



A guide for...

The Group Chair

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Editor's notes

Although in some parts of the British Isles Scout Counties are known as Areas or Islands – or in one case Bailiwick – for ease of reading this publication simply refers to County/Counties. In Scotland there is no direct equivalent for County or Area. In Scotland, Scouting is organised into Districts and Regions, each with distinct responsibilities. Some 'County' functions are the responsibility of Scottish Regions, while others lie with Scottish Districts.

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About the role

Introduction

This resource is designed to help explain the role of the Group Chair. If you are reading this, you have probably taken on (or are considering taking on) this role and are looking for guidance and further information. The resource aims to provide you with advice and support for you in your role. Other members of the Group (such as the Group Scout Leader, or adults who wish to understand the role of the Group Chair) may also find it useful.

This resource should be treated as a guide and read in conjunction with other resources (including The Scout Association's Policy, Organisation and Rules referred to as POR throughout this resource). If you are new to the Scouts or the role you may find it useful to read the 'Understanding Scouting Language' section at the end of this resource.

The Group Chair's Role

The role description will vary but the following are the key duties of the Group Chair:

- Chair the Group Scout Council.
- Chair the Group Executive Committee.
- Work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader, maintaining effective communication.
- Work with the Group Scout Leader to encourage the development of Scouting within the Group and as part of the local community.
- Ensure all members of the Group Executive Committee are fully briefed on the requirements of their roles.
- Ensure that the Group Executive Committee acts within the legislation applicable to charity trustees.
- Ensure an Annual General Meeting takes place within six months of the end of the financial year.
- Maintain effective communication with the District Chair.
- Be a full and active member of the Group Executive Committee.
- Promote Scouting within the local community.

Note: The diagram on page 22 shows the structure of the Scout Group, the Group Scout Council and the Group Executive Committee.

How did you become the Group Chair?

In functional terms:

- You were nominated as Group Chair by the Group Scout Leader.
- The nomination was then approved by the Group Scout Council at its Annual General Meeting.

What are you the Chair of?

You are the Chair of the Group Scout Council and the Group Executive Committee.

The Group Scout Council is the electoral body which supports Scouting in the Scout Group. The Group Executive Committee are accountable to the Group Scout Council.

In reality the Group Scout Council meets just once year. In most Scout Groups this meeting, the Annual General Meeting, is usually held in May or June, but must be held within six months of the Group's financial year end. It receives annual reports and sets up the Group Executive Committee for the following year. More detailed information about the Annual General Meeting is covered later in this resource.

Membership of the Group Scout Council is open to all adults with appointments in the Group, as well as the parents of youth members in the Group and Patrol Leaders. Other supporters, including former Scouts and their parents, may be admitted to the Group Scout Council. It is highly desirable, to include all of those who support the Group.

How does the Scout Group work?

The Group Scout Leader manages the Group and is responsible for its support and development and the programme of activities it offers to young people.

The Group Chair and the Group Executive Committee support the Group Scout Leader and ensure the effective administration of the Scout Group. The Group Scout Leader nominates the Group Chair and the relationship should be one of partnership and mutual support.

The Group Executive Committee aims to make sure that the Scout Group has the facilities and resources needed to deliver good scouting in the Group.

The leaders in the Group work with their team of adults (who perform a variety of roles) to deliver an exciting and attractive programme of activities for young people in the Group. Their work is co-ordinated through the Group Scouters' meeting (chaired by the Group Scout Leader), which includes the Section Leaders and Assistants.

The Group Chair works closely with the Group Scout Leader and together they ensure the successful running of the Scout Group.

Who are members of the Group Executive Committee?

Ex-officio members

These sit on the committee because of their appointment. If they resign the role they cease being an Executive Committee Member and a trustee.

- The Group Chair
- The Group Secretary
- The Group Treasurer
- The Group Scout Leader
- The Assistant Group Scout Leader
- All Section Leaders, ie individuals holding a Beaver Scout Leader, Cub Scout Leader or Scout Leader role, subject to that Section Leader expressly indicating to the AGM (in writing or orally at the meeting) that they are willing to perform such a function
- The Explorer Scout Leader, if stated in a partnership agreement and subject to that Explorer Scout Leader expressly indicating to the AGM (in writing or orally at the meeting) that they are willing to perform such a function
- The sponsoring authority (or its nominee).

The District Commissioner and the District Chair have the right of attendance at meetings of the Group Executive Committee.

Elected Members

- Persons elected from the Group Scout Council at the Group's Annual General Meeting (Note: these should normally be four to six in number, however the actual number is subject to resolution by the Group Scout Council).

Nominated Members

- Persons nominated by the Group Scout Leader and approved at the Group's Annual General Meeting (Note: nominated members are not required to be members of the Group Scout Council before nomination, but may well be).
- The number of nominated members must not exceed the number of elected members.

Co-opted Members

- Are chosen annually by the Group Executive Committee for their skills to be on the Committee.
- The number of co-opted members must not exceed the number of elected members
- Other people who the Group Executive Committee believes are suitable for a specific function are 'co-opted' on to the Group Executive Committee. Co-Opted members can be appointed by the Group Executive Committee mid-year if required.

Ideally, between the nominated members, elected members and co-opted members, the Group Executive Committee should include a parent of at least one Member of each of the sections in the Group.

Why do we need a Group Executive Committee?

Members of the Executive Committee must act collectively as charity trustees of the Scout Group, and in the best interests of its members to:

- Comply with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association
- Protect and maintain any property and equipment owned by and/or used by the Group
- Manage the Group finances
- Provide insurance for people, property and equipment
- Provide sufficient resources for scouting to operate. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting recruitment, other adult support, and fundraising activities
- Promote and support the development of the Scouts in the local area
- Manage and implement the Safety Policy locally
- Ensure that a positive image of the Scouts exists in the local community
- Appoint and manage the operation of any sub-committees, including appointing Chairs to lead the sub-committees
- Ensure that young people are meaningfully involved in decision making at all levels within the Group
- The opening, closure and amalgamation of Sections in the Group as necessary.

The Executive Committee must also:

- Appoint Administrators, Advisers, and Co-opted members of the Executive Committee
- Approve the Annual Report and Annual Accounts after their examination by an appropriate auditor, independent examiner or scrutineer
- Present the Annual Report and Annual Accounts to the Scout Council at the Annual General Meeting; file a copy with the District Executive Committee; and if a registered charity, appropriate charity regulator
- Maintain confidentiality with regard to appropriate Executive Committee business
- Where staff are employed, act as a responsible employer in accordance with Scouting's values and relevant legislation
- Ensure line management responsibilities for employed staff are clearly established and communicated.

All members of the Group Executive Committee are charity trustees of the Scout Group. Only persons aged 18 and over may be full voting members of the Group Executive Committee because of their status as charity trustees (however the views of young people in the Group must be taken into consideration). Certain people are disqualified from being charity trustees by virtue of the Charities Acts.

Charity trustees are responsible for ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation including data protection. Some Groups

may also need to register as a charity with the relevant charity regulator:

England & Wales

Scout Groups must register with the Charity Commission for England & Wales if;

- the annual income is over £100,000, and/or
- has a permanent endowment, and/or
- owns land or buildings, or
- has a permanent endowment or owns a building with annual income over £5,000.

Scotland

Scout Groups can choose to register with Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator if they pass the Scottish Charity Test.

More guidance can be found online from the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; <https://scvo.org.uk/setting-up-a-charity/decide-on-charitable-status>

Northern Ireland

All Scout Groups must register as a charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Who can help you get started?

Support and training

When starting out as an Executive Committee Member with the Scouts, you will need to complete some basic Essential Information training for Executive Committee Members and GDPR. This essential training can be done in a variety of ways, ensuring you have a good basic knowledge about volunteering in the Scouts, the role and responsibilities of a charity trustee and some of the key polices you will need to follow while as a member of the Scouts. More information can be found online;

www.scouts.org.uk

The County Training Manager locally to you will also be able to advise who from their team of trainers can support your Executive Committee with some additional in depth support.

The Group Scout Leader (GSL)

The relationship you have with the Group Scout Leader is one of the most important in your role as Group Chair. The responsibility for the Scout Group is one that rests on:

- your working relationship – running the Scout Group is a partnership between you and the Group Scout Leader.
- you both need to understand the responsibilities of your own and each other's role.

You, as Group Chair, need to understand:

- the structure of the Scout Group and how it operates (including the sections and the programme of activities)
- the Group Scout Leader's priorities (including any concerns or issues)
- the Group Scout Leader's preferred methods of working.

The Group Scout Leader needs to understand:

- how they can support you
- your ideas about how you intend to carry out the role
- your need to be communicated with and informed.

Your Group Scout Leader should be a source of support and information, and will be able to provide you with information about the Group and the Scouts in the local area.

The retiring Group Chair

Hopefully your predecessor is available to do a proper handover of the role. Whether their appointment was long or short term, they will have valuable experience about the role and a useful insight into recent issues, challenges and opportunities for further development. Make effective use of this knowledge to give yourself the best possible start.

Arrange to meet with them so that the handover can be smooth for you and all the other people involved. Ask them for any relevant paperwork and information. They might be the best person to introduce you to the key people within the Scout Group and the local community.

The first few months in your new role is a period in which you need to be supported, but remember that others will also need time to get used to a change in the team. Making sure you have a firm understanding of the current situation is essential to work out the best way to move forward. Remember that one day you will handover to someone else, so keeping notes, records and other details of your time in the role will make the transfer to a future successor much easier – they won't need to start from scratch.

The District Chair

Making contact with the District Chair is a good way to learn more about your own role and about the Scouts locally. The District Chair will have useful local information and will be an ongoing source of support and help to you.

It is important to establish a good working relationship, so that you know what is expected of you not just by the Scout Group but also by the District and can work together effectively.

One of the District Chair's responsibilities is to 'maintain contact with Group Chair's and promote the organisation and effective working of their Group Scout Councils and Group Executive Committees. They should be in a position to introduce you to other Group Chairs in the District.

An experienced Group Chair or Executive Committee Member

The experience of a Group Chair (and other members of Group Executive Committees) can make all the difference during good and bad times. It can be invaluable to have someone to talk to who:

- understands your situation
- has experience of similar situations
- is not directly involved in the situation.

Being able to communicate, by email, phone or in person, can be a source of ideas, inspiration and support. While every Scout Group might have a different way of doing things, they are likely to have come across similar situations before.

Other Group Chairs in your District can also provide this support. Try to meet as many as possible and find someone you can relate to.

They will have been new to the role at some point, so draw from their experience and benefit from it. It is likely that you will have something to offer them, too.

Your key colleagues

The Group Secretary

The Group Secretary is elected at the Annual General Meeting by the Group Scout Council. They are appointed to act as the secretary of the Group Scout Council and the Group Executive Committee. The key tasks are to:

- work closely to support the Group Chair
- provide sound administrative support to the Scout Group – including the return of the annual census and working on the Scout Group annual report
- maintain records
- keep in contact with the District Secretary.

The Group Treasurer

The Group Treasurer is elected at the Annual General Meeting by the Group Scout Council. They advise the Group Executive Committee on financial control and expenditure and co-ordinate the Group's budget. The key tasks are to:

- collect and forward the membership subscription to the District Treasurer
- work closely to support the Group Chair
- produce an annual budget following consultation with the Group Scouters' meeting*
- monitor the Group's income and expenditure against the approved budget
- receive and account for all monies in the Group (including from sections), making payment as authorised by the Group Executive Committee
- advise on expenses for adults in the Scout Group
- produce sound administration for the Scout Group – including advising on insurance, fundraising and maintenance of Group property
- ensure that all money held by others is properly accounted for
- ensure that proper inventories and insurance of Group property and equipment are maintained
- comply with the rules of The Scout Association and the laws of the land relating to finance
- keep in contact with the District Treasurer.

* The Group Scouters' meeting is a meeting of all the Section Leaders and Assistants within the Scout Group. It meets to plan and co-ordinate all the Group's activities and the development and delivery of the programme to each member. It is tasked with keeping the Group Executive Committee advised of the financial and other resource requirements of the training and activity programmes.

Other Executive Committee Members

Other members of the Group Executive Committee will have different functions, skills and strengths. Establishing a good method of working is very important, so try to meet them as soon as possible.

Working relationships

The Group Executive Committee will function most effectively when you work as a team, with a good understanding between you all. Arranging an introductory meeting of the Group Scout Leader, the Group Secretary, the Group Treasurer and other members of the Group Executive Committee would help to start to build a good and effective working relationship.

An introductory meeting with each member, soon after you become the Group Chair (or whenever there is a new addition to the team) is also a good idea. It gives you the opportunity to:

- be clear about each other's role
- decide how best you can work together.

Remember that by working together and combining strengths, you are all supported to do a better job.

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 to form a sub-committee, which reports to the Group Executive Committee. The full rules relating to sub-committees and how they are formed can be found in POR.

A sub-committee has the advantage of being:

- small enough to meet more frequently than large groups and to function more quickly
- able to look at some issues in greater 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. They need:

- a Chair who would normally be a member of the main Group Executive Committee
- a clear remit and job to do
- a clear definition of the limits of authority and who they report to.

Chairs of sub-committees are definitely part of your list of key people to work with. You need to keep up to date with their work, review their progress and provide them with support where necessary.

Scout Groups do not always have them, but common examples of sub-committees are:

- Fundraising
- Headquarters (for maintenance or getting it built if you do not already have one)
- Social

Try to include a range of people on any committee and make it specific to their role to serve on it. Leaders in the Scout Group often have more than enough to do, so look elsewhere for people who are not so committed.

Key parts of the role

We've already listed the role description for the Group Chair. The following are some of the key elements that we will explore in more detail.

The Group Chair should:

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

Work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader

Your partnership with the Group Scout Leader is key to the successful running of the Scout Group. You each have a distinct role in the Scout Group but neither of you will be effective if you do not work together.

Your role is to look after the administrative side of the Scout Group, and to support the Group Scout Leader to develop the Scout Programme.

The key to making this relationship a success is regular contact to keep each other informed of activities, issues and challenges.

Scout Groups need a variety of resources to function and it is important you understand what those resources are and why they are needed. Your Scout Group might need:

- adventurous activity equipment (eg canoes, harnesses, abseiling ropes)
- materials for weekly meetings (eg craft equipment, games equipment, paper, pens)
- training equipment (eg maps, compasses, pioneering poles)
- camping equipment (eg survival bags, tents, camping stoves, lanterns).

Lead the administrative and financial support team

We've already considered that key members of the team are the Group Chair, the Group Secretary and the 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. Although this really means the whole of the Group Scout Council, in reality it means the members of the Group Executive Committee. The teams come together at Group Executive Committee meetings, so making sure the meeting is considered important and planned for is necessary to make it effective.

Best practice is to include a wide range of people, with different skills, interests and experiences, to sit on the Group Executive Committee. As the Group Chair, encouraging the participation of those aged 18-25 (with or without an adult appointment) is particularly important.

Encouraging those Section Leaders who come to the Executive Committee to consult with their youth members and bring their views along is very important.

Preparing for meetings

Many Group Chairs will be used to preparing for meetings – through their personal, professional or Scouting experiences. However, the following advice may put a new perspective on the habits you've built up.

There are three key steps a Group Chair should follow when preparing for a meeting:

1. Meet with the Group Secretary to agree the agenda

Preparing the agenda should start with a look at the previous meeting's minutes to review the content and to identify any new issues. There may be some routine items (such as preparing for the Annual General Meeting) that are needed, depending on the time of year.

It is important that all committee members know when the meeting is and inform the Group Secretary (by a specified date, normally at least two weeks before the meeting) of any agenda items they wish to raise. You may decide once you are in full possession of the facts that there is no need for a meeting. If this is the case, then alerting people and rearranging the meeting is the best use of everyone's time.

When planning the agenda you need to consider:

- 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 of the meeting. Doing some advance thinking about the meeting venue is worthwhile. Are all members of the Committee able to access the room? Is the venue accessible to those who may need to use public transport? Is the start time suitable for those who may need to travel home from work? The meeting is more likely to be a success if everyone is comfortable, the room is an appropriate temperature and there is sufficient space. Meeting round a table is preferable as it gives everyone somewhere to put their papers and people can gain eye contact with the Chair.

The following is a sample agenda for a Group Executive meeting. Treat this as an example and make copies that are relevant for your Scout Group and situation.

Group Executive Committee

Meeting agenda for Wednesday 4 September 2019

Location: Village hall

Time: 7.30pm, to finish by 9.30pm

1. **Welcome and introductions** (led by Group Chair)
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Declaration of interests – Minutes of the previous meeting**
4. **Review of action points from the previous meeting**
5. **Financial report** (led by the Group Treasurer)
 - a. Current balances
 - b. Review of Group budget (copy enclosed)
 - c. Payment of membership subscriptions to the District
 - d. Renewal of equipment insurance
6. **Safety Updates**
 - a. Review of the fire risk assessment and evacuation plans
 - b. Schedule for portable appliance testing of electrical equipment
 - c. Review of recent accident/near-miss reports
7. **Fundraising sub-committee report** (led by Chair of the Fundraising sub-committee)
8. **Review of the web campaign for funds for Headquarters repairs**
9. **Update on funds for new tents and equipment for the Cub Pack**
10. **Update on future plans**
 - a. District fun day
 - b. Group sports day
 - c. Village fete
11. **Group Scout Leaders' report**
 - a. Including details on:
 - i. Report on sections – activities, aims and achievements.
 - ii. Report on any Group activities and review the Group Development plan.
12. **Recruitment and retention issues** (led by the Scout Troop Leader, GSL and Group Chair)
 - a. Report to be led by the Scout Troop Leader, GSL and Group Chair
 - b. Youth and adult membership
 - c. Joining list figures
 - d. Want to join enquiries – appointment of Membership enquiries role followed by a general discussion
13. **Future meetings**
 - a. Agree meeting dates for the next 12 months – please bring your diaries!
14. **Any other business**
 - a. Please advise the Secretary at least 48 hours before the start of the meeting of any other business, so that appropriate time can be reserved.

2. Receive the papers

The Group Secretary should send the papers to everyone attending (including you) so when you receive them you will know what information has been sent.

3. Decide how you will tackle each item

As Chair, you are a key influence on the direction of the meeting and the items discussed. The effectiveness of the meeting will depend on how people understand the agenda issues, how you introduce each topic and who you choose to lead a discussion.

While you should try not to prejudge the outcome of an issue being discussed, you can have a clear idea of what is needed and steer the conversation. Consider if you are seeking:

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

You also need to ensure the meeting is a good use of the committee members' time, by:

- ensuring that issues discussed are part of the committee's remit
- making sure that all members are in agreement or have been an active part of the discussion
- not returning to issues already dealt with or discussed.

It helps if you time the agenda and allocate a portion of time to each item. This will let you monitor progress and ensure that the matters of real substance are fully covered.

At the meeting

The Chair is normally the centre point of the meeting, so you need to be well prepared and arrive on time.

1. On arrival

Check with the Group Secretary that everything is in order. Arriving in good time allows you to confirm that things have been set up as planned. If you have agreed the arrangement beforehand with the Group Secretary and they have then set the meeting up, please remember that they need and will welcome your support.

Being punctual allows you to compose yourself and be there to welcome people to the meeting, especially those new to the Group Executive Committee.

2. Working through the agenda

It makes sense to 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'. Any previously discussed item that is likely to require further discussion has its own place on the agenda.

Introduce each item clearly, making it plain that the previous item is finished, and ensure that everyone knows:

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

Discourage 'tabled papers' as they cause a lull in the meeting while people read them. People digest information at different speeds, making tabled papers an inefficient use of time. Similarly, people read at different rates so the discussion can easily

start with some 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. Allowing everyone to comment in turn, before allowing people to respond again, is a good rule of thumb, although it can also 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. Make a point of noting when people return to an issue already discussed and move the conversation on.

Part of your job is to summarise the discussion. This is necessary in order to bring a phase of a discussion to an end.

Summarising is a way of drawing a line under the issue and ensuring that the topic moves forward before a decision is made.

Most decisions can be achieved by consensus but occasionally a formal vote may need to be taken. Please ensure that you are familiar with the rules about the conduct of meetings, as defined in POR. There are specific rules about what happens, for example, in the event of a tied vote.

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

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

Try, where possible, to avoid any un-planned 'Any Other Business' in the meeting. Any other topics for discussion should be sent to the Secretary in advance of the meeting so that you can plan a suitable length of time to discuss the matters raised.

3. Closing the meeting

You 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.

Having committee meeting dates for the year ahead allows people to plan their time, know their commitments and gets the meetings booked. Having meeting dates planned also benefits the Group, as it helps avoid activities and events clashing.

Making changes to a planned programme (if a meeting needs to be rescheduled or cancelled) is much easier than trying to find a date that a group of busy people can make at relatively short notice.

4. Before going home

Before leaving there are several people to speak to:

- newcomers to the meeting – to listen to their feedback and answer their questions
- your host of the meeting (the caretaker responsible for a meeting room) – to thank them for their help
- the Group Secretary – to agree the work to be done.

After and in between meetings

1. Evaluation

Taking the time to review the meetings you chair is good practice. You should consider:

- did the meeting go according to plan?
- did everyone feel that they were able to contribute and that their contribution was valued?
- were the outcomes clear and achieved?
- are those with actions fully aware they have them?

- what will you do differently next time?

2. The minutes

While it is the Group Secretary's job to produce the minutes, you need to agree them before they are circulated. Arrange a date with the Secretary when the minutes will be ready for you to check and when you will be ready 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 when.

Minutes should be circulated as soon as practical following the meeting and certainly within two weeks. The Group Secretary should check if people prefer receiving them by email. The closer to the meeting the minutes are received, the more likely it is that people will complete their actions.

3. Follow up

The work between meetings is vital to making sure the meetings produce effective outcomes. We have already stressed the importance of the relationships with the:

- Group Scout Leader
- Group Secretary
- Group Treasurer.

Regular contact to keep them updated is essential. You may find it best to make contact with them individually but it can also be useful on occasions to meet as a group.

Those who have actions from the Group Executive Committee meeting need your support as well. Regular informal contact (by phone, email or in person) to ask how they are getting on provides them with the opportunity to raise any problems, issues or concerns – and for you to receive positive feedback.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

You should read the relevant sections of POR before you even start to plan the meeting.

A Scout Group is required to hold an Annual General Meeting within six months of the end of the financial year. The invitation should be to all members of the Group Scout Council (see Scout Group structure diagram at end) with a recommended 21 clear days before the meeting.

The meeting is to:

- receive and consider the annual report of the Group Executive Committee, including the annual statement of accounts, that have previously been externally checked and then approved by the Executive Committee
- approve the Group Scout Leader's nomination of Group Chair 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 POR
- set a quorum for Executive Committee meetings (the number of members required for decisions made in the meeting to be binding).

Although the AGM has a formal function, it is an ideal opportunity to:

- promote the Group – to current members and the wider community
- highlight the successes of the past year
- plan for the future activities of the Scout Group
- meet and communicate with other members of the Group Scout Council
- have an exciting, inclusive meeting that may lead to the recruitment of adults to the Scout Group.

The Group Chair should work closely with the Group Scout Leader and other members of the Group Executive Committee to ensure the event achieves its aims.

The biggest challenge is often getting people to turn up. The formal part of the meeting needs to be conducted properly and achieve the aims above. However, it does not need to put people off attending.

The formal parts should be conducted openly and efficiently. Making sure the meeting is prepared for properly is essential to making people feel interested and included in the items. Items for discussion should be talked through properly and with no pre-planned conclusions.

It is a good idea to circulate paper copies of the report and accounts to the meeting. You can then concentrate on the highlights in your comments. You may even choose to send out the report and accounts in advance, so that people can formulate questions beforehand. Either way, a written report is useful to send to those who have not been at the AGM, to let them know how active the Scout Group has been.

Besides the formal part of the meeting, the rest of the event needs to be enjoyable (and planned) for everyone who attends, and of benefit to the Group.

Make the event as exciting as you can. You could:

- combine it with a barbecue, outdoor activity or other social occasion
- invite members of the local community
- include parents and other members of the Group Scout Council in the planning of the event
- encourage parents in the Group to attend by making the event one that appeals to young people.

You may also decide to invite a guest speaker to the AGM. If you do, remember to consider:

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

Make sure that you meet them beforehand, so you can introduce them properly to the meeting.

Maintain and develop the Scout Group as part of the community

A Scout Group needs to be a part of the community around it. The Scout Group must understand the community and aim to work together with it.

By working together, the Scouts can play a positive part in the community, whose members will appreciate and support what you are trying to achieve.

As mentioned before, the Group Chair and Group Executive Committee must work with the Group Scout Leader to ensure that the Scout Group is well received within the community. The Group Chair in particular has a key role in maintaining and developing relations within the local area. This might be through making links with schools, by arranging open evenings or by publicising the work that the Scout Group does.

Section Leaders (and other adults working with young people in the Group) need to concentrate on the Programme and the work they do with the youth members. It is, therefore, the Group Chair and Group Executive Committee who should ensure that the Group's relationships with the community are positive and well maintained.

Keep in touch with the Scout District

Your Scout Group will be part of a Scout District and the Group Executive Committee should play an active role in making sure that it is seen and felt to be an active part of it.

As Group Chair, maintaining contact with the District Chair (and other members of the District Executive Committee) is one way to ensure that situations are identified and problems resolved in good time.

Other Group Chairs and Group Executive Committee members are very useful sources of support and information.

There are a number of other people in the District who you might come to know – including members of Scout Network and Active Support Units. Make sure you develop contacts as you go.

Other topics

There are a number of other things you should be aware of as Group Chair. We explain some key information and direct you to other sources of support.

Membership of The Scout Association

There are two types of membership of The Scout Association – Member or Associate Member.

Members

Young people who join a section make the Scout Promise and become Members of The Scout Association.

Adults who, by choice or because of the requirements of their appointment, become Members of The Scout Association, make the Scout Promise.

Associate Members

Some adults may choose to become Associate Members. This involves agreeing to the same declaration as Members, but not having to make the Scout Promise.

Please note: Group Chairs, Group Secretaries, Group Treasurers and other members of the Group Executive Committee can choose either to be Members or Associate Members.

Group bank accounts

A Group bank account is the most practical way to ensure that the activities of the Scout Group can be paid for and expenses reimbursed. All bank accounts for the Scout Group must be held in the same name of the Scout Group. It is forbidden for money to be held in the private bank accounts of individuals.

The Group account(s) must be operated by the Group Treasurer and other persons authorised by the Group Executive Committee and a minimum of two signatories (or dual authorisation for online transactions) must be required for any withdrawals.

It is normally the case that the other people authorised by the Group Executive Committee to operate the bank account(s) will include the Group Chair and Group Secretary.

The requirement for two signatures for any withdrawals exists to safeguard you the individual, the Scout Group and the Scouts in general. This requirement is defined in POR, and in charity regulation. Members of the Group Executive Committee are charity trustees and failing to operate the system correctly may mean they are personally liable for any losses.

A common cause of large embezzlements of Scout Group funds is Trustees not using the two signature system sensibly or honestly.

Liaise with your Group Treasurer to ensure that the Group account is managed properly at all times.

Fundraising

One of the main responsibilities of the Group Executive Committee is the raising of funds. This is an important task and must be done in accordance with the guidance outlined in POR.

Fundraising must be carried out legally, especially on the issues of:

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

Scouting's rules exist for two reasons. First, to protect the Scouts brand, reputation and its image. Second, to ensure that fundraising is co-ordinated and that Scout Groups and Districts do not compete with itself for funds.

Headquarters and meeting places

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

The key issue is that sections have the appropriate facilities to carry out scouting in their area.

The Group Executive Committee may well be asked, through you, to work towards providing these facilities. Make use of local experience and advice, as well as from the resources described later in this resource.

Social events

Social activities are an important part of the life of the Scout Group. They are good ways to:

- keep people interested
- allow everyone to unwind
- involve more people
- raise funds or awareness.

When planning, it is important to remember that social events should not distract from the real purpose of the Scout Group, which is to deliver the Scout programme to young people.

Other sources of help

People

As Group Chair you should work in partnership with the Group Scout Leader. You also have the support of the rest of the Group Executive Committee and the Group Scout Council.

Being in contact with the District Chair can be useful and provide insight into the workings of the Committee at a District level.

Resources for a Group Chair

For further information, contact the Scout Information Centre by:
0345 300 1818 or info.centre@scouts.org.uk

For help with the development of the Scouts locally (in England), the Regional Services Team can be contacted via your District Commissioner or the Scout Information Centre. In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, contact the appropriate Country Headquarters.

Resources to support the role of the Group Chair are available at www.scouts.org.uk

The main resources to support your role are:

- Role Description for a Group Chair (FS330037)
- The Group Executive Committee (FS330007)
- Role Description for a Group Scout Leader (FS330063)
- Guidelines for the Appointment of Group/District/County/Area Honorary Presidents (FS330080)
- The Appointment Process: Guide to Appointing Adults
- Keys to Success for Group Scout Leaders.

You may also find these resources helpful:

- Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR)
- Guidance for the Storing and Destroying of Adult Appointment Forms (FS310610)
- A Guide for the Group Treasurer
- A Guide for the Group Secretary
- A Guide for the Group Executive Committee member
- A Guide for Supporting Young People on Executive Committees
- A Guide to Executive Committees for Young People

Online

Sign up to Compass on www.scouts.org.uk to access your personal and scouting record, including training and awards. You can use your details to receive the Scouting magazine and tailored email communications. The website is a starting point for resources, information and advice. Use the online tools at www.scouts.org.uk to assist you with your role.

External resources

The Charity regulators have a number of resources, guidance and policies.

- The Charity Commission for England & Wales - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>
- The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator - <https://www.oscr.org.uk/>
- The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland - <http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/>
- The Charity Governance Code - <https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en>
- NCVO - <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations - <https://scvo.org.uk/>
- Small Charities Coalition - <http://www.smallcharities.org.uk/>

Understanding scouting language

Language used in the Scouts can be confusing and off-putting for newcomers, with a range of terms, abbreviations and jargon to contend with. This basic guide is intended to explain some common terms for the newcomer.

Group

The local unit of the Scouts that is managed by a Group Scout Leader (GSL).

Section

Each Group will include one or more Scout sections, eg the Beaver Scout section, for a specific age range of young people.

Beaver Scout section

The Beaver Scout section is for young people aged 6 – 8. Each Beaver Scout section is known as a Colony. The Colony may be divided into small groups of young people called Lodges.

Cub Scout section

The Cub Scout section is for young people aged 8 – 10½. Each Cub Scout section is known as a Pack. The Pack may be divided into small groups of young people called Sixes, each led by a Sixer.

Scout section

The Scout section is for young people aged 10½ – 14. Each Scout section is known as a Troop. The Troop may be divided into small groups of young people called Patrols, each led by a Patrol Leader.

Explorer Scout section

The Explorer Scout section is for young people aged 14 – 18. Each Explorer Scout section is known as a Unit. Most Explorer Scout Units will be based within the Scout District (with a few attached to Scout Groups through a partnership agreement).

Scout Network section

The Scout Network is for people aged 18 – 25. Each Scout Network section is known as a Unit. Almost all Scout Network Units are based within the Scout District. There is also the UK Scout Network that members between the ages of 18 and 25 will automatically be part of enabling them to gain the Scouts Top Awards while volunteering locally.

Active Support

For adults, Active Support Units are based in Scout Groups, Districts, Counties and nationally and provide direct support to the Scouts locally.

Leaders

Each section will have a group of adults who run it, usually led by a Section Leader, who will be supported by other adults in the Scouts, including Assistant Section Leaders, Section Assistants, Instructors and Occasional Helpers. Some of these

voluntary roles may be described in a couple of different ways, for example:

DC: District Commissioner

GSL: Group Scout Leader

ABSL: Assistant Beaver Scout Leader

SL: Scout Leader

Adults in the Scouts

Most adults in the Scouts will hold an appointment, which means they have a defined role that they have been appointed to. Group appointments are approved by the Scout District.

Scout Group

The Group Scout Leader is the manager of the Scout Group and leads a team of adult volunteers. Scout Groups are made up of Beaver Scout Colonies, Cub Scout Packs and Scout Troops (some also include Explorer Scout Units using a partnership agreement).

- The Group Executive Committee exists to support the Group Scout Leader with the role and to ensure the effective administration and running of the Scout Group.
- The Group Chair, chairs the Committee and works in partnership with the Group Scout Leader.
- The Group Scout Council comprises a variety of adults and young people in the Group and is the body to which the Group Executive Committee is accountable.

District

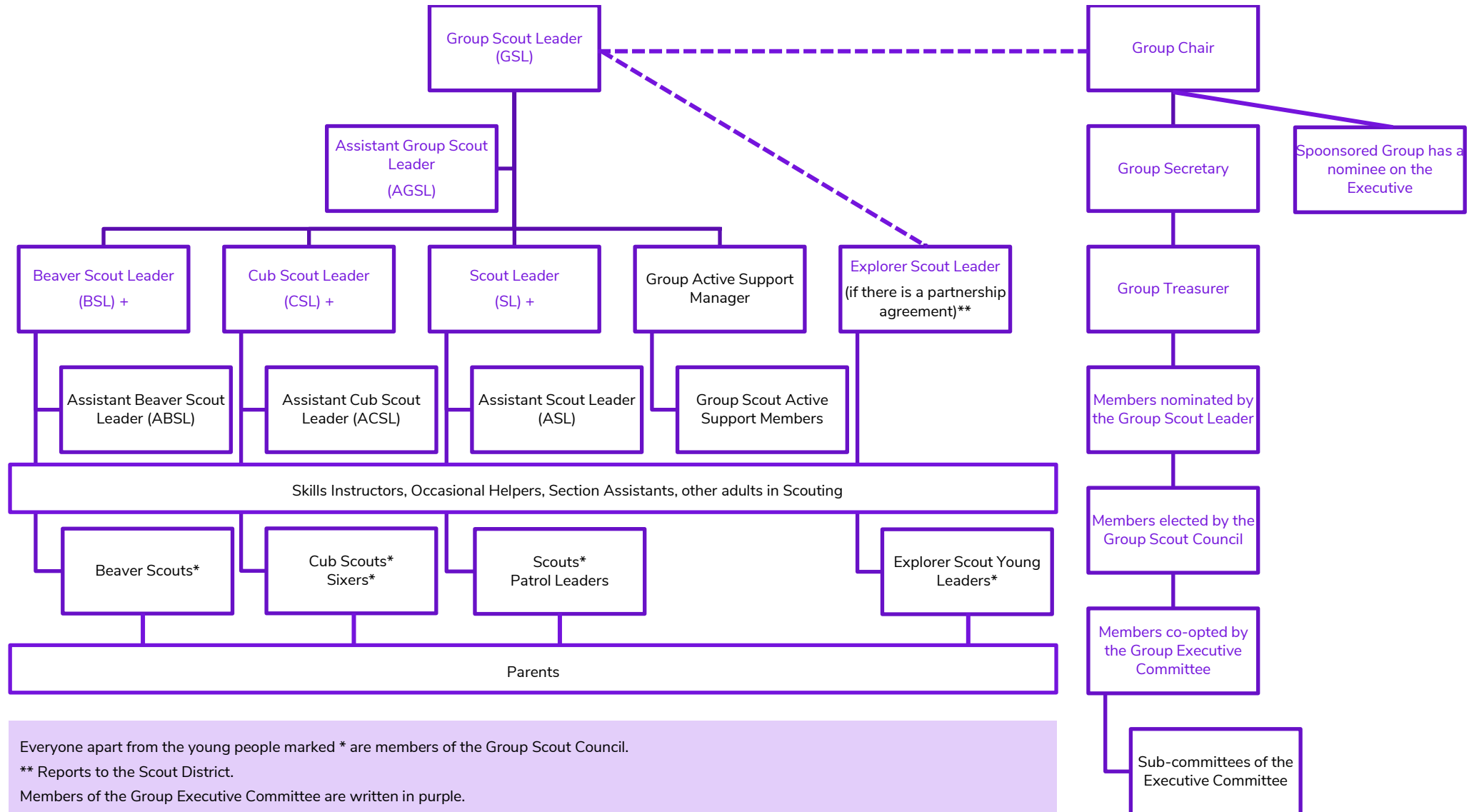
Your Scout Group will be part of a Scout District, which provides support to Scout Groups and encourages them to work together.

- The District will be managed by a District Commissioner (DC).
- They are likely to be supported by a team of Assistant District Commissioners (ADC). They will often hold a specific appointment such as ADC (Cub Scouts), with responsibility to develop this particular area of Scouting.

County

Your Scout District and Group will also be part of a Scout County, which is managed by a County Commissioner (CC). Among other things, the Scout County are responsible for ensuring there is the provision of training locally for all adult volunteers.

The Scout Group Structure



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

** Reports to the Scout District.

Members of the Group Executive Committee are written in purple.

+ Section Leaders must state at the Annual General Meeting that they wish to take up the ex-officio role on the Group Executive Committee.

The District Commissioner and District Chair have the right of attendance at Group Executive Committee meetings and are ex-officio members of the Group Scout Council.