

a guide for administrators

Supporting **The Group Supporter** *– a guide to the roles*



Adult Support

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Supporting the Group Supporter ***- a guide to the roles***

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This booklet is designed to help those who become involved in the support 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 Supporter

- a guide to the roles

Congratulations on becoming involved in the Scout Group. All support roles are extremely important to Scouting and I hope that you will enjoy your involvement.

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.

SUPPORTING THE SCOUT GROUP

There are a wide variety of roles which need to be undertaken in any Scout Group. Some are as part of the Group's committee structure and others involve much more practical tasks.

All of these tasks are required to ensure that the Group can provide Scouting for the young people in membership both now and in the future.

How did you become involved in the Scout Group?

You may be in a role because you were invited to volunteer by the Group Scout Leader or the Group Executive Committee.

You may be in a role which required you to be 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 involved in?

You are almost certainly a member of the Group Council.

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.

The Group Chairman works closely with the Group Scout Leader and leads all of those who provide help and support to the Group in other ways. An important job 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
- ▶ 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. **◀◀ Is this you? ▶▶**

Members elected by the Group Council:

Members of the Group Council elected to the Executive Committee **◀◀ Is this you? ▶▶**

Members co-opted by the Executive Committee:

Other people who the Group Executive believe are important to the committee's work. **◀◀ Is this you? ▶▶**

That sounds like quite a good team to work with. But remember everyone has a role to play.

THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE TEAM

Working relationships

It goes without saying that if you are to do your job well you will need to work as a team with those around you. A very good understanding between you all is essential.

Everyone needs to understand:

- ▶ the responsibilities of their own and their colleagues roles
- ▶ who they are responsible to

This may be the Group Scout Leader, the Group Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer (the 'officers'). It is important to be sure who you are responsible to for your role. It works both ways they will be responsible for providing you with support and guidance.

You need to understand:

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

Your supporter needs to understand:

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

Good relationships do not just happen they need to be formed.

A meeting, soon after you become involved with a new team, or whenever there is a change to the team, is a sound start. It will give you all 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.

The Group Scout Leader

The Group Scout Leader 'GSL' is nominated by the District Commissioner 'DC' to lead the Scout Group.

In practice the GSL works through the Section Leaders and closely with the Group's officers and Executive Committee.

The Group is managed by the Group Executive Committee. It is accountable to the Group Council for the running of the Group.

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 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
- ▶ ensure that floats held by others are properly accounted for
- ▶ ensure 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

WHO CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED?

A great deal depends on the role you have agreed to fulfil. Clearly the person who you are responsible to has a major role to play as have your immediate colleagues.

You may wish to think about some other sources of help:

Your predecessor

Hopefully your predecessor, if there was one, is to hand 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 time in the role. 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 may be some things that you will need to collect, in particular any records, equipment or just a list of the key sources of help to them.

Your predecessor may well be the best person to introduce you to your immediate colleagues.

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 Scout District

One of the main responsibilities of the District is to support Groups. If there is someone in the District specialising in your role they are very much someone with an interest in helping you.

What is more important is that once you have established a relationship you will have an ongoing source of help and advice.

The District will also be in a position to introduce you to people in other Groups doing the same job. Another source of support.

An experienced you 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.

Someone doing the same job in another, 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.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ROLE

This will depend very much on 'your role'. The following are a selection of some of the many jobs that need to be carried out in Scout Groups.

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Being a Committee Member involves more than just attending and sitting in a meeting. It involves making a contribution to the work of the committee.

You can do this by being well prepared. There are three key stages:

- ▶ before a meeting
- ▶ during a meeting
- ▶ after and in between meetings.

Things to do before a meeting:

- ▶ keep the date free in your diary
- ▶ look out for the agenda
- ▶ read the agenda and any supporting papers thinking about the issues to be discussed
- ▶ prepare any part which you have agreed to undertake
- ▶ tell the Secretary if you are unable to attend.

Things to do during a meeting:

- ▶ arrive on time
- ▶ listen
- ▶ speak when you have a contribution to make
- ▶ takes notes about anything you agree to do
- ▶ help to keep everyone involved

Things to do after and in between meetings:

- ▶ do what you said you would do
- ▶ read the minutes when they arrive
- ▶ keep the Chairman advised of progress, asking for help if you need it.

Remember that it is not the talk at the committee which achieves things. It is the action between meetings and people working together that makes the progress.

SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The Group Executive Committee may decide to set up one or more sub-Committees or working groups to manage the work. Each of these will require a Chairman.

The Group Scout Leader and Group Chairman are ex-officio members of any sub-Committees set up in this way.

It is normal for the Chairman of a sub-Committee to be drawn from members of the Group Executive Committee. If this was not the case there would be no clear line of report.



Typical sub-Committees might be:

- ▶ Fund raising sub-Committee

A Fund raising sub-Committee must include at least TWO members of the Group Executive but may not include Section or Assistant Section Leaders.

- ▶ Group Headquarters sub-Committee
- ▶ Social sub-Committee
- ▶ Other sub-Committees to do specific short term tasks.

Chairing a sub-Committee is no different to any other meeting. There are three stages:

- ▶ preparing for meetings
- ▶ at a meeting
- ▶ after and in between meetings

The booklet in this series aimed at Group Chairmen has a good many helpful hints. The key messages are that you need to be well prepared, involve those who are part of your team and ensure that the task moves forward.

Remember that people will lose interest if they are not involved or if they don't believe that you are all making progress.

QUARTERMASTER

Scout Groups need equipment to operate an exciting programme of activities for the young people who are Members. Equipment is not cheap and each item will represent a good deal of hard work in fund raising. It follows, therefore that everybody in the Group needs to look after the equipment.

The care and control of the equipment is the responsibility of the Quartermaster who will be responsible to the Group Treasurer. This may seem a little strange but it is the Group Treasurer who is responsible for the inventory and insurance of the equipment. In reality the Quartermaster will need to have a practical working relationship with the Section Leaders who will be the chief users.

The key elements of the role likely to be:

- ▶ operate the booking arrangements for equipment
- ▶ control the issue and return of equipment
- ▶ check the condition of equipment

- ▶ maintain the equipment
- ▶ give advice about the needs for refurbishment or replacement of equipment
- ▶ advise the Group Treasurer of the need to modify the inventory.

It is a role that requires a good deal of patience and flexibility. Remember that the equipment is there to be used even if that does make the store look less tidy from time to time!

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

It is important to keep the community informed about Scouting and the contribution being made by Scouting locally. A Public Relations Officer 'PRO' can maintain contact with local newspapers and other media so that the news about your activities is heard.

This is a role which requires active contact throughout the Group so that the PRO knows what is going on. Too often those who are busy doing do not realise that it is newsworthy. The PRO should ideally be responsible to the Group Scout Leader or Group Chairman.

Local newspapers are always on the look out for well written articles, especially ones with accompanying photographs.

Don't expect the media to come out to you, especially at weekends. They are busy people. Supplying your own article and photographs will frequently ensure that you get into print.

GROUP MAGAZINE EDITOR

No matter how large or small your Group is there will be a need to keep people up to date with events. A regularly produced Group magazine can play a major part.

A Group magazine needs an active Editor who 'chases a story'. It makes sense if the Editor is responsible to the Group Secretary. But they will need to establish working relationships throughout the Group.

The Editor does not need to write the whole newsletter everyone in the Group with something to say will need to do their share. The Editor will need to be able to bring it all together in an interesting way and encourage, or cajole, contributions.

Remember contributions can come from the young people in membership. After all they are taking part in the activities.

HEADQUARTERS MANAGER

If the Group owns its own Headquarters it will be a major asset. Any major asset and facility that is well used will quickly deteriorate if it is not managed well.

The Group may decide to create a Headquarters sub-Committee of the Group Executive Committee. It may then be the sub-Committee Chairman and the sub-Committee who fulfil this role.

The Headquarters Manager should be responsible to the Group Chairman. They will, however, need to form good relationships with all those who use the facility.

The key tasks are likely to be:

- ▶ manage the booking arrangements
- ▶ ensure that the building is kept clean
- ▶ control the arrangements for opening and locking up the premises
- ▶ monitor the use of electricity, gas, water and other consumables
- ▶ inspect the building and identify where repairs are needed
- ▶ make arrangements for repairs to be carried out
- ▶ identify long term needs for the building
- ▶ liaise with the Quartermaster
- ▶ liaise with any outside users (outsider users can be a useful source of income)

Remember that there is an important balance between operating a set of basic 'house rules' which ensure that everyone can use the facility and rules which start to constrain use.

TRANSPORT MANAGER

If the Group has a mini-bus or other vehicle, it is a good idea to appoint a Transport Manager. They should have responsibility for maintenance and arranging usage of the vehicle as agreed by the Group Scout Leader.

The Transport Manager should be responsible to the Group Treasurer who is concerned with insurance, taxation and eventually, running costs.

OTHER TOPICS

POLICY, ORGANISATION AND RULES OF THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION (POR)

This contains the rules of The Scout Association. They are designed with the benefit of a great deal of experience to ensure that Scouting remains on a sound footing.

The rules are in places complex and you should not be afraid to ask for interpretation. Do not however think that you know better and 'do your own thing'.

'POR' includes details of the requirements placed on Scout Groups to ensure that they stay within the law and specific information about facets of Scouting where there are particular requirements. These include: Activity rules, Accounting and Auditing requirements and the enquiries to be made before adults may become involved with Scouting.

It is essential to ensure that you are referring to an up to date copy. Amendments are published periodically.

The GSL or any of the Group officers will be able to help you obtain a copy.

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.

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.

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 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 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 chief thing that you need to do, as someone very clearly part of the Group, is to turn up. Hopefully you will be able to encourage some others to come as well. It is an opportunity to involve others and to spread the workload wider.

Please remember that if your role is an elected one and if you are to continue in the role the meeting will have to re-elect you.

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.

The Charities Act does not apply to Scotland where there is separate legislation.

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.

Fund raising activities could include:

- Scout Job Week
- Fetes and Bazaars
- Jumble Sales
- Bring and Buy sales
- Sales from fund raising catalogues
- Special sales opportunities offered to Scout Groups
- Auction of pledges
- Sponsored events:
 - walks
 - swims
 - silences
 - slims
- Quiz or games nights
- Social events:
 - Dances
 - Dinners
 - Bar-b-ques
- Grand Draw
- Duck Race
- Mile of coins
- Christmas post scheme
- Waste paper collecting

And many more from your imagination.

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.

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.

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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.

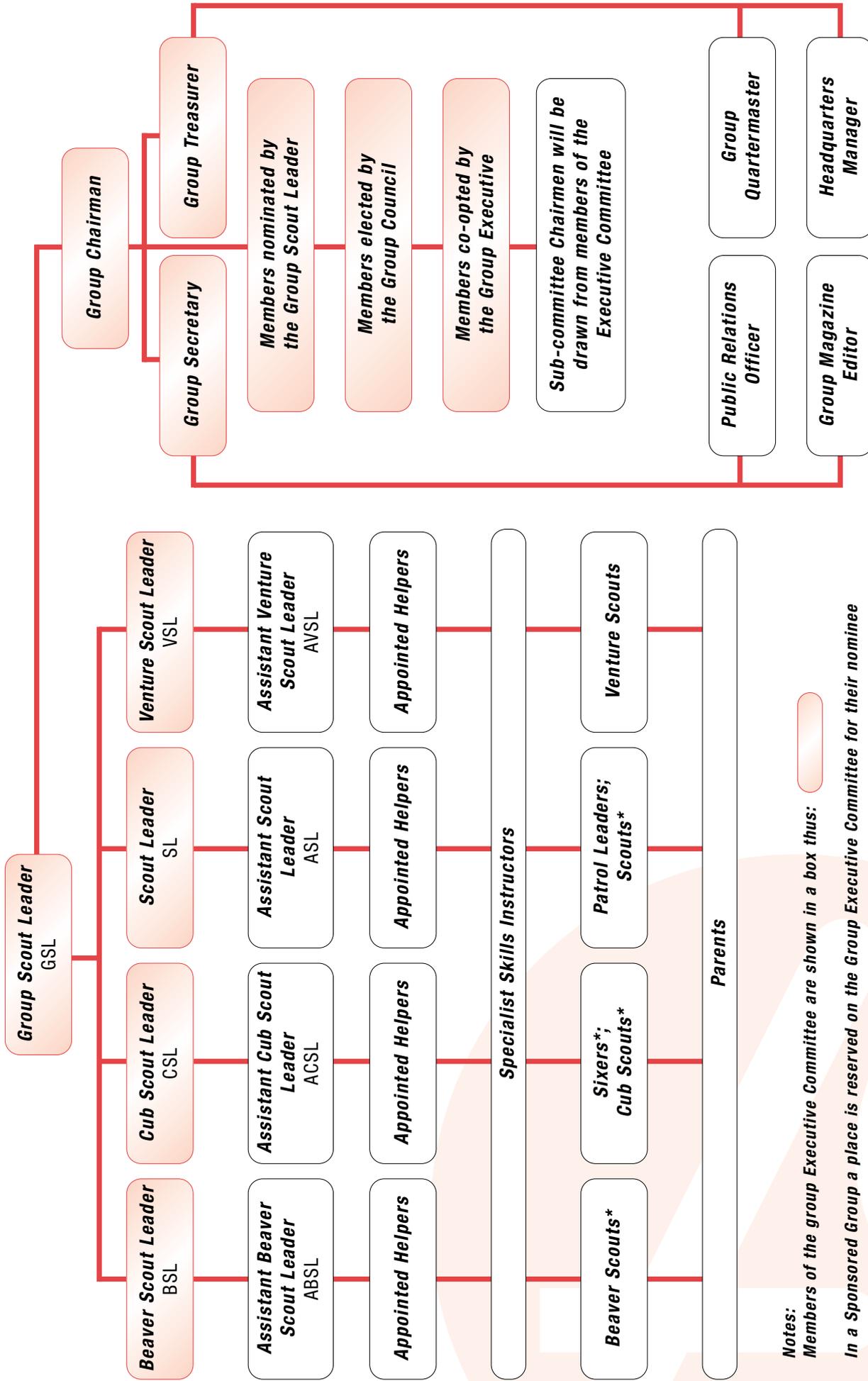
Other adults may be Appointed Helpers or Skills Instructors. Helpers usually provide general help to a Section on a regular basis whilst Skills Instructors provide more specialised support. Both are issued with Certificates of Appointment.

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.

NOTES:







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