

Where has the Boys' Brigade gone?

Following the initial COVID-19 lockdown last March we have been following guidance from the Boys Brigade HQ which is based on advice from Youthlink, of which the BB is a member. We have also been complying with the Broxburn Parish Church Covid Policy. This all means that we have not been able to meet face to face in the Church Hall for nearly a year now!

Once we understood the limitations imposed on us by the lockdown restrictions we decided to keep in contact with the boys and their parents as much as possible. To do this we introduced them to **#BBathome**, which is a programme of home based activities provided by BB HQ, based on BB programme materials. These activities were distributed online to the boys each week and the boys were invited to share their work and thoughts. We also provided **#faithathome** to help provide weekly devotional material for parents and their whole family and included weekly releases of material from Alpha Scotland and their programme Alpha youth series 2.0 and also links to other Church of Scotland, BB and other youth activities.

This continued throughout 2020 trying to keep as much continuity for the boys and their parents as possible. To provide some variety, during the summer months we added **#BBatcamp** and provided links and information for UNITE and also CUMBRAE CAMP at home. We then broke up at the end of July.

We began the 2020/21 session at the end of September and restarted the **#BBathome** and **#faithathome** online activities. This continued till December when the company staff started trialling **#virtualBB** on Zoom, for Going Live in January 2021.

We now meet weekly for **#virtualBB** parade nights, for 40 minutes on a Monday evening, via Zoom. It has to be said that this past year has been a challenge due to the Covid-19 outbreak and pandemic.

One significant challenge, which was overcome, was getting the staff up to speed so that we are now at least as competent as the boys with Zoom and online working!

We are having a good time and are looking forward to 2021 which will bring us to further Christ's Kingdom, and allow us to show that church and BB was not shut down by the pandemic, it has just appeared in thousands of places elsewhere online and in other ways.

Douglas Leiper,
Captain, 2nd Broxburn Company