

Developing and Revitalising your Scout Fellowship



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Is your Fellowship reaching its full potential? Do you continue to provide Active Support to Scouting year after year? Do you feel recognised and supported locally? Are you continuing to adapt and change?

This factsheet is intended as a starting point to help you think about ways to address these, and other, issues which may affect your Fellowship.

Recruitment

Recruiting new members is essential to the success of the Scout Fellowship, bringing in new skills, ideas and energy. Many Scout Fellowships are started by individuals who are extremely active and at the beginning of their Scouting career. As these members change jobs, have families or move away from the area, their level of contribution has to change, or maybe even stop. In order to replace this resource and continue to support Scouting and the community, it is important that new members are recruited.

It is very easy when you are busy and enjoying yourself, to forget about recruitment, or to push it to one side to think about later. However, if ongoing recruitment is sustained then it is hopeful that a Fellowship will never be in a 'recruit or die' situation.

The best form of recruitment is to be seen taking part in interesting and useful activities. The people who see these activities are most likely to already be connected with Scouting. In an ideal world, all Scout Fellowships would also recruit from outside the Movement and add to the resources that support Scouting, but in practice this is very hard to achieve. The best method of recruitment, therefore, is to sell the Scout Fellowship within Scouting. This means not only existing Leaders, but also the much wider network of Helpers, supporters, parents and the like. The key benefit (and therefore selling point) of Scout Fellowship is **flexibility** – in terms of age, time commitment, ability, interests, membership and service requirements.

Some sources of potential volunteers to consider targeting are:

- The Scout Network
- Leaders who give up because of a lack of time
- Leaders who retire
- Former Members of the Movement
- Wives, husbands and partners
- Leaders and Commissioners
- Group and District Administrators
- The parents of young people in Scouting

The Scout Information Centre

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Once new members have been recruited the key concern is to ensure that they stay – make sure that they feel welcomed, wanted and valued, and keep them busy – more people leave an organisation through lack of activity, than anything else.

Selling your skills

Promoting and offering your services is important in order to keep providing 'active support'. Whilst those who know you may already use and appreciate your services, there may also be groups out there who could really benefit from some support, but do not know that it is available. Changes in the people who you are supporting may mean that your contact with the group has moved on which may result in you no longer being asked to help. As the membership of your Fellowship changes you may be able to help in ways that you were previously unable to do, but you need to let people know that the situation has changed. Keeping the lines of communication open is key to a good working relationship.

Additionally, letting people know what you have been getting up to recently will help to display a positive image and may encourage people to get in touch wanting to make use of your services. Perhaps you could have a space in the County newsletter, or put a copy of your Fellowship mailing in the Group HQ.

Promotion can be targeted at individuals (face-to-face, e-mail, postal, telephone, mail drop), local media (newspapers, radio, television), meetings and display points (web sites, libraries, colleges, schools, companies). Good public relations are invaluable and a Scout Fellowship

should ensure there are links to the young people and adult Leaders in The Scout Association, and through them, parents and other supporters; members of Girlguiding UK and the Trefoil Guild; many individuals and groups with whom Scout Fellowship members are involved in various activities; and the general public.

Developing your skills base/training

Whilst many people join Fellowship with a particular skill that they are willing to pass on, there will also be people who want to develop their skills in an area, or try something new. Although the focus of Scout Fellowships should be on 'active support' for Scouting, it is also important to consider what your own members are getting out of their experiences, and consider offering them opportunities for personal development. This in turn will strengthen the skills base which you are able to offer to others. For example, an existing member could run a session to pass on their skills to others; or an external provider could come to run a first aid course.

If you feel that as a Fellowship you need some additional support in order to help you fulfil your role effectively get in touch with your ADC(SF) or ACC/AAC(SF).

Adapting to a changing need

If your Fellowship was set up to meet a specific need, is that need still there? Perhaps the need has changed and you are finding that you are no longer performing an active function. During the review of your remit you should pick this up and perhaps consider changing directions and focus.

It is probably the case that there is a similar function which will need fulfilling, for example if your Fellowship was formed to support a particular County event which has now passed, perhaps there is a District, or other local event, which would also welcome your support. Just as changes in your membership over the years may result in a change of direction of your support, changes of people at other levels in the organisation may have the same effect. It is important that your Fellowship remains relevant and up-to-date to enable it to provide the best support possible to Scouting.

Programme Ideas

It is important to consider how a Section operates before planning an activity. Not only will the Section you are supporting dictate the type of activity being provided, it will also influence the delivery of the activity. If you are a Fellowship with a particular focus, such as Scuba Diving, then that will form the majority of your programme. If you are a Fellowship without a specific focus, then your programme is likely to be more varied. When you start to collect ideas for activities ask different Groups and Sections what support they need, brainstorm new ideas, consider projects that can benefit the community, decide on some social and fundraising events. Once you have collected some ideas, you need to ensure they fulfil your Fellowship's remit of providing Active Support to Scouting.

More information

The resource *Active Support: A Complete guide to the Scout Fellowship* has more detailed

information, advice and ideas on all of the areas above. It can be downloaded free from the Fellowship webpages at www.scouts.org.uk/fellowship or purchased from the Information Centre on 0845 300 1818