up to 10 people five days to sort through all the jumble. Once sorted everything is then transported down to the sale rooms in the town the night before the first event, an operation which again involved the entire Scout troop, parents, helpers, scout leaders and



volunteers. On the day of the sale around 50 helpers and supporter along with 50 young members of the scout group set up the sale, man the stalls and then clear away the unsold items afterwards. "It's a Herculean task!" says Scout Leader Bruce Harvey.

The Jumble Sale was the brain-child of Mary Moore who joined the Executive committee in 1974 and has been the chief co-ordinator of the event ever since. The Jumble Sale was originally started to raise funds for the first rebuild of the Scout centre on Winter's Lane in Ottery in 1980. This having been successfully achieved, the event continued to grow and funds were then channelled into other scouting activities and were also channelled into the extension of the scout centre which opened in 2015.

"I am very sad that the committee has taken this decision", says Mary. "Of course I understand the reasons, but the jumble sale has been such a great community event for such a long time, it's very sad to lose it. We have had help down the years from so many people in the town and so many generous donations from people from the whole area and we must not forget this."

"We have to accept that fashions have changed", says Mary." People are no less interested in buying second hand goods as they once were and we have to face the fact that if another event is going to replace the jumble sale we need to rethink the whole approach. It would be very sad to lose it entirely, so let's see what we can do for 2018."

"We are very fortunate to have an active fund raising group who help organise other fund raising events for the scout group", says Ottery St Mary Scouts Group Chair Nick Johnson. "We will continue to raise funds by running events such as the Quiz night and by supporting town events like Tar Barrels and Pixie Day, but we have to be realistic about how much time and effort we ask our volunteers to commit through the year and when one event demands so many man hours, many have started to ask if their time cannot be better spent supporting other activities during the year. It is sad because the Jumble Sale has given a lot of pleasure to a lot of people down the years."



If you are a young person wishing to join Scouts or an adult who would like to consider volunteering please visit our new web site www.otteryscouts.org.uk or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/otteryscouts

Note for Editor

- Ottery St Mary Scout group has a membership of approx 150 young people aged 6 – 18.
- We provide a wide range of experiences across this age range. Recent experiences have included various international adventures; gliding; caving; coasteering; life saving skills; knee boarding; assisting with community events; participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme; knife and axe training, rifle shooting and much more.
- Nationally 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.

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