

## **BB ARTICLE FOR STREAM MAGAZINE – AUGUST 2023**

Our BB company will re-start on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September. Anchor Boys (for boys in P1 to P4) starts at 6.30pm each week for one hour, and Junior Section (for boys in P5 to P7) runs from 7.15 to 8.30pm each evening. Company & Senior Sections (for boys in Years 8 to 14) run from 7.30 to 9.00pm approx. each week.

We run challenging and dynamic programmes for each age grouping, and are as ever keen to welcome new members, even with almost 50 boys in the ranks last year. So we would appeal to everyone reading this article to try to identify any boys who you think might like to try BB. Please pass on their details to myself or any of our staff team. We are very thankful to all our Officers and leaders – for those with long and dedicated service, and to a number of younger leaders who have brought new energy into our staff team.

As you read this article you may recall some press articles over the past year about The Boys' Brigade in Northern Ireland (BBNI), and its historic decision to split from the rest of Brigade in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. This has been something which BBNI, which makes up 40% of BB membership throughout the UK and RoI, has contemplated for a number of years, particularly for faith, financial and programming reasons.

At the recent BBNI AGM, the vote in favour of endorsing the decision to split from the rest of Brigade was 95%. The negotiation team of David Blevins (BBNI President), Lisa Keys (BBNI Director) and Stephen Gowdy (BBNI solicitor) deserves tremendous credit for their patience and skill in conducting all their dealings with Brigade in such a Christian and principled manner.

And part of the split from Brigade has also involved a major re-organisation of governance structures here, with a new charity called The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade already established and currently completing registration with The Charity Commission NI. The new organisation comprises five trustees, each with specific skills sets, and I was delighted to be selected as one of these new trustees who will guide BBNI as it starts a completely new existence from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. Please pray for me in this new role.

For our members and leaders, this significant change will have little impact day to day initially, but gradually, the financial benefits and greater staff support from BBNI HQ will become clear. So I would ask for your prayers for Boys' Brigade in Northern Ireland in the coming weeks and months, for careful decision making and ensuring that we bring all our companies and members with us on this new journey.

Sure and Steadfast in His Love

Stephen Boyle  
(Captain)