

a guide for administrators

Supporting
The Group Secretary
– a guide to the role



Adult Support

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Supporting the Group Secretary - a guide to the role

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This booklet is designed to help those who become involved as Secretary 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 Secretary

- a guide to the role

Congratulations on becoming the Group Secretary. 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 SECRETARY'S ROLE

The key aspects of the Group Secretary's role are 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**

How did you become the Group Secretary?

In constitutional terms you were nominated and seconded before being elected 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 Secretary of?

You are Secretary 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.

You, the Group Secretary work closely with the Group Chairman who leads all of those who provide help and support to the Group in other ways. An important job and one which clearly needs sound administrative support.

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
- ▶ The Assistant Group Scout Leader
- ▶ All Section Leaders
- ▶ The Group Secretary ◀◀ **That s YOU** ◀◀
- ▶ 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 committees work.

That sounds like quite a good team to work with. But remember they will be looking to you for administrative support.

WHO CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED?

The Group Chairman

A good place to start. After all one of their key responsibilities is to lead the team who provide the administrative and financial support for the Group.

Your relationship with the **Group Chairman** is going to be crucial to the success of both of your roles, so you need to talk it through.

You both need to understand:

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

You need to understand:

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

The Group Chairman needs to understand:

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

The Group Chairman 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 Secretary.

Your predecessor - the retiring Group Secretary

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. There will be some records that you will need to collect, in particular minute books or folders and records of those people involved in the Group.

Your predecessor 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 fulfil 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 Secretary

One of the main responsibilities of the District Executive Committee is to 'supervise the administration of Groups'. The District specialist in administration is the District Secretary so this is very much someone with an interest in helping you to fulfil your role

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 Secretary will also be in a position to introduce you to other Group Secretaries in the District. Another source of support.

An experienced Group Secretary 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 Secretary 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 Chairman

The Group Chairman is nominated 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

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

The Group Scout Leader

Whilst the Group Secretary will principally work with those who support the Scout Group there will be situations when you will need to work directly with the uniformed Leaders. This will particularly stem from your role in providing and collecting information.

It is important that in doing so you are aware of the Group Scout Leader's priorities and preferred working methods. You should also keep them well informed of your dealings with the Sections.

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 Secretary, 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 other's 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 Chairman, Group Treasurer and yourself would help to put everyone's role into context.

follow the thread of events. The log will also enable you to keep a track of your telephone expenses.

When you receive correspondence you will need to decide what action to take. It is likely that:

- ▶ some you will be able to answer yourself
- ▶ some will require reference to one of your key colleagues
- ▶ some will require a decision by the Group Executive Committee
- ▶ some will contain information for distribution to others.

In any event you should try and take action as soon as is practical. If it will be some time before you can take all the action required you should let the sender know.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ROLE

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

- ▶ 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

It is now time to explore each in more detail.

PROVIDE SOUND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO THE GROUP**CORRESPONDENCE**

Unless you keep your election a secret it will not be long before you start to receive correspondence. There will also be a need for you to send things to other people. In both cases it is essential to be organised.

We would usually date a letter which we send to someone else. It is good practice to record the date when you receive something. Just writing the date on the top corner works.

Increasingly people telephone rather than writing and so a log of telephone calls and the key contents makes sense. If you also include those which you make to others you will be able to

PREPARING FOR MEETINGS

There are three key steps to preparing for a meeting:

i) meet with the Chairman to agree the agenda

The starting point for each meeting must be the outcomes from the previous meeting. In preparation for your discussion with the Group Chairman you should review the progress of issues from the previous meeting.

These ongoing issues together with any new issues will form the key elements of the agenda. There are also likely to be some routine issues due to the time of the year, although it helps to keep these to a minimum.

It is important to encourage all committee members to tell you about any issues that they may wish to raise. This ensures that the meeting can be planned and that issues are included in the agenda. This means that others can think about them and the Chairman can give them the time that they deserve.

At this stage the Chairman 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 the decision is made when in possession of all the facts and **do let everyone know**.

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. It also helps you to see who is speaking.

ii) make the arrangements

Whether the venue is to be the Group Headquarters, someone's home or another venue there are things to do.

- ▶ book the date and time
- ▶ check that the facilities required will be available e.g. kitchen facilities if you plan to provide refreshments
- ▶ check how you gain access e.g. who will let you in or where to collect the key
- ▶ make arrangements with anyone who you need to help you set up the room e.g. arrange the furniture.

Good venues get booked up fast and so you may find it easier to set meeting dates well in advance and to book for a whole year.

iii) send out the papers

Send out the papers in good time. People need time to read them and to think about the issues. About two weeks makes good sense.

Sending out the papers for a meeting much earlier usually means that late items crop up and cannot be included. This means that people are not prepared at the meeting itself. Bear in mind that some people are prone to losing things that come out too early.

Group Executive Committee
Meeting agenda for Thursday 25th February 1999
at 1945 hours in the Village Hall Committee Room

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

Only send the papers to those who are members of the committee. You should agree with the Chairman if others should receive them on a regular basis or if there are special reasons for someone to receive a copy.

AT A MEETING

At a meeting there is a great deal for the Secretary to do and so you need to be well prepared and arrive in good time.

i) on arrival

Check that everything is as you had arranged and set up those aspects that you had agreed to undertake.

Remember to make sure that any newcomers will be able to park their car and find the meeting room.

ii) before the meeting starts

This is a time fraught with dangers for the Secretary. You may wish to speak with some individuals before the meeting gets underway. Some people will wish to use the opportunity of meeting you to deal with issues unconnected with the meeting. You on the other hand will wish to get yourself fully prepared for your role during the meeting itself.

Don't be afraid to make a simple note and agree to contact people on another occasion. It is all too easy to become blown off course, especially when you are new.

iii) during the meeting

Inevitably some people will have forgotten their papers so be prepared and have a few spare sets available. You need your own copy.

You will need a record of who is present and of any apologies received. It helps to have a list of names on which those attending just initial against their name. You can then use the same list to record apologies.

At the start of the meeting when the minutes of previous meetings are agreed remember to have the record copy available for the Chairman to sign and date.

Your role is to record what happens during the meeting. This does not mean everything that is said but the key facts. You should record:

- ▶ the topic being discussed
- ▶ the key facts or issues (you can refer to papers presented without having to record all the detail so long as a copy is kept on file)
- ▶ the key points from any discussion
- ▶ the decision reached or the matter reported

Fund Raising sub-committee

review of the Duck Race 5.12.98

1. Ducks sold to the value £257 which was an increase of £46 over 1996 when we last held the event.
2. Expenses amounted to £89.75. These consisted of:
 - Prizes 1x £25; 1x £20; 1x £15 Total £60
 - Posters £9.75
 - Hire of Ducks £20
3. Due to the time of year we did not attempt to raise money selling refreshments at the race. Despite the time of year and the cold wind a good crowd, 50-55 people turned up. Refreshments raised £35 in 1996 when the event was held in September.
4. There was some difficulty in collecting the money as the Pack was not running to it's usual routine and in two weeks prior to the event met away from the Village hall
5. The amount raised was £167.25

Don Drake
17.12.98

- ▶ what action is to be taken by whom and by when.

If you are not sure what has been agreed at any stage ask the Chairman to restate the position. Similarly they may ask you to remind the committee what has been agreed so far. There are likely to be some items on the agenda on which you will need to report. This will happen when you were responsible for action stemming from the last meeting.

It can be helpful to include with the agenda a simple report or list of actions completed since the last meeting. It often means that there is no need to reopen the discussion.

iv) at the end of the meeting

Make sure that you have a clear understanding of all that has been agreed and that you have copies of any papers which have been brought into the meeting by others.

You will particularly want to know that the arrangements for the next meeting have been agreed. It can be an extremely arduous task to telephone all the committee members to agree a date. Far better to have agreement when they are all together.

v) before going home

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

- ▶ those who helped you set up the meeting.
- ▶ your host for the meeting, be it the householder if you have been at someone's home or the caretaker or keyholder responsible for a meeting room.
- ▶ the Chairman, to agree the after and in between meetings' work, especially when they will be available to discuss the draft minutes.

Group Executive Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25th February 1999
at 1945 hours in the Village Hall Committee Room

Present:

Ian Thompson (in the chair), Nigel Brittain (Secretary), Lisa Smith (Treasurer), Simon Mason (GSL), Katherine Brown (CSL), Tom Green (SL), Jennifer Corner, Paul Cutts, on Drake, Mick Evans, Gordon Fairbrother, Maureen Smith.

1. Welcome and introductions for newcomers
Tom Green, the new Scout Leader was welcomed to the meeting and introduced.
2. Apologies for absence were received from:
Lawrence Birch, David Chestnut
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.
4. Matters arising from the minutes
 - 6b. It was noted that the new patrol tent had been delivered and the GSL reported that it had already been used at the Troop Frostbite weekend.
5. Financial Report
 - a Current balances
Current account: £300
Deposit account: £1545
High interest account: £3577
 - b Review of Group Budget
The Treasurer reported that Group finances were inline with expectations although quotes for the equipment insurance were higher than anticipated the new patrol tent had been purchased at a special discount which saved £27.
 - c Payment of membership subscriptions to the District. The amount payable will be £519.40 after deducting the prompt payment rebate. It was agreed that the Treasurer should transfer the funds from the current account to meet this liability and make payment on 4.4.99 as requested by the District.
 - d Renewal of equipment insurance
The cheapest of the quotes received was from the existing insurer at £149.50, £29 more than last year. The Treasurer was authorised to pay the premium due in mid March.
6. Fund raising sub-Committee Report
 - a Review of the Duck Race 5.12.98
The report was accepted and it was decided to repeat the event in 1999 reverting to September. Refreshments will again be included. It was noted that with the race so soon after the summer break that a new approach to the collection of 'Duck Money' will be needed. Don Drake agreed to discuss this with his team.

AFTER AND IN BETWEEN MEETINGS

i) the minutes

Prepare the draft minutes whilst the meeting is still fresh in your mind. You will have your notes but the support of your recent memory will be invaluable.

It is the Secretary's job to produce the minutes but you need to agree them with the chairman before they are circulated. Agree with the chairman when the minutes will be ready and when they 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 2 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.

ii) taking action

It goes with the role that you will be responsible for a good deal of the action following a meeting. You may need to take some action even before you prepare the minutes. It makes good sense to note these items at the time they are decided.

Preparing the minutes will give you your own action list. Be prepared to place the items in order of priority and then work methodically through the list.

- ▶ some things may need direct action from you which means that you can control the timing.
- ▶ some things need action by others who were not at the meeting and they need to know of the decision.
- ▶ some things require you to involve others and so you may be in their hands when it comes to timing.

iii) follow up

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

- ▶ Group Chairman
- ▶ Group Treasurer
- ▶ Group Scout Leader

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. They may wish to seek clarification about what they agreed to do. You, on the other hand will want to be certain that they understand what they agreed to do and more importantly when it was to be done by.

You will quickly learn how to work with each individual. Some will see a telephone call to check progress as nagging whilst others will welcome the reminder.

You do need to impress upon them all your need to be kept informed so that you are able to track progress, keep things co-ordinated and arrange for help if problems arise.

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 it's plans for the future to the parents and the local community. There is a need for the Group Chairman to work closely with the Group Scout Leader if the event is going to achieve all that it could.

The biggest challenge will be 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 Group Secretary's role is the same as at any other meeting and has the usual three stages:

- ▶ preparing for the meeting
- ▶ at the meeting
- ▶ after the meeting

You are likely to have gained some experience of other meetings before you get to your first AGM and so you will be able to apply some tried and tested routines.

There are some issues which deserve some thought well beforehand:

- ▶ will there be outside guests, or even a guest speaker, and if so who will look after them?
- ▶ who will actually arrange what given that several aspects of the Group may be involved?

- ▶ are there any long held traditions that need to be included?

It is a good idea for the report and accounts to be circulated in writing. This means that The Group Chairman can concentrate on the highlights in their 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.

You should also remember that if you are to continue in the role of Group Secretary the meeting will have to re-elect you.

Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome by the Group Chairman
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Group Council
4. Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts presented by the Group Chairman
Members of the Group Executive Committee will be available to answer questions.
5. Approval of the Group Scout Leader's nomination of Group Chairman
6. Approval of the Group Scout Leader's nomination of members of the Group Executive Committee
7. Election of the Group Secretary
8. Election of the Group Treasurer
9. Election of members of the Group Council to the Group Executive Committee
10. Appointment of independent scrutineer, independent examiner or auditor

Options

- 11a. Guest Speaker: Insp. Tom Smith - Drugs and young people.
Insp. Smith leads the County Police Drugs information team and is currently spearheading a programme designed to raise the awareness of parents and others working with young people.
 - 11b. Presentation: The Patrol Leaders and Sixers - our Scouting Year
 - 11c. Discussion Topic: 'A place of our own'
Should the Group set out to build its own Headquarters? There will be a display of the options put together by the Group Headquarters research group.
12. Close of meeting

The meeting will be followed by refreshments during which Leaders and Members of the Group Executive Committee will be available.

MAKE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE GROUP INFORMATION RECEIVED INTO THE GROUP

DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION

Becoming Group Secretary is likely to mean that you get to know your postman better. You will often be the person who receives information needed by a range of others in the Group.

You need to establish a system for distributing information. The system needs to be reliable and quick. Ideas include:

- ▶ pigeon holes at the Group Headquarters or other point which everyone uses.
- ▶ regular postal or personal delivery
- ▶ delivery to the Section meetings

GROUP DIARY

Many Groups find it useful to publish a Group Diary. This means that everyone involved has a clear idea of what is happening when and can plan their time accordingly.

In a very active Group it also ensures that the Group's facilities are not double booked.

The Group Secretary is well placed to co-ordinate the information that needs to be included in the diary although its production could easily be delegated to another volunteer.

Having dates planned a year ahead is not uncommon in Scouting and therefore a 'rolling diary' published quarterly for the next 12 months will give good advanced warning.

GROUP NEWSLETTER

Keeping people in the Group up to date with what has happened and what is about to happen is essential if everyone is to feel involved. It is a significant task and one that is best not done by the Group Secretary.

The secretary will no doubt be a contributor to the newsletter but this is one workload that needs to be shared. Discuss with the Group Chairman the appointment of a Group Magazine Editor.

Some Groups have found that much of the newsletter can be produced by the young people in the Group. Their involvement can often help readership as their parents look for their child's contribution.

KEEP IN CONTACT WITH THE DISTRICT SECRETARY

An open dialogue with the District Secretary 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.

KEEP SUCH RECORDS AS THE GROUP SCOUT LEADER AND GROUP CHAIRMAN REQUIRE

Group Directory

There is certainly a need to keep a record of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all those who hold an appointment or office in the Group. This includes:

- ▶ the Leaders, Assistant Leaders, Helpers and Instructors
- ▶ the Group officers
- ▶ members of the Group Executive Committee
- ▶ Group Advisors
- ▶ others who fulfil specialist roles for the Group e.g. Quartermaster or Caretaker.

There may indeed be others. It is useful if all of those involved are included in a directory and that everyone has a copy. If they do not it will be the Group Secretary who they will turn to when they need to make contact.

Records and Archives

There will be some records that you will need to keep safe. Already mentioned are minute books or folders and records of those involved in the Group. There may well be others and you need to ask so that you are sure of the Group Scout Leader's and Group Chairman's requirements.

The Group should also have a list of all its youth members. This may be kept by the Section Leaders but many Groups keep it centrally to enable communication direct to parents.

Some of the information may be sensitive or confidential and you need to agree who may have access to what.

Holding information about members requires an outline knowledge of the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Information is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Legal documents

The Group Secretary is responsible for ensuring that documents relating to the ownership of property and equipment and all other legal and official documents, together with any documents of historical importance or interest are kept in a safe place.

Certain documents may be safeguarded by using The Scout Association Trust Corporation. Specified documents that must be safeguarded in this way are listed in Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR).

The Group Secretary must keep a register of such documents with details of their location.

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.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION AND CENSUS

The Scout Association carries out a census each year in January. It does so in order to establish the number of young people and supporting adults in each Section, Group, District and County/Area.

The numbers identified in the census are used as the basis for the renewal of the Group's Registration and payments of the Annual Membership Subscription.

It is important that the census is accurate as it forms the basis for so many decisions and the insurance of the Association's Members.

The co-ordination of the Census for the Scout Group falls to the Group Secretary. You do not have to count all the members yourself and if you are involved for the first time you will need some guidance. You should liaise with the Group Scout Leader and each of the Section Leaders so that they can play their part.

It is very important that your return is made on time if the District and in turn the County/Area are to meet their deadlines.

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 (08703 330123) 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.

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
The Scout Association
Gilwell Park
Bury Road
Chingford
LONDON E4 7QW

Tel: 0845 300 1818
Fax: 0208 498 5407
E mail: info.centre@scout.org.uk

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.

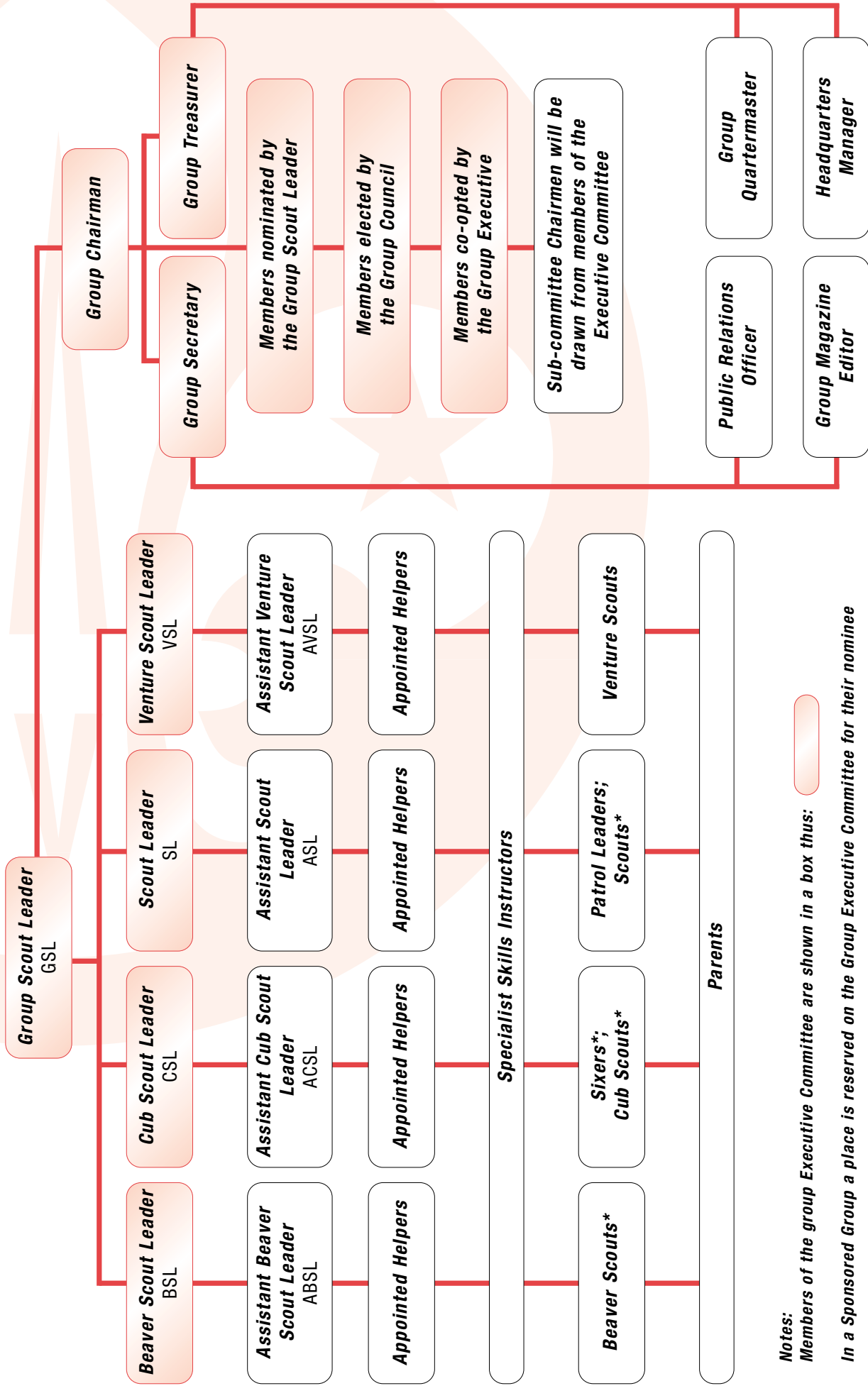
Other adults may be Appointed Helpers or Skills Instructors. Helpers usually provide general help to a Section on a regular basis whilst Skills Instructors provide more specialised support. Both are issued with Certificates of Appointment.

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 lead 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 lead 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.





Scout Information Centre

The Scout Association, Gilwell Park, Bury Road
Chingford, LONDON, E4 7QW

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