

The District Executive Committee



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Help For District Executive Committees.

Executive committees are an important part of Scouting – but are often overlooked. This Factsheet provides an outline description of the responsibilities of an executive committee together with some pointers to other information that may be useful for members of executive committees.

Charity Trustees

All members of executive committees are charity trustees; this is important and all committee members must be aware of their responsibilities.

Charity trustees are responsible for carrying out their role with due regard to the purpose of the charity and acting as a reasonable person.

Trustees can, in some circumstances, be liable for financial loss incurred by the charity and must therefore consider their decisions very carefully. Trustees are unlikely to be liable if they: act reasonably; work within the governing document (in our case *“Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association”*) and take proper and appropriate advice when they don't know enough to make the decision or are required to do so by law.

To help with this big responsibility, the good news is that there are excellent documents available without charge from the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission is the body responsible for regulating the work of charities in England and Wales. It provides advice for charities and will also take legal proceedings against charities and their trustees if they break the law.

The Charity Commission has a useful website from which one can download some useful documents. Visit:

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>

The documents of particular interest are:

- CC3 - Responsibilities of Charity Trustees
- CC3a - Responsibilities of Charity Trustees: A Summary

The documents are also available in printed form from the Charity Commission on 0870 333 0123.

It is important to ensure that all members of the executive committee are aware of their responsibilities as charity trustees. One way of achieving this is to ensure that everyone who expresses an interest in joining the executive receives the outline booklet (CC3a) in time to read it before standing for election at the Annual General Meeting. The full document (CC3) could be given to each committee member at or before the first meeting of the District Executive after the Annual General Meeting.

The District Executive Committee

Full details of the responsibilities of the District Executive Committee can be found in chapter four of *“Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association”* (POR). It is important to remember that the Scout District is led by the District Commissioner and managed by the District Executive Committee (and both are responsible to the District Scout Council for the satisfactory running of the District) [POR rule 4.19b].

The Scout Information Centre

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Rule 4.21f(i) defines the responsibilities of the District Executive Committee as follows:

“The District Executive Committee exists to support the District Commissioner in meeting the responsibilities of the appointment and to provide support for Scout Groups and Explorer Scout Units in the District.”

These responsibilities are amplified through a number of rules in chapter four that detail the responsibilities and rights of the District Executive Committee. In particular, rule 4.21f(xi) states that the District Executive Committee is responsible for:

- *“promoting the development of Scouting in the District and arranging for harmonious co-operation with other organisations;*
- *the raising of funds and the administration of the District’s finance and property, including Explorer Scout Units;*
- *appointing a District Appointments sub-Committee and a Chairman of such a sub-Committee;*
- *appointing other sub-Committees and their chairmen as the Committee may require;*
- *supervising the administration of Groups, particularly in relation to finance and the trusteeship of property;*
- *attending to District administration, particularly:*
 - *matters relating to Leader Warrants;*
 - *the appointment of Section Assistants and Skills Instructors, Administrators and Advisers;*
 - *registrations, membership of the Movement, appointing an Assistant Secretary as Badge Secretary for the District;*
 - *the presentation of an Annual Report and annual statement of accounts to the Annual General Meeting of the District Scout Council.”*

It is clear that the District Executive has a large role within the District – and not only that of matters of administration. In particular:

- 1) considering all new appointments, changes in appointment and appointment reviews within the District (carried out by the Appointments sub-Committee);
- 2) approving the registration of new Groups within the District [POR rule 3.17];
- 3) closing a Group or a Section within a Group [POR rule 3.21]; and
- 4) approving the opening of a new Section within a Group [POR rule 3.19(c)];

This list is not exhaustive, but serves to indicate the scope of the responsibilities of the District Executive Committee.

The District Executive Committee is required to set up one mandatory sub-committee: the District Appointments sub-Committee – responsible for considering the appointment of adults within the District.

The District Executive includes some people who are members because of their position (the *ex-officio* members), specifically: the District Commissioner, chairman, treasurer, secretary and District Explorer Scout Commissioner.

In addition to the *ex-officio* members, there are three other groups of people who may be members of the District Executive:

- **elected members** – these are elected by the District Scout Council at the Annual General Meeting and there are normally four to six of them;
- **nominated members** – these are nominated by the District Commissioner in consultation with the District Chairman at the Annual General Meeting and there must be no more than the number of elected members;
- **co-opted members** – these are co-opted by the District Executive Committee and there must be no more than the number that may be elected.

POR rule 4.21f(ii) covers the membership of the District Executive Committee in detail.

The membership is set up this way to ensure that the interests of the District Scout Council and the District Commissioner are represented, and balanced. It also serves to broaden the membership of the Executive – possibly to bring in people from other parts of the local community.

The co-opted members are often used to bring particular skills into the Executive Committee, perhaps because of a particular project that is being undertaken or problem that is being tackled.