



UK Outdoors

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Outdoor Education Community and Supporters Send Letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Calls for Sector to be allowed to Reopen in Summer Term

11 March 2021 – Over 200 leaders from the outdoor education sector, as well as high profile supporters, are among those who have put their names to a letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling on him to allow the outdoor education sector to reopen.

In the letter, the positive role that outdoor education plays in the wellbeing of the nation's children is outlined, as well as the part the sector can play in supporting their recovery from the effects of the pandemic. However, the serious impact that pandemic has had on the industry is highlighted, and the Prime Minister is urged to ensure that outdoor education is part of the Government's wider reopening of education, with both day and overnight visits allowed to operate in the critical Summer Term.

Well known signatories to the letter include:

- Benedict Allen, explorer and author
- Dr. Mya-Rose Craig, the ornithologist and campaigner for equal rights
- Duncan Falconer, former Special Boat Service commando and writer
- Jon Holt, the YJA MS Amlin International Sailor of the Decade
- Victoria Humphries, polar explorer and three times Guinness World Record holder
- Sir Michael Morpurgo OBE, former Children's Laureate and author
- Sir Donald McCullin OBE, photojournalist
- Mary Ann Ochota, broadcaster and anthropologist
- Etienne Stott, Olympic Gold Medal-winning canoeist
- Sir Clive Woodward OBE, former Coach of the England Rugby Team

Andy Robinson, Chief Executive of Institute for Outdoor Learning and Member of UK Outdoors, said:

"The benefits of outdoor education are clear. Over the last year, so many children and young people have been locked down in cities and towns with restricted opportunities to connect with each other or with nature; the sector can play a critical role in helping them recover from the impact of COVID-19."

The sector has formally submitted its proposal for inclusion in the Government's Roadmap to the Department for Education, to ensure it can restart safely as soon as possible. The proposal includes day visits restarting from 29th March and residential from 17th May, in line with Step 3. A final decision is expected in the week commencing 15th March.



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Jim Whittaker, Chair of Association of Heads of Outdoors Centres and UK Outdoors Member, said:

“The outdoor education sector is willing and able to help children recover from this awful pandemic. We call on the Prime Minister to allow the sector do what it does best and open in the Summer term, so that we can work with young people to help them achieve their full potential.”

- Ends -

Media Enquiries

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Notes to Editors

About UK Outdoors

UK Outdoors is the industry body for outdoor learning, representing over 5,000 individuals and organisations in the outdoor and environmental education and adventure world. We deliver one voice and the best support for individuals and organisations throughout the sector.

Outdoor learning changes lives and provides opportunities for all students, regardless of background. The sector holds a pivotal role in supporting schools to develop students' social and mental health wellbeing through adventure and engagement with the natural environment.

The outdoor learning sector delivers formative educational experiences to at least 2m students across the UK every year. The sector provides over 16,000 jobs and £700m to the UK economy.

UK Outdoors includes the following organisations:

- AHOEC - Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres
- BAPA - British Activity Providers Association
- IOL - Institute for Outdoor Learning
- Outdoor Council



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High profile signatories to the letter include:

Sir Michael (OBE, FRSL, FKC) and Lady Morpurgo (MBE) - Founders and Trustees - Farms for City Children

- Multi-award winning Children's author and Child Laureate

Jon Holt - International Sailor of the Decade - Greig City Academy

- Founder of the Scaramouche Sailing Trust, and YJA MS Amlin International Sailor of the Decade (Dec 2020)

Sir Clive Woodward, OBE - Former Rugby Union player / coach

- World Cup winning England Rugby Coach from 1997 to 2004

Alastair Humphreys - Adventurer, Author, Keynote speaker N/A

- English adventurer, author and motivational speaker. Over a four-year period he bicycled 46,000 miles around the world. He was a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year in 2012.

Ed Stafford - TV Survivalist

- British explorer and holds the Guinness World Record for being the first human ever to walk the length of the Amazon River. He now hosts shows on the Discovery Channel.

Sir Donald McCullin - CBE – Photojournalist

- Legendary British photojournalist, renowned for his war photography and images of urban struggles

Benedict Allen - FRGS - Explorer, Author, Film Maker & Patron Tony Trust

- Writer, explorer, traveller and filmmaker. He has made numerous series for the BBC, and written ten books.

Duncan Falconer - Author & Patron - Tony Trust

- Former Special Boat Service commando and writer.

Victoria Humphries - Polar Explorer & Patron - Tony Trust

- Polar adventurer, three times Guinness World Record holder, mountain climber, marathon runner, author, businesswoman.

Mary Ann Ochota - Broadcaster, Anthropologist, Author & Patron - Tony Trust

- Broadcaster and anthropologist.

Etienne Stott MBE - Olympic Champion, Whitewater Slalom

- The 2012 Olympic Champion slalom canoeist

Dr. Mya-Rose Craig – Founder & President Black2Nature & Patron of the Tony Trust

- British Bangladeshi ornithologist and campaigner for equal rights.