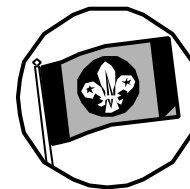


## 2.10 Acting as Liaison for Your Scout Fellowship



In order for a Scout Fellowship to be effective in its role of providing Active Support to Scouting it is essential that good lines of communication be maintained with all sections of local Scouting.

For example, a Group Scout Fellowship should be in direct communication with the Beaver Scout, Cub Scout, Scout and Venture Scout sections as well as the Scout Group Executive Committee. A District based Scout Fellowship should be in direct communication with all of the various District Teams, including any which are organising specific events such as the District Camp, the swimming sports or the gang show.

The advantage of this is that the Scout Fellowship will be kept fully briefed about what is happening and will be in a much better position to offer 'Active Support'. The various Sections in Scouting will also be constantly aware that the Scout Fellowship is there to help them, and is much more likely to involve the Scout Fellowship at an earlier stage.

Having lines of communications that are constantly open means that the needs of local Scouting can be much more easily understood and therefore met, and this is to the benefit of everyone involved in local Scouting.

### Attending meetings in the Scout Group, District or Area/County

The best way to maintain open lines of communication is for a member of the Scout Fellowship to actually attend meetings in the Scout Group, District or Area/County. These meetings may include;

- Sectional programming meetings for the Groups Beaver Scout Colony, Cub Scout Pack, Scout Troop or Venture Scout Unit.
- Group Scout Leaders meetings
- Group Executive meetings
- ADC's meetings for the various training sections
- District GSLs meeting
- District Executive Committee meetings
- AAC/ACCs meetings for the various training sections
- Area/County DC's meetings
- Area/County Executive Committee meetings
- Regional meetings for the various youth Sections
- Various meetings for special events such as camps, outings, gang shows etc

It is unlikely that a member of the Scout Fellowship will attend all of these meetings as of right, but it is beneficial that they do so. The GSL or appropriate Commissioner should ensure that the people organising and running all such meetings invite a member of the Scout Fellowship to attend on a regular basis.

It is important that the GSL or appropriate Commissioner explains the advantages of having the Scout Fellowship in attendance (as above) and that they effectively and proactively 'sponsor' the attendance of the Scout Fellowship at such meetings.

Even better, the GSL or appropriate Commissioner should try and ensure that the constitution of these meetings includes a member of the Scout Fellowship by right. This can be done in one of several ways, including nominating a member of the Scout Fellowship on to various committees, or asking a member of the Scout Fellowship to attend such meetings on their behalf.

### Who represents the Scout Fellowship?

Given the large number of meetings in any Scout Group, District or Area/County, it would be unreasonable to expect the Chairman of the Scout Fellowship to attend every meeting where the Scout Fellowship should be represented.

It is therefore sensible to ask members of the Scout Fellowship to act as 'Liaison Officers' between the Fellowship and the various sections and committees with whom communications need to be maintained. This role can be shared amongst the members of the Executive Committee, or the wider membership.

Generally it is better to appoint someone who has a good working knowledge of the area they will be liaising with, since they are much more likely to be accepted on both sides if they know what they are talking about!

Therefore, it is a good idea to appoint a liaison officer who is already part of the section or committee with whom communications needs to be maintained. For example, ask a Scout Fellowship member who is also a Cub Scout Leader to represent the Scout Fellowship at the District Cub Scout Leaders meetings. Ask a Scout Fellowship member who is already a member of the stage crew to act as liaison with the gang show back stage crew.

This means that they will often already be attending the necessary meetings and will not have to make a special effort to go.

### To be an effective liaison officer

Follow a few simple tips to be an effective liaison officer...

- Ensure that both parties understand that you are acting as liaison officer between the Scout Fellowship on the section/committee concerned. Make sure that this is agreed by the Scout Fellowship Executive Committee and the Leader/Chairman of the section/committee you are liaising with.
- Wherever possible, gain the active support of your GSL or appropriate Commissioner. Make sure that they sell the advantages of your role to the Leader/Chairman of the section/committee you are liaising with.
- Make sure that as far as possible, all communications go through you. This will avoid confusion and gives everyone an easy route to spread information. If direct communications between the Chairman of the Scout Fellowship and the Leader/Chairman of the section/committee is needed, make sure that you're included or fully briefed.
- Make sure that you understand the limits of your authority. Check these with the Chairman of your Scout Fellowship and the Leader/Chairman of the section/committee you are liaising with.
- 'Sell' the Scout Fellowship, and volunteer the potential services of the Fellowship when you feel that it is appropriate.
- However, do not commit the Scout Fellowship to anything or promise that the Scout Fellowship can deliver something without checking first.
- Don't ask the Scout Fellowship to do something unless the request is agreed by the section/body you are liaising with. It can be embarrassing if the Scout Fellowship turns up to help and someone asks "Why are you here?" - or even worse says "We didn't need your help."

- If in doubt, take notes of your own. Although minutes of meetings will be produced for most meetings you attend, these may not always include the full details that your Scout Fellowship needs, or you may not receive a copy in time to brief your Fellowship.
- Don't oversell your role - this can take a lot of time and turn people off. There's no need to report back on everything. Ensure that your reportback to the Scout Fellowship is as concise as possible and only go into detail when it affects the Scout Fellowship (and vice versa).
- If you can't attend a meeting, arrange a replacement to take your place, brief them properly beforehand and ask them to update you after the meeting.
- Be prepared to speak about the broader role of the Scout Fellowship, including the social aspects of membership. There are lots of opportunities to promote the Fellowship and you may recruit some new members by giving a good presentation.

By following these simple guidelines any member of the Scout Fellowship can be an effective liaison officer. You'll be a channel for effective communications between those needing and providing the support and local Scouting will greatly benefit from your efforts.