

**a guide for administrators**

# *Supporting* **The Group Chairman** *– a guide to the role*



**Adult Support**

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# ***Supporting the Group Chairman - a guide to the role***

## **CONTENTS**

◆ <b>The Group Chairman s role</b>	<b>2</b>
◆ <b>Who can help you get started?</b>	<b>3</b>
◆ <b>Your key colleagues</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Key elements of the role:</b>	
◆ <b>Work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader</b>	<b>5</b>
◆ <b>Lead the administrative and financial support team</b>	<b>5</b>
meetings - preparation	
- at a meeting	
- after and in between	
the Annual General Meeting	
◆ <b>Maintain and develop the Group as part of the community</b>	<b>11</b>
◆ <b>Keep in touch with the Scout District</b>	<b>11</b>
◆ <b>Other topics:</b>	<b>12</b>
Membership of the Scout Association	
Trusteeship and the Charities Act	
Group bank accounts	
Fund raising	
Headquarters and meeting places	
Social events	
◆ <b>Other sources of help</b>	<b>10</b>
◆ <b>Understanding Scouting language</b>	<b>12</b>
◆ <b>The structure of the Scout Group</b>	<b>IBC</b>

This booklet is designed to help those who become involved as Chairman of a Scout Group get started.

It is not designed as a technical guide but to point you in the right direction in the first few weeks and months.

Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association (POR) is referred to in this booklet.

It contains the up to date rules of The Scout Association.

# **Supporting the Group Chairman**

## **- a guide to the role**

Congratulations on becoming the Group Chairman. It is an extremely important role in Scouting and I hope that you will enjoy it.

This booklet is designed to help you get started and point you in the right direction in the first few weeks and months.

If you are very new to Scouting you may well find it useful to read the 'jargon buster' *Understanding Scouting language* first. You will find it at the end of this booklet.

### **THE GROUP CHAIRMAN'S ROLE**

**The key aspects of the Group Chairman's role are to:**

- ▶ **work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader**
- ▶ **lead the team who provide sound administrative and financial support to the Group**
- ▶ **maintain and develop the Group as part of the community**
- ▶ **keep in touch with the Scout District**

### **How did you become the Group Chairman?**

In constitutional terms your nomination by the Group Scout Leader (GSL) was approved by the Group Council. I expect that before hand there was some discussion with you and even some mild persuasion. You may even be reading this booklet because you have nearly been persuaded and want to find out a little more.

### **What are you Chairman of?**

You are Chairman of the Group Council and the Group Executive Committee.

The Group Council exists to support Scouting locally. The Group Scout Leader and the Group Executive Committee are accountable to the Group Council.

In reality the Group Council meets just once each year. This meeting, the Annual General Meeting, is usually held in May, but must be held within 6 months of the Group's financial year end. It receives annual reports and sets up the Group Executive Committee.

Membership of the Group Council is open to all the Leaders, Appointed Helpers and others who work directly with the Group's young people together with the parents of those young people. Venture Scouts and Patrol Leaders are also members as can be former Scouts and their parents. Indeed it is possible, and highly desirable, to include all of those who support the Group.

### **How does the Scout Group work?**

The Group Scout Leader leads the Scout Group and has a team of key people to help.

The uniformed Section Leaders each lead their team of assistants and helpers together with the young people in their section. Together they are responsible for the delivery of the programme for the young people who are members. Their work is co-ordinated through the Group Scouters' Meeting which includes all the Section and Assistant Leaders. The Group Scout Leader chairs this meeting so you are off the hook this time.

You, the Group Chairman work closely with the Group Scout Leader and lead all of those who provide help and support to the Group in other ways. An important job and one which clearly is more than just chairing a few meetings.

### **Why do we need a Group Executive Committee?**

The Group Executive Committee which exists to manage the Scout Group supports the Group Scout Leader and is responsible for:

- ▶ the maintenance of Group property
- ▶ the raising of funds and the administration of Group finance
- ▶ the insurance of persons, property and equipment
- ▶ Group public occasions
- ▶ arranging accommodation and assisting to find camping grounds
- ▶ assisting in the recruitment of Leaders and other adult support
- ▶ appointing any sub-Committees that may be required
- ▶ appointing Group Administrators and advisors other than those who are elected.

## Who are members of the Group Executive Committee?

Membership of the Group Executive Committee includes members who are ex officio members, nominated members, elected members and co-opted members. This sounds rather complicated but the list looks like this:

Ex officio members:

- ▶ The Group Scout Leader
- ▶ The Group Chairman    ◀◀ That s YOU ◀◀
- ▶ The Assistant Group Scout Leader
- ▶ All Section Leaders
- ▶ The Group Secretary
- ▶ The Group Treasurer
- ▶ The Sponsoring Authority or nominee (sponsored Groups only)

(The District Commissioner and the District Chairman have right of attendance)

- ▶ Members of the Group Council nominated by the Group Scout Leader:

Usually parents so that a parent of a young person from each section is involved.

- ▶ Members elected by the Group Council:

Members of the Group Council elected to the Executive Committee

- ▶ Members co-opted by the Executive Committee:

Other people who the Group Executive believe are important to the committee's work.

That sounds like quite a good team to help you. But remember they will be looking to you for leadership.

## WHO CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED?

### The Group Scout Leader (GSL)

A good place to start, after all they persuaded you to allow them to nominate you!

Your relationship with the **Group Scout Leader** is going to be crucial to the success of your Chairmanship so you need to talk it through.

You both need to understand:

- ▶ the responsibilities of your own and each other's role

You need to understand:

- ▶ about the Scout Group
- ▶ the GSL's priorities
- ▶ the GSL's preferred methods of working

The GSL needs to understand:

- ▶ your need for information
- ▶ your ideas about how you intend to do the job
- ▶ how they can support you.

The Group Scout Leader will be able to provide you with a vital tool for your role; 'Policy, Organisation and Rules', (**POR**).

This book sets out the structure and rules of the Scout Association and defines the responsibilities of all who have roles within it. It recognises that Scouting happens principally in Scout Groups and so emphasises the importance of your role, the Group Chairman.

### Your predecessor - the retiring Group Chairman

Hopefully your predecessor is available so that they can hand over the reins. Whether they did the job for a long or short time they still have the experience of their term of office. It would be silly to waste it.

Arrange to meet with them so that the hand over can be smooth both for you and all the other people involved. They may well be the best person to introduce you to the key players.

You may well have your own ideas, I hope you have, about how you wish to fulfill your role but remember that change can be unsettling for people. A good understanding of the current situation is essential even if your way of proceeding is likely to be very different to the past.

### **The District Chairman**

One of the main responsibilities of the District Chairman is to 'maintain contact with Group Chairmen and promote the organisation and effective working of their Group Councils and Executive Committees'. So this is very much someone on your side.

There is clearly a need to establish a working relationship so that you know what is expected of you by the District. What is more important is that you have an ongoing source of help and advice.

The District Chairman will also be in a position to introduce you to other Group Chairmen in the District. Another source of support.

### **An experienced Group Chairman from another, nearby, Group**

Having someone to talk to who:

- ▶ understands your situation
- ▶ has experience of similar situations
- ▶ but who is not directly involved

is frequently helpful. If such a person is nearby, either physically or on the phone, and someone to whom you easily relate, you have a wonderful support.

The Group Chairman of a nearby Group fits the bill. You may need to be selective as you need someone who is on your wave length, not just the nearest.

They will have been new to the role at sometime and so will have an understanding of your needs. You even have something to offer them in the freshness that you bring by being new.

## **YOUR KEY COLLEAGUES**

### **The Group Secretary**

The Group Secretary is elected to act as secretary of the Group Council and the Group Executive Committee to:

- ▶ provide sound administrative support to the Group
- ▶ make available to members of the Group information received into the Group
- ▶ keep in contact with the District Secretary
- ▶ keep such records as the Group Scout Leader and Group Chairman require.

### **The Group Treasurer**

The Group Treasurer is elected to advise the Group Executive Committee on financial control and expenditure and to co-ordinate the Group's budget. The key tasks are to:

- ▶ produce an annual budget following consultation with the Group Scouters' Meeting
- ▶ monitor the Group's income and expenditure against the approved budget
- ▶ collect and forward the Membership Subscription to the District Treasurer
- ▶ receive and account for all monies in the Group (including from Sections) paying out only as authorised by the Group Executive Committee
- ▶ ensuring that floats held by others are properly accounted for
- ▶ ensuring that accumulated funds are invested
- ▶ ensure that proper inventories and insurance of Group property and equipment are maintained
- ▶ keep in contact with the District Treasurer
- ▶ comply with the rules of the Scout Association and the laws of the land relating to finance.

**Working relationships**

It goes without saying that if you are to do your job well you all need to work as a team with a very good understanding between you all. Good relationships do not just happen they need to be formed.

A meeting, with each, soon after you become Group Chairman, or whenever there is a change of holder of one of these key roles, is a sound start. It will give you the opportunity to:

- ▶ be clear about each others role
- ▶ decide how you can best work together.

Remember that by working together and combining your strengths you will each receive support and be able to do a better job.

*You may find that a meeting of the Group Scout Leader, Group Secretary, Group Treasurer and yourself would help to put everyone's role into context.*

**KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ROLE**

We have already listed the key elements of the Group Chairman's role:

- ▶ work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader
- ▶ lead the team who provide sound administrative and financial support to the Group
- ▶ maintain and develop the Group as part of the community
- ▶ keep in touch with the Scout District

It is now time to explore each in more detail.

**WORK CLOSELY WITH AND SUPPORT THE GROUP SCOUT LEADER**

We have already explored the relationship with the Group Scout Leader when looking at who can help you get started. The relationship started at that time needs to be maintained.

You each have your own role in the Group but neither of you will be effective if you do not work together in partnership. There is no replacement for regular contact during which you keep each other well briefed.

Scouting has needs for a wide range of resources and it is important that you understand both what and why items are needed. Scouting has needs for:

- camping equipment  
e.g. tents, stoves and cooking gear
- training equipment  
e.g. maps and compasses
- activity equipment  
e.g. life jackets and climbing ropes.
- materials for weekly meetings  
e.g. paper, paints and balls for games.

**LEAD THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TEAM**

We have already established that the key members of this team, besides yourself, are the Group Secretary and Group Treasurer. We have also covered the importance of the three of you working closely together.

It is now time to look at the wider team. Strictly speaking this means the whole of the Group Council but in reality it means the members of the Group Executive Committee. It is at Group Executive Committee Meetings that this team comes together and so these meetings are important and so is the work that makes them happen.



## PREPARING FOR MEETINGS

There are three key steps to preparing for a meeting:

There are three key matters for the Chairman to attend to before a meeting:

### i) meet with the Secretary to agree the agenda

This will include looking at the previous minutes to establish any ongoing issues and identifying any new issues. There may also be some routine issues due to the time of the year.

It is important that all committee members tell the Secretary of any issues that they wish to raise. This ensures that the meeting is planned and that issues are included in the agenda and given the time that they deserve.

#### Group Executive Committee

Meeting agenda for Thursday 25th February 1999 at 1945 hours in the Village Hall Committee Room. The meeting will finish by 2145 hours.

1. Welcome and introductions for newcomers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes
  - 6b. the new patrol tent has been delivered
5. Financial Report
  - a. Current balances
  - b. Review of Group Budget (copy enclosed)
  - c. Payment of membership subscriptions to the District
  - d. Renewal of equipment insurance (two quotes will be available at the meeting)
6. Fund raising sub-Committee Report
  - a. review of the duck race 5.12.98 (copy enclosed)
  - b. Update on future plans:
    - i) Jumble Sale 20.3.99
    - ii) Group Bar-b-que 11.6.99
    - iii) School fete book stall 25.6.99
7. Group Scout Leaders report  
To include details of the plans for:
  - Cub Scout Pack holiday near Bristol 21.8 to 28.8.99
  - Scout Troop Expedition to France 29.5 to 5.6.99
8. The Annual General Meeting - Thursday 20.5.99 at 1945 hrs.  
Please come prepared to discuss ideas so that we can build on the increased attendance achieved last year.
9. Any other business  
Please advise the Chairman of any items before the start of the meeting so that appropriate time can be reserved.
10. Date of future meetings:  
Thursday 22.4.99 at 1945 hrs  
Thursday 24.4.99 at 1945 hrs

At this stage you may decide that there is no need for a meeting. If this is the case I am sure that most people will be pleased to have some time for other things. Please be sure, however, that you make the decision when in possession of all the facts.

In planning the agenda you will need to think about:

- ▶ the information that members will need in order to come to the meeting prepared

*Discussion can focus on the issues if members start with a common understanding. A full explanation either as part of the agenda or in a supporting paper is essential.*

- ▶ the venue for the meeting

*I hope that it goes without saying that everyone will need somewhere to sit and that the room needs to be at a comfortable temperature. It is much better if a committee meets around a table rather than in classroom style. The table gives everyone somewhere to put their papers and everyone can gain eye contact with the chairman.*

### ii) receive the papers

When you receive the papers, like everyone else, from the secretary you know exactly the starting point for everyone else and that the papers have gone out.

### iii) decide how you will tackle each item as Chairman

A lot will depend on peoples understanding of the issue from the agenda, how you introduce each topic and who, if anyone, you brief to lead the discussion.

Whilst you should not prejudge the outcome of a discussion it makes sense to have a clear idea of what is needed. Are you seeking:

- ▶ a briefing for the committee
- ▶ a decision
- ▶ a range of options for further investigation
- ▶ views and/or ideas.

You also need to be aware of the potential for the committee to waste its members time by:

- ▶ tackling issues that are not part of its remit
- ▶ straying into the realms of 'red herrings'
- ▶ becoming repetitive.

It helps if you time the agenda, allocating a portion of time to each item. In this way you will be able to monitor progress and ensure that the matters of real substance get the lions share of the time.

## AT A MEETING

At a meeting the Chairman is very much in the limelight so you need to be well prepared and to arrive in good time.

### i) on arrival

Check with the Secretary that everything is in order.

If you have agreed beforehand with the Secretary all the arrangements for the meeting and they have then set the meeting up please remember that they need your support. Arriving in good time allows you to confirm that things are set up as you wish.

Arriving in good time also ensures that you are there to welcome any newcomers.

### ii) working through the agenda

It makes sense to follow tradition and accept apologies for absence and to agree the minutes of the previous meeting first.

Try not to be drawn into discussion on 'matters arising from the minutes'. It is far better to ensure that any item discussed previously that is likely to require further discussion has its own place on the agenda.

Introduce each item clearly ensuring that everyone is clear:

- ▶ why it is on the agenda
- ▶ the background, including any supporting papers
- ▶ what it is hoped to achieve

Discourage 'tabled papers' they simply cause a lull in the meeting while people read them. People read at different speeds and so the discussion can so easily start with some committee members not up to speed.

Next, ask the person directly involved with the issue to speak. Then ensure that everyone who wishes to speak on the topic has the opportunity. One turn each before allowing people to come back in is a good rule of thumb, although it can be helpful to ensure that questions are answered as you proceed.

One of your biggest challenges will be to keep speakers to the point and to discourage repetition. A good way is to warmly congratulate anyone who, when you ask them to speak, tells you that their point has already been made.

It is your job to summarise the discussion. You will certainly need to do so:

- ▶ in order to bring a phase of a discussion to an end

Summarising is a way of drawing a line and ensuring that the topic moves forward.

- ▶ before a decision is made

People need to be clear what they are being asked to decide.

Most decisions can be achieved by consensus but just occasionally a formal vote may need to be taken.

There are particular rules about tied votes please ensure that you are familiar with the rules on the Conduct of Meetings in the Scout Group. These can be found in Policy, Organisation and Rules.

- ▶ at the conclusion of the item

It is essential at the end of the discussion that the Secretary can make a clear record. Everyone needs to know:

- ▶ what has been decided
- ▶ who needs to take action
- ▶ when the action will happen.

### iv) closing the meeting

You clearly need to thank everyone for their contributions to the meeting and to send them away feeling positive about the outcomes.

It makes good sense to ensure that the date, time and venue of the next meeting is clear.

Many people, especially those in Scouting with full diaries, find it useful if committees have a calendar of meetings for the year. It means that people know what they are committed to.

Making a change to a planned programme, if a meeting needs to be changed or even cancelled, is much easier than trying to find a date that several busy people can make at relatively short notice.

#### v) sub committees

When a major piece of work or a complex issue needs to be tackled a large committee will not always produce the best result. This is an opportunity for a sub-committee.

A sub-committee has the advantage of being:

- ▶ small enough to meet as frequently as needed and function quickly
- ▶ able to deal with matters of detail
- ▶ able to draft in those with special knowledge or skills

There are, however, some key issues to bear in mind when setting up a sub-committee. The sub-committee needs:

- ▶ a chairman who is a member of the main committee
- ▶ a well defined job to do
- ▶ clear limits of its authority

Chairmen of sub-committees need to be added to your list of key people. You will want to keep up to date with their work and they deserve your support and guidance.

Typical sub-committees (if you choose to have them) in a Scout Group might be:

- ▶ Fund raising
- ▶ Headquarters (getting it built if you do not already have one or looking after it if you do)
- ▶ Social

The leaders who work with the young people have enough to do. They should not be part of any Fund raising sub-committee.

#### vi) before going home

Before you go home there are several people to speak to:

- ▶ those who were present for the first time to listen to their feedback and to answer their questions.
- ▶ your host for the meeting, be it the householder if you have been at someones home or the caretaker or keyholder responsible for a meeting room.
- ▶ the Secretary to agree the after and in between meetings' work.

## AFTER AND IN BETWEEN MEETINGS

#### i) evaluation

Taking a short while to ask yourself some questions after a meeting when you have been in the chair is good practice. You should ask yourself:

- ▶ did the meeting go according to plan?
- ▶ did everyone feel that they had been able to contribute and that their contribution was valued?
- ▶ were the outcomes clear and in particular are those who need to take action fully aware?
- ▶ what will you do differently next time?

#### ii) the minutes

Whilst it is the secretary's job to produce the minutes you need to agree them before they are circulated. Agree with the secretary when the minutes will be ready and when you will be available to go through them. Minutes should be no longer than necessary and include:

- ▶ the topic being discussed
- ▶ the key facts or issues
- ▶ the key points from any discussion
- ▶ the decision reached or the matter reported
- ▶ what action is to be taken, by whom and by when.

Minutes should be circulated as soon as is practical following the meeting, normally within TWO weeks. Don't be tempted to save postage and wait until the next agenda is ready before sending out. Many of the actions will not have happened.

#### iii) follow up

In between meetings there is plenty to do. We have already stressed the importance of the relationships with the:

- ▶ Group Scout Leader
- ▶ Group Secretary
- ▶ Group Treasurer

and a regular update is essential. You may find it best to make contact with each of them individually but it can also be useful on occasions to meet as a group.

Those who have taken on action points from the Group Executive Meeting deserve your support as well. A telephone call to ask how they are getting on provides them with the opportunity to raise any problems besides putting your mind at rest that they are making progress.

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGM

A Scout Group is required to hold an Annual General Meeting of the Group Council within six months of the end of the financial year to:

- ▶ approve the Annual Report of the Group Executive Committee, including the annual statement of accounts
- ▶ approve the Group Scout Leader's nomination of Group Chairman and nominated members of the Group Executive Committee
- ▶ elect a Group Secretary and Group Treasurer
- ▶ elect certain members of the Group Executive Committee
- ▶ appoint an auditor or independent examiner or scrutineer as required by the rules.

You should read the relevant section of Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) before you even start to plan the AGM.

The AGM also provides an opportunity to promote what the Group has achieved in the past year and its plans for the future to the parents and the local community. There is a need to work closely with the Group Scout Leader if the event is going to achieve all that it could.

The biggest challenge is often to get people to turn up. They won't if the event has a history of being a long drawn out meeting. There is however a need to conduct the formal part of the meeting in a proper fashion.

The formal part of the meeting should be conducted in an open and efficient manner. Having everything stage managed may look efficient but can cause people who are not 'in the know' to feel excluded. There needs to be a balance.

It is a good idea for the report and accounts to be circulated in writing. This means that you can concentrate on the highlights in your comments. You may choose to send out the report and accounts in advance. In any event a written report is useful to send to those who were not at the AGM to let them know how active the Group has been.

What you arrange besides the formal part of the meeting needs to be enjoyable to everyone who attends and of benefit to the Group.

If it is decided to involve some of the young members you need to remember that formal meetings are not their first choice entertainment. However involving them in other parts of the event can be a way of encouraging their parents to attend.

You may decide to invite a guest speaker. If you do so there are some essential points to remember:

- ▶ who will liaise with them before the event?
- ▶ who will meet them on arrival?
- ▶ who will look after them during the event?

You will also need to ensure that you are well briefed and able to introduce them properly.

## MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THE GROUP AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY

A Scout Group needs to be part of the community which it serves. It needs to understand its community and for the community to understand what it is trying to achieve.

It is only through this understanding that Scouting can play its part in the community and the community will support Scouting.

The Group Chairman has a key role to play in maintaining and developing the Scout Group as part of the community. Much of what the community does, and certainly those who are in positions of influence will be adult. It follows that it needs to be adults who work in this adult world.

The Section Leaders need to concentrate their time in their work with the young people. It falls, therefore, to the Group Executive Committee to ensure that the Group's relationships with the community are positive and well maintained.

## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE SCOUT DISTRICT

An open dialogue with the District Chairman means that the Group is always well informed and situations can be identified early so that they never grow into problems! It also makes it easier to make the call for help if you are in regular contact.

## OTHER TOPICS

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION

#### Members

Young people who join and adults who hold warranted appointments are Members of the Scout Association. They make the Promise and pay Membership subscriptions.

Additionally adults who are 'warranted' make a Membership declaration. Those with unsupervised access to young people are subject to vetting procedures. Other adults may become Members. Members can wear uniform.

#### Associate Members

Other adults involved in Scouting may also become Associate Members. This involves signing a declaration and paying the Membership subscription.

Members of Group Executive Committees are encouraged to become Associate Members.

### TRUSTEESHIP AND THE CHARITIES ACT

Members of the Group Executive Committee are the 'Charity Trustees' of the Scout Group. This places responsibilities on them to comply with the law in this respect.

The Charity Commission ( 01823-345000 ) provides useful supporting information. You might consider obtaining a copy of either :-

*"Responsibilities of Charity Trustees" ( CC 3 )* or,  
*"Responsibilities of Charity Trustees - A Summary" ( CC 3a )*

This "Summary" is on a single sheet of A4 and very easy to read.

Some of the points which they make are :-

*"They ( i.e. trustees ) should exercise the same degree of care in dealing with the administration of their charity as a prudent businessman would exercise in managing his own affairs or those of someone else for whom he was responsible.*

*If trustees act prudently, lawfully and in accordance with their governing document, and do not commit the charity to debts which amount to more than its assets, then any liabilities they incur as trustees can be met out of the charity's resources.*

*Trustees must act jointly in administering a charity."*

The Group Executive Committee is not, for example, in a position to decide to take a chance and save money by not insuring group property. They have an ongoing and personal responsibility.

Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) sets out the details. Up to date information is available from the Scout Information Centre.

### GROUP BANK ACCOUNTS

The Group will have a bank account as it is forbidden for Group money to be held in the private bank accounts of individuals. In practice a Group is likely to have a current account and some form of interest earning or investment account for money not immediately required.

The Group bank account(s) must be operated by the Group Treasurer and other persons authorised by the Group Executive Committee and on TWO signatures.

It is usual for the other people authorised by the Group Executive Committee to operate the bank account(s) to include the Group Chairman and Secretary.

The requirement for two signatures on each cheque exists to safeguard both Scouting and you the individual. This requirement is in your governing document, POR, and in Charity Commission instructions. Members of the Group Executive that fail to operate the system correctly may (in their capacity as Trustees) find themselves personally liable for any losses.

One of the commonest causes of large embezzlements of Scout Group funds is trustees not using the two signatures system sensibly or honestly.

## FUND RAISING

One of the main responsibilities of the Group Executive Committee is the raising of funds.

It must go without saying that fund raising must remain within the law. There are laws which govern:

- ▶ house and street collections
- ▶ lotteries and gaming
- ▶ the use of children and young people
- ▶ the sale of alcohol

Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) provides a good deal of information. Besides the law of the land it is also important to stay within Scouting's rules.

Scouting's rules exist for two reasons. First, to protect the Association and its image. Second, to ensure that fund raising is co-ordinated and that Scouting does not compete with itself for funds.

## HEADQUARTERS AND MEETING PLACES

Many Scout Groups own their own Headquarters and others aspire to do so. Others operate very successfully using facilities hired or provided on some other basis.

The key issue is that the Sections have appropriate facilities to use in order to carry out the training of the young people in membership. The Group Executive is responsible for providing these facilities.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Many Groups find that establishing a Group social life is crucial to ensuring full support for the Group. They can also be used as a source of funds, they certainly can have the effect of involving more people.

The only dangers are that if social events become too important there is a risk that effort is diverted from the real purpose of the Group, supporting the training of the young people.

## OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

### PEOPLE

We have already listed several people who can give you help. These were chiefly those in your own Group and the District Secretary.

Similar structures exist for the County or Area of which your District is part. There is also the Association's Headquarters which is home to a wide range of specialists who are there to help.

You may also find that there are other local organisations, also working with young people, who have particular expertise. It is worth remembering that we can work with and not compete against these other organisations.

### PUBLICATIONS

Scouting has a wide range of books, booklets and information sheets.

Scouting also has a monthly publication 'Scouting Magazine' dedicated to all of those who support Scouting. You can buy it through your newsagent or arrange a subscription.

The Scout Information Centre can supply you with the details of the most up to date information.

Scout Information Centre  
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# Understanding Scouting language

## Abbreviations, terms and jargon

To a newcomer, Scouting can seem to have a language all of its own and far too many people talk in abbreviations, which can be a barrier to newcomers. This 'jargon buster' is designed to give you, the newcomer, a fair chance.

**Group** The local unit of Scouting that will consist of one or more Sections and be led by a **Group Scout Leader GSL**.

**Colony** A Beaver Scout Section that may be divided into small groups called **Lodges**.

**Pack** A Cub Scout Section that will be divided into groups called **Sixes**, each led by a **Sixer**.

**Troop** A Scout Section which will be made up of a number of **Patrols**, each led by a **Patrol Leader**.

**Unit** A Venture Scout Section which will be managed by a **Unit Executive Committee**.

Each Section will have its own Leaders, usually a Section Leader supported by Assistant Section Leaders together with Appointed Helpers and Instructors.

**BSL** Beaver Scout Leader  
**ABSL** Assistant Beaver Scout leader  
**CSL** Cub Scout Leader  
**ACSL** Assistant Cub Scout Leader

Leaders in the Cub Scout Pack use names drawn from Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book. The CSL is called '**Akela**' and the Assistant Leaders use the names of other characters: **Baloo, Hathi, Kaa, Rikki** and so on.

**SL** Scout Leader  
**ASL** Scout Leader

In many Troops it is traditional that the Scout Leader is called '**Skip**'.

**VSL** Venture Scout Leader  
**AVSL** Assistant Venture Scout Leader

The terms **Leader** and **Scouter** are both used to describe adults who hold a **Warrant**. The Warrant is the appointment card that is given to those who accept the appointment as a uniformed Leader. Such appointments are made by the Scout District.

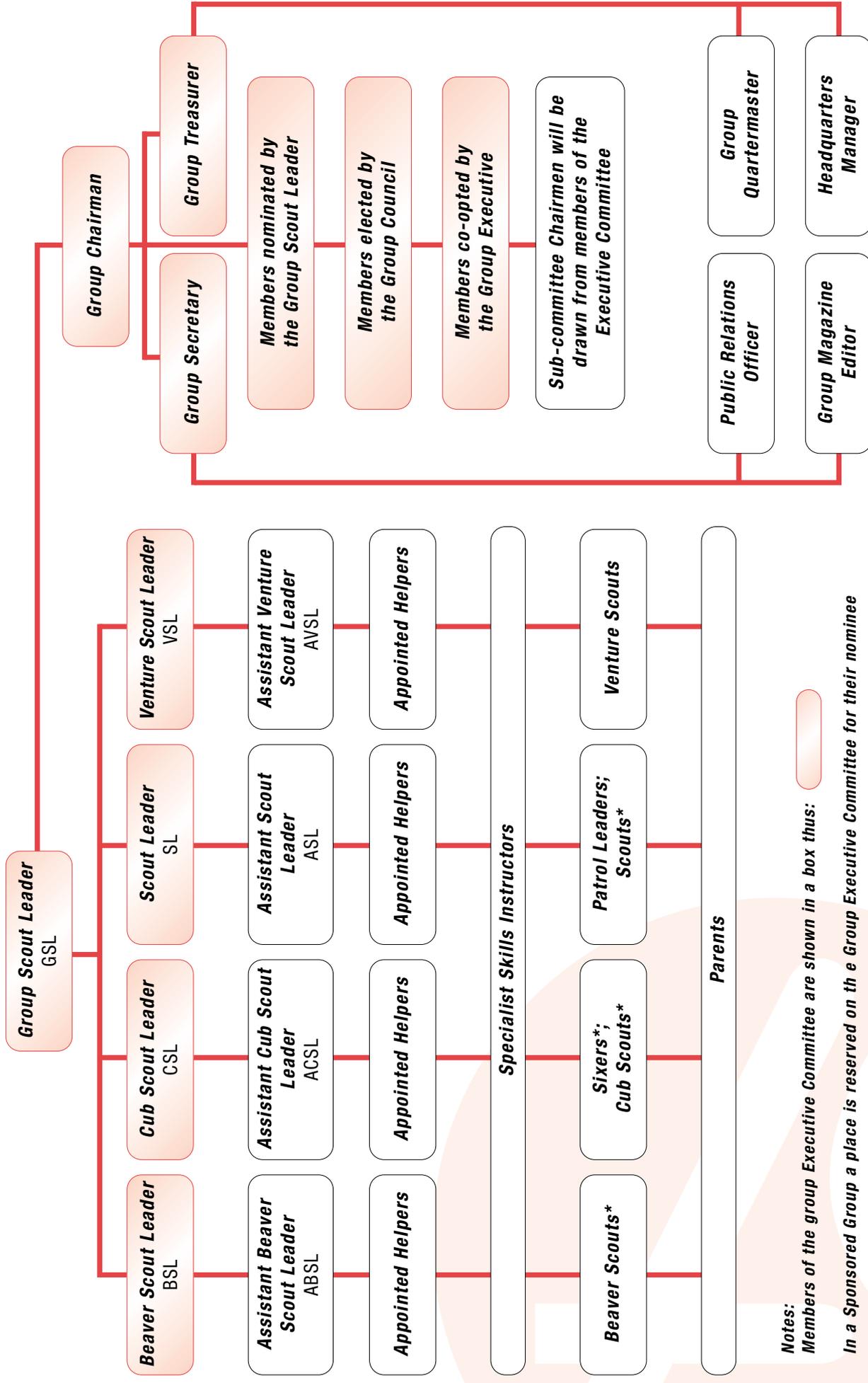
Other adults may be Appointed Helpers or Skills Instructors. Helpers usually provide general help to a Section on a regular basis whilst Skills Instructors provide more specialised support. Both are issued with Certificates of Appointment.

Besides the Leaders, the Group will have a team of other adults who provide support chiefly with administration and fund raising. These will be led by a **Group Chairman**. The Group Chairman is strictly speaking the Chairman of the **Group Scout Council**. This meets annually as the **Group Annual General Meeting (AGM)** and includes all those, especially the parents, who are connected to the Group. The more routine management of the Group's affairs is conducted by the **Group Executive Committee**, often called **The Executive**. Some Groups are 'sponsored' by, for instance, a Church with the Minister acting as **Sponsoring Authority**.

Your Group will be part of a **District** which exists to provide support to and promote co-operation between Groups. The District will be led by a **District Commissioner (DC)**. The District Commissioner is likely to be supported by a team of **Assistant District Commissioners (ADC)**. These will each have specific responsibilities and thus hold appointments such as **Assistant District Commissioner (Cub Scouts) (ADC(CS))**. Districts look for their support to a **County (Area in Scotland and Wales)** which will be led by a **County or Area Commissioner (CC) or (AC)**. Similarly to the District there will be a team of **Assistant County/Area Commissioner (ACC) or (AAC)**.

Both Districts and Counties have Scout Councils and Executive Committees in line with the arrangements within the Scout Groups.

# The Scout Group Structure



**Notes:**  
Members of the group Executive Committee are shown in a box thus:  

In a Sponsored Group a place is reserved on the Group Executive Committee for their nominee

**Everyone apart from the young people marked \* are members of the Group Council.**



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