

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED**  
**UNTIL 10AM TUESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2013**

## **BETH TWEDDLE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AND LAUNCHES FIRST ATHLETE-LED LEGACY PROGRAMME ON LONDON OLYMPIC SITE**

Today (Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> August) on the anniversary of her greatest triumph at the London 2012 Olympics, Beth Tweddle MBE, Britain's greatest ever gymnast, returned to the Olympic Village to announce her retirement and to launch the first athlete-led legacy programme on the London Olympic site.

Having previously ruled out competing at the 2016 Olympics, Beth announced that she is to retire from competitive gymnastics. Beth's impressive career included an Olympic Medal - winning bronze on the uneven bars at London 2012, triple World Champion, six-time European Champion, Commonwealth Champion and seven-times consecutive National Champion. Following her Olympic success, Beth took a break from competitive gymnastics, taking part in the 2013 series of ITV's Dancing on Ice, which she won with skating partner Daniel Whiston.

Details about Beth's legacy programme were unveiled at Chobham Academy, a new school, which opens next month in East Village, the new residential development on the site of the Olympic Village. The school, which overlooks where Beth stayed during the Olympics, will host a Beth Tweddle Academy, part of a national roll out of programmes run by Total Gymnastics, set up by Beth, and fellow Olympian Steve Parry, to provide the opportunity for as many children as possible to take up gymnastics, within schools, leisure centres and gymnastics clubs to help develop the sport around the country.

Chobham Academy, working closely with Total Gymnastics, will provide gymnastics for children aged 2-14 years old. The programme combines the Gym Stars programme for 2 to 8 years and the British Gymnastics Proficiency programme for 8 to 14 years.

Total Gymnastics offer sessions in a non-competitive environment, providing boys and girls of all abilities the opportunity to learn key fundamental core skills. There are currently 11 Beth Tweddle Academies and 46 leisure centres running the Gym Stars programme, meaning that over 5,000 children are currently being given the opportunity to try gymnastics across the UK.

**Beth said:** *"It's been a hard decision to make; gymnastics has been and always will be a massive part of my life. Following the Olympics I've had a lot of projects on and recently I've had a bit more time to get back into the gym and decide whether I could put 100% into it and I know now deep down I can't commit to the hours and training to remain at the very top.*

*I'm going to miss being part of the team, my teammates, my personal coach Amanda Reddin, the buzz of the competition and achieving your dreams. There are so many people to thank for helping me, the biggest one is Amanda who has always been at my side, nothing could have been achieved without her, British Gymnastics who have supported me throughout, of course my family who have always been there for me and the British fans who have been unbelievable.*

*I don't think my achievements will ever really sink in but when I do look back I can be very proud of what I've done and how I've done it. I guess if there was anything I wanted to pass on from my time in the sport it would be that you should never let any obstacle get in your way. With hard work there's always a way to succeed and always a way to achieve your dreams."*

*The London 2012 Olympics is where I achieved my life long dream and now I hope I can inspire the next generation of youngsters by providing the opportunity for them to try gymnastics.*

*I'm honoured that Chobham Academy has chosen to support my Academy, and it's very special for me to be able to do this on the Olympic site. The school opens this September and my Academy will be starting in mid-October it will be open to anyone in the local area that wants to come along.*

*I want to give every child an opportunity to try gymnastics. I had to try a lot of sports before I found gymnastics, this way children can have a go; they might love it, they might hate it, but at least we've given them the opportunity to try it.*

*We are actively looking for new locations in the UK; it's simple to set-up, doesn't cost the school anything to run, we provide the coaches and infrastructure, the only thing they need is basic PE equipment."*

**Seb Coe, Chair, British Olympic Association said:** *"During a remarkable career that has seen her achieve unprecedented success at every level of competition, Beth Tweddle has set a new standard of excellence for British Gymnastics. She has been an inspiration and a role model for a generation – from her impressive competitive record to setting up Total Gymnastics, through which she strives to give as many children as possible an opportunity to try gymnastics. I will always be grateful for her steadfast support to London 2012 while we were bidding and delivering the Games.*

*Equally, I am delighted that the Chobham Academy are to have a Beth Tweddle Academy. It is a fitting tribute and I am sure that young people will be proud to go to a school that is associated with Britain's most successful gymnast."*

**Steve Parry, Director, Total Gymnastics, commented:** *"This is a real sporting landmark and we feel that as much as this is an announcement of Beth's retirement from competitive gymnastics, this is also a fantastic opportunity to celebrate all of her successes and commitment to the sport."*

*"It is an absolute delight to have Beth, not only a director of Total Gymnastics but also our ambassador for the company, she is truly inspiring and has an amazing passion that filters through into everything the company stands for. At Total Gymnastics we share the same mission of "wanting to provide every child with the opportunity to access gymnastics" and we are successfully on track to achieve this.*

*"It's fantastic that we will be setting up a new Beth Tweddle Academy that will be hosted by Chobham Academy, this will provide a true legacy for gymnastics on the Olympic site, so a big thanks to the school for providing this great opportunity."*

**Derek Gorman from East Village, said:** *"We are thrilled to welcome Beth back to East Village and we'd like to congratulate her on her tremendous achievements at the London Games and throughout her career. In the year since Beth was last on site we've been busy transforming athletes' beds into new homes with our first residents due to move in this summer. It's fantastic news that a Beth Tweddle Academy will be coming to Chobham Academy, bringing a first-class gymnastics programme to our doorstep for new residents and the existing local community to enjoy."*

**For schools and leisure providers who would like to run a Beth Tweddle Academy, please contact Total Gymnastics on 0844 357 9653 or visit: [www.totalgymnastics.co.uk](http://www.totalgymnastics.co.uk)**

**-ENDS-**

**For further information and images, please contact:**

Milly Baker  
The Sports Partnership  
[milly@sports-partnership.com](mailto:milly@sports-partnership.com)  
0207 240 0305

**Notes to editors:**

About Beth Tweddle MBE

As Britain's greatest ever-female gymnast, Beth's impressive achievements include being an Olympic Bronze Medalist, a triple World Champion, a six-time European Champion, a Commonwealth Champion and seven-times consecutive National Champion. Along with her unrivalled success Beth has competed at three Olympics Games; Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012 - where she won Bronze in the Uneven Bars. **[www.bethtweddle.com](http://www.bethtweddle.com)**

About Total Gymnastics

Total Gymnastics is a dedicated gymnastics company set up by Olympic Bronze Medalist Beth Tweddle MBE to provide gymnastics classes around the UK in partnership with local schools and leisure centres. Total Gymnastics aims to supply high quality coaches who are able to offer more club provision for young people and develop talented performers. Total Gymnastics' mission is to provide every child with the opportunity to access gymnastics. **[www.totalgymnastics.co.uk](http://www.totalgymnastics.co.uk)**

About East Village

East Village is London's newest neighbourhood on the site of the London 2012 Olympic Village. The vibrant new neighbourhood will deliver high-quality new homes for thousands of individuals, couples and families, with the first new residents set to move in later this summer. **[www.eastvillagelondon.co.uk](http://www.eastvillagelondon.co.uk)**