

Last week I had the chance to visit Kent Scouts in Sandling and see their amazing climbing wall and facilities, all of which is open to the wider community. Aside from the realisation that the scouting movement has changed so much since I was a Brownie and Girl Guide in the Eighties, it was incredible to see how scouting has seamlessly transformed into a movement that competes fantastically well with the modern day temptations of indoor and sedentary technological activities.

The climbing wall is just one of the many adventurous opportunities for youngsters that the scouts offer. But in addition to that there are many life skills being taught or encouraged which will only go to serve our next generation well as they head out into the uber-competitive world of university and work.

As an employer, scouts and guides often offer you a different kind of candidate. You know they are likely to be part of a team, show commitment, be community minded and so on. Plus they can rough it if need be – although most employers don't require you to camp if away on business! My trip to Kent Scouts reminded me that alongside all the fun and adventure these are all core skills they help develop.

You can see this from the conversations we had about dementia training right down to the wider use of the climbing wall. While I was visiting it was being used by a school for pupils with certain behavioural challenges. The rewards for those pupils was enormous – not just in terms of the activity but the value that the climbing tuition was bringing to their lives; you can't lose concentration on a cliff edge, even one with a crash mat at the bottom.

Well done to all those who help deliver this kind of community engagement across our local communities. It is invaluable and should be celebrated.