



## Welcoming back site users to Seven Springs Outdoor Activity Centre - Statement from the Trustees

As with so many small charities and organisations the challenges that Seven Springs has faced, and continues to face, during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have been significant. We are grateful to all our volunteers and who have helped maintain the site, in a covid-secure way, since we closed in March 2020 and to our Friends of Seven Springs for their continued donations. The Trustees have continued to meet (virtually) throughout the pandemic and have spent a lot of time monitoring the impact of the pandemic, trying to navigate our way through to a brighter future for Seven Springs.

Whilst we are optimistic for the future, Seven Springs is not going to emerge from the pandemic unscathed. The Trustees have taken the difficult decision to close the Venture House permanently as a residential facility. Before the pandemic, we were aware that it was nearing the end of its life (hence the start of our Build it Better campaign to raise money for a replacement building) and its lack of use for more than a year has caused further issues which mean it is no longer fit for its intended purpose. The financial investment that would be required to keep it open would not be good use of our limited charitable funds. We know that many people have lots of happy memories of the Venture House and will be saddened by this news, just as the Trustees are. Of course we do have other residential buildings so we will continue to operate those.

Our plans for replacing the Venture House with a new building have not been abandoned and the money that was raised is safe for the time when we are able to proceed further; this remains our long-term plan. However, the pandemic has demanded that our priorities change in order to ensure the survival and recovery of the site as a whole.

The long-term future is still uncertain but we do have a plan to enable us to re-open and begin to rebuild. We are pleased to welcome Disley Forest School, who will be operating out of Seven Springs on weekdays. We are also looking forward to being able to welcome back to the site our friends from Girlguiding Manchester and beyond, along with other youth groups, for day visits, from 17<sup>th</sup> May. We have carried out a covid risk-assessment and are currently implementing various measures, such as installing outdoor sanitiser stations and signage, to enable people to meet safely.

We are planning on re-opening on a gradual, phased return, as follows:

**Phase 1:** from 17<sup>th</sup> May

Use of the outdoor space (including the playground) and access to the toilet block only, for half-day, day or evening visits.

**Phase 2:** no earlier than 21<sup>st</sup> June

As above, plus use of Kinder as in indoor space only (no residential) with access to the kitchen, some games equipment and limited availability of grass sledging.

**Phase 3:** hopefully, by September

As above, plus outdoor camps, indoor residentials in Kinder and The Den.

Phase 1 (only) will open for bookings from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April; to enquire please contact [office@girlguidingmanchester.org.uk](mailto:office@girlguidingmanchester.org.uk). However, to help in your planning, our risk assessment for phase 1 and details of costs will be available on our website on Wednesday 21 April.

We all have many happy memories of visits to Seven Springs and I'm sure that you, like us, look forward to it being full once again, with young people and their leaders enjoying the wonderful outdoor space, facilities and views that we have to offer. Thank you for your understanding and support. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact us at [info@7springs.org.uk](mailto:info@7springs.org.uk)