



**Bear Grylls helicoptered in to open Scouts International Volunteer Lodge  
funded by the Jack Petchey Foundation**

Bear Grylls literally flew in by helicopter to open a new International Volunteer Lodge at the spiritual home for Scouting, Gilwell Park. The state of the art building will accommodate volunteers from around the world and was given almost £1m by the Jack Petchey Foundation to promote matched giving. The volunteers will be giving up their time to provide young people with amazing outdoor education experiences.

As a young man, Sir Jack Petchey CBE was influenced by Scouting and wanted to 'give something back'. This has led to a long relationship. The Jack Petchey Foundation previously provided funding for the 'Jack Petchey Lodge' that opened at Gilwell Park 10 years ago, providing a unique residential experience for young people.

The Jack Petchey Foundation wanted even more young people to get the opportunity to experience all that Scouting has to offer. To achieve this more leaders were needed and the International Volunteer Lodge will ensure a constant supply of young leaders are trained up and can carry on giving when they go back to their home countries after supporting Scouts in the UK.

The 52 bed lodge now has volunteers from as far away as Mexico and South Africa. The building itself is an architectural gem. Resembling a Scandinavian home it is predominantly timber framed with a large social space constructed using glulam beams and includes a two storey sleeping area. This provides 26 double bedrooms and an accessible bedroom, all with en-suite facilities. The single storey social spaces include a drying and boot room, laundry room, open space kitchen, dining and lounge area, quiet room and cinema style room to allow volunteers to relax after long days.

**Trudy Kilcullen MBE– Chief Executive Officer at the Jack Petchey Foundation** said "The Jack Petchey Foundation wants young people to have opportunities and develop confidence. The Scout Association delivers just that. As a former Scout himself, Sir Jack Petchey CBE knows the values that Scouting instils in young people. Not only will these young volunteers be 'giving' time to other youngsters to help them develop through outdoor education but they will also be learning that in giving, you actually get a great deal of satisfaction too. It's a two way process and a lesson Sir Jack learned as a young scout. "

**Erika, from Bolivia**, is one of the 31 volunteers now living in the International Volunteers Lodge. She spends her day running activities for young people, giving them life changing

opportunities and experiences and boosting their development. This is a rewarding experience for the volunteers and having a space to come back and reflect on their day has made their volunteering even more enjoyable.

Erika used to live in an old lodge where volunteers were separated. For Erika the International Volunteer Lodge has allowed her to build stronger friendships with her peers and create another family far from her family in Bolivia. Erika explained that when you have to share a living space with someone for nine months it can become tough however now having a big, friendly place to share makes the experience more enjoyable and gives them more positive experiences when creating the incredible opportunities for thousands of young people who visit the centre.

Erika said “It’s great to know that when you have a bad day it’s not only you who had a bad day or even when you had a good day you can share this with other people because sometimes it’s quite hard to be far from home but there is always someone who is there to cheer you up.”

**Sathiha is an 18 year old volunteer from Germany.** Sathiha has found that the International Volunteer Lodge has allowed her and her peers to have a social life. For volunteers living in the workplace, it can be difficult to separate yourself from your work life and before the lodge was built the volunteers were struggling to find some space for themselves. However the bigger space in the International Volunteer Lodge is more centred on the volunteers and gives them the space they need.

Volunteering in a different country has also developed Sathiha’s confidence and given her a chance to become more mature. Sathiha said that one of the most difficult parts of being a volunteer in the UK is missing home, however in the new lodge they have a home. The volunteers now have a comfortable and open space to continue any hobbies, relax and talk with their friends.

Sathiha said “The new lodge already looks so amazing and modern; it’s the start of an exciting new era and is definitely going to bring us all together.” She added “It will help the staff and the Scouts that visit make new friends and interact with each other by bringing everyone together in one place.”

Simon Carter, Head of Media Relations at the Scout Association commented: “Having the new International Volunteer Lodge is going to make a huge difference to all the volunteers who travel from all around the world to come and work at Gilwell Park and provide young people with incredible activity experience”.

## **ENDS**

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## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

### **About the Jack Petchey Foundation**

1. Sir Jack Petchey CBE founded the Jack Petchey Foundation in 1999 to recognise the positive contributions young people make to society and to support them in achieving their potential. Since then it has provided support to a wide range of 2,000

youth initiatives across London and Essex and invested over £100m in projects to inspire and motivate young people and help them achieve goals.

2. Our major programme, the Achievement Awards is a peer recognition scheme and includes grass roots youth clubs, youth organisations, secondary schools and uniformed organisations throughout London and Essex. Nominations are made by young people as well as teachers, parents, and supporting adults. The young award winners choose how best to spend their award money to the benefit of their club or school. From 2016 we have increased the award money so new winners will now receive £250 each.
3. The Jack Petchey Foundation also funds other programmes that celebrate positive contributions of young people in society. “Speak Out” is the world’s largest public speaking competition for young people.
4. “Step into Dance” provides opportunities for dance in over 150 schools.
5. The Individual grants for the Volunteers Fund supports young people who are giving up their time for the benefit of another community.
6. To find out more about our work and the range of projects we support go to [www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk](http://www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk). Follow JPF on Facebook [www.facebook.com/JackPetcheyFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/JackPetcheyFoundation) and Twitter [@JPFoundation](https://twitter.com/JPFoundation).

## **About Scouting**

1. The Scout Association was founded on 1st August 1907.
2. The number of volunteers working for Scouting is bigger than the combined workforces of the BBC (24,000) and McDonalds (67,000) put together.
3. Over 200 activities are offered to the half a million Scouts 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.
4. One of the challenges that the Scout Movement faces is finding more volunteers to plug the current gap. At present there are over 40,000 young people on waiting lists across the UK.
5. Worldwide Scouting has 40 million members both male and female and operates in nearly every country in the world.