



17 April 2012

Mr Stephen Evans  
Campaigns Manager  
National Secular Society  
25 Red Lion Square  
London  
WC1R 4RL

Dear Mr Evans

Thank you for your letter of today's date which you have addressed to me, the Chief Scout and the Chief Commissioner for England and which you have chosen to publish wider as "an open letter". This response is on our collective behalf.

Scouting is open to anyone who feels able to make their personal commitment to the Scout Promise, which includes "to do my duty to God" (or other wording according to age or specific faith). We are part of the World Scout Movement that shares this common fundamental premise. Scouting is a voluntary organisation for all who wish to share that Promise whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Sikh or of another faith.

We are a membership organisation not just an activity programme, and share a basis of association by common belief. Similarly if a person does not wish to make the Promise and share that common association with people of similar beliefs, then that is a respectable personal choice.

Although this may be disappointing to you with regards to availability, there may well be other membership or volunteering opportunities provided by local branches of other voluntary organisations (such as the Woodcraft Folk, who enjoy some similar activities such as camping and international networks) where the basis of shared-belief is not an expectation of membership or participation. Indeed, Scouting frequently works alongside other providers of youth-work in very collaborative ways, each of us with our distinctive contribution into the total provision for young people and their communities.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Wayne Bulpitt  
UK Chief Commissioner

**The Scout Association**

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