

# Biggest Sleepout takes place tonight



We hope they all have their thermals on!

***Tonight the Biggest Big Sleepout ever will take place in Edinburgh and across Scotland with more and more people under the stars to help the homeless***

The Big Sleepout, the night when big-hearted Scots get together to help those with no place to go, is shaping up to be one of the biggest events of its kind ever, raising thousands of pounds for the homeless.

Organised by the Bethany Christian Trust in its 30th birthday year, the Big Sleepout 2013 will see nearly 300 people leave their comfortable beds to sleep under the stars in a cardboard box to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people.

For the first time, the event will move outside Edinburgh, where it has been a feature for the past 12 years. Big Sleepouts will also take place tonight in Aberdeen, Dundee and St Andrews and Dunfermline in Fife.

Already nearly double last year's numbers are signed up to spend the night on the streets – with 140 in Edinburgh, 65 in Dundee, 45 in Aberdeen and more than 30 in Fife. The numbers are being swollen by more than 50 volunteers from the Peter Vardy Group, the Trust's long-term corporate sponsors.

Organiser Hannah Biddulph said: "The response has been overwhelming and the number of people who are willing to endure considerable discomfort in a very good cause is particularly heartening.

"The money raised when friends and family sponsor our

volunteers for the night makes it possible for Bethany to offer practical help to homeless people to help them overcome the challenges in their lives and become more settled.”

Once again, participants will take part in the Bethany Trust’s shelter building contest, creating snug sleeping stations out of cardboard boxes. Bethany helpers will be on hand to provide hot drinks and support.

The number of Peter Vardy board and colleagues taking part is also the highest ever for the 2013 Big Sleepout, reflecting the company’s ongoing commitment to the communities in which it operates. It has a policy of giving away 10% of its annual profits to worthwhile causes.

Martyn Bellshaw from The Peter Vardy Foundation, who will be sleeping out on the streets along with so many of his colleagues, said: “The Bethany Trust does very valuable work and everyone in our group is happy to support their magnificent efforts.

“For us, the Big Sleepout is one night of discomfort before we return to our comfortable beds, but for many people sleeping rough is their life. Along with Bethany Christian Trust, we want to do as much as possible to highlight the issue of homelessness in Scotland, and to help those affected by it to turn their lives around.”

Are you taking part? Tweet us some photos!