

## 3.4 Recruiting Scout Fellowship Members



Recruiting - A matter of course

Any Scout Fellowship should have recruitment on their agenda. This means that hopefully a Fellowship will never be in such a bad state that it has to 'recruit or die' as if this happens it may be too late. So long as all Scout Fellowships have on-going recruitment as one of their goals, and so long as they are active and contributing to Scouting, recruiting new members should not be a major problem.

Why recruit?

The answer may be obvious to many of us, but to a Scout Fellowship that is active and enjoying what they are doing as well as enjoying each other's company, the need to recruit is often overlooked.

Many Scout Fellowships are started by individuals who are extremely active at the beginning of their Scouting career. As the 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.

How to recruit

The best form of recruitment is by being seen to take 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 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 Scout Fellowship has many advantages both as an extension of existing Scouting commitments, and as a means of carrying on offering support but in a more flexible way, for example when a Leader is unable to continue running a section due to lack of time.

Recruiting Adults in Scouting is a six-step process:

1. Define the job that needs to be done.
2. Identify the skills and qualities needed.
3. Generate a list of who can do the job.
4. Target the best choice.
5. Ask someone to help you
6. Offer support and welcome them into Scouting.

This process applies when you are recruiting new members to the Scout Fellowship. You need to start by working out exactly what you are looking for, and this will depend on the remit of your Fellowship and what role you would like your new recruit to have. Then, look at what skills and qualities are needed to do the job, breaking these down into those that are essential, those that are important and those that would be useful. From here, you need to identify possible recruits, and approach those that meet the skills and qualities you have listed. This is easier than recruiting for most other jobs in Scouting as almost any skill can be used by the Scout Fellowship, meaning that everyone has something to offer. When you have got a 'yes', welcome them, get them involved and work on their 'Induction' (see factsheet 'Induction and Retention')

Think about the benefits of the Scout Fellowship and remember what we are 'selling'...

There is a key word that makes the Scout Fellowship special - FLEXIBILITY. This is the selling point that leads to a greater understanding of what the Scout Fellowship really is. There is also a danger that this flexibility can be our weakness when talking to others both inside and outside the Movement. It is all too easy to be non-specific when presenting the Scout Fellowship to others, so we need to think carefully about what message we want to get across. Our common factor is that we believe in the Scout Movement and the ideals for which it stands and from there the Scout Fellowship role will differ depending on the remit.

So what makes us flexible...

**Age** - any person over the age of 18 can apply to join the Scout Fellowship and can remain a member for the rest of their lives.

**Time Available** - at different periods in anyone's life the amount of time they can give to Scouting varies. Membership of the Scout Fellowship enables people to be flexible in the amount of time they can offer to Scouting.

**Ability** - one of the key points of the Scout Fellowship is the diversity of the people who join - there is a part for everyone to play.

**Interest Groups** - a Scout Fellowship can have a broad remit or be based around a particular or specialist activity. Ideally, the Scout Fellowships within the District will, between them, be broad enough to make use of all the skills of potential supporters.

**Membership** - making the Promise is a requirement of membership of any uniformed Section of the Scout Association and this is the same in the Scout Fellowship. However, in the Fellowship it is recognised that not everyone is ready or able to make his or her commitment and so the Scout Fellowship also offers Associate Membership. The Scout Association services are available to all members and associate members, provided the Annual membership subscription has been paid.

**Service** - the mix of people in a Scout Fellowship will dictate what can be achieved as service to Scouting or the wider community. The amount of time available and the skills of the members make every individual Scout Fellowship quite unique in the service that it gives.

Identifying sources of potential volunteers and how to target them...

There are various groups of people who may be potential members for the Scout Fellowship. Think about each of the key groups in your area and use the suggestions below to help target them.

## 1. Venture Scouts

Why... They are coming to an end of their time in a 'programme' section of the Association, but may want to continue their involvement in Scouting, without making the commitment to become a Leader or Helper.

The benefits to them... The Scout Fellowship allows them to keep up their Scouting connections and give support and help in the areas that they have become interested in through Venture Scouting. If they have not finished their Duke of Edinburgh's award, this can be completed as a Scout Fellowship member. Also, the set up of the Scout Fellowship is similar to Venture Scouting, being 'self-governing', and organising its own programme.

How to get them involved... To increase the numbers of 'ex Venture Scouts' in the Scout Fellowship we must improve our links between the two sections with communication and representation being all-important. The Scout Fellowship should be represented at District Venture Scout meetings and vice versa, and communication should be open with the individual Units in the District, informing them about activities happening, and offering help to them in running their programmes. Personal contact with the older Venture Scouts informing them about the Fellowship's activities and the opportunities offered is vitally important, followed by a personal invitation to join from the Fellowship's chairman or liaison officer.

## 2. Leaders who retire because of lack of time

Why... Inevitably there are those leaders who find it impossible to continue with their responsibilities within a Section because of increasing commitments at work or home. They may want to stay involved in Scouting but, not knowing about the Scout Fellowship, feel that the only option they have is to be a Leader or leave completely.

The benefits to them... The Scout Fellowship allows them to continue offering support, keeping up contact and being involved, but in a flexible way that fits in around other commitments.

How to get them involved... This is about making sure that existing Section Leaders, Group Scout Leaders and Commissioner's know you are there, know what you do and how you do it. Personal contact at Group or District meetings help promote what the Scout Fellowship has to offer and will help Leaders see another option rather than just leaving completely. Also, ask the GSL or DC to send a letter to any Leader who leaves explaining about the Fellowship and suggesting they get in contact (see factsheet Promotional and Recruitment Examples).

## 3. Leaders who retire

Why... At age 65 members have to retire from holding a warranted position in the Association. When a person has given up so much of their spare time to Scouting it is difficult to suddenly change and do nothing, particularly when for many people, there is then more spare time and many over 65 still want to be involved in offering support to Scouting.

The benefits to them... By joining the Scout Fellowship, members will remain in Scouting to their own and the Movement's advantage. It gives the opportunity to continue giving support in their areas of interest for as long as they want to be involved.

How to get them involved... Again, the key element here to attract people must be an invitation to remain within the family of Scouting giving their invaluable experience to help others in the District. A thank you letter and invitation from the District Commissioner followed up by personal contact by the ADC (Scout Fellowship), Chairman or Liaison Officer would be a good form of approach.

#### 4. Former members of the Movement

Why... In every community there are people who have once been members of the Movement. Many may feel very positive towards Scouting, but either don't want, or are not able, to take on a Leadership role.

The benefits to them... The Scout Fellowship should be able to offer them a chance to come back in to the Movement. They can offer support in a flexible way, giving up as much or as little time as they can afford.

How to get them involved... Again the ideal contact will be made through the network of people we know. Recruitment does not often happen using the 'poster' type approach, but you can still try this through publicity in the media, local community magazines, community notice boards, leaflets at schools etc. Give material to your District Public Relations Officer so they can support and promote the Scout Fellowship and even if it doesn't get you any new members, it will all help to promote Scouting to the wider community.

Note: Remember that if a person joins the Scout Fellowship and is not already a member of the Association, then enquiries need to be made under the terms of POR Rule 15.1 immediately. Contact your DC's and ADCs(SF) for help with this or see factsheet 'Overview - Running a Scout Fellowship'.

#### 5. Wives, Husbands and Partners

Why... Quite a large number of husbands and wives and for that matter, boyfriends and girlfriends too, are members of the Movement or linked with it in some way. However, there are many that have no official link, and they may be quite willing to be involved if they are asked.

The benefits to them... The Scout Fellowship offers these individuals a splendid opportunity to be part of Scouting rather than just on the fringe and they'll finally understand what their other halves have been going on about! Again, it is a way they can be involved in areas that interest them, without taking a Leadership role

How to get them involved... Approach the existing members of the Movement encouraging them to invite their partners to join the Scout Fellowship, explaining the opportunities the Fellowship can offer. This could be done by the ADC(SF), the Chairman, a Liaison Officer, or someone in the Fellowship who knows them personally. Try and be creative in your 'promotion and recruitment' – your Fellowship could organise and host a Barbecue for Leaders, partners and guests in your Group as an 'information and ideas share' along with a social night.

#### 6. Scouters and Commissioners

Why... Leaders and Commissioners may enjoy doing what they are doing, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't like to try some different things! Also, the social network that the Scout Fellowship provides can make it an excellent way of building the 'team' in the Group, or District.

The benefits to them... The Scout Fellowship provides an excellent opportunity to try other things, for example, a Beaver Scout Leader helping on a service team for a Scout event, or a Group Scout Leader organising a District abseil. Also, by having links with the Scout Fellowship there is less possibility of a Scouter being 'pocketed' away in a Church Hall weekly with little or no contact with his or her peers. The Scout Fellowship need not be coy about their social activities: the very presence of these activities may well be a vitally important resource in meeting the needs of a new Scouter. However, they also need to be clear that they are not just joining a social club.

How to get them involved... Approach the existing members of the Movement encouraging them to invite their partners to join the Scout Fellowship, explaining the opportunities the Fellowship can offer. This could be done by the ADC(SF), the Chairman, a Liaison Officer, or someone in the Fellowship who knows them personally. Try and be creative in your 'promotion and recruitment' – your Fellowship could organise and host a Barbecue for Leaders, partners and guests in your Group as an 'information and ideas share' along with a social night.

## 7. Group and District Administrators

Why... Chairmen, Secretaries, Treasurers and other administrators in Groups and Districts play a very important part in Scouting. They may have other skills which they could use to support Scouting, but not be aware that they can do this through any other means than their current role of as a Leader.

The benefits to them... Administrators can feel isolated in their responsibilities and the Scout Fellowship will help involve them in the wider Scouting network. Their membership of the Fellowship should in no way dilute the work they already do for Scouting, but by the nature of its flexibility, the Scout Fellowship can fit in around their existing role.

How to get them involved... A personal invitation by the ADC (Scout Fellowship), Chairman or Liaison Officer with the support of the GSL would be a good route to encourage these individuals to join the Fellowship.

## 8. The parents of Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts and Venture Scouts.

Why... The majority of parents probably prefer to support the Group of which their son or daughter is a member. However, some may be able to be involved in Scouting on a wider base without their support for the Group suffering.

The benefits to them... Scouting is something they believe in as their children are members, so the Scout Fellowship is an opportunity to give something back to Scouting, fitting in around their other commitments, and keeping them involved in what their children do.

How to get them involved... Every Group should make it clear to all connected with Scouting that they are welcome to join the Scout Fellowship in the District. The Group Chairman and the GSL will need to explain this opportunity which will lead to a strengthening of support for Scouting. Displays and talks at Section open evenings and Group Annual General Meetings would be a good approach here. Make sure you have follow up material ready for those who show an interest. They can then be approached personally later, on the full understanding that they will not have made a commitment to join by showing an interest.

## Help with recruiting

Good ideas for recruitment can be found in the Adult Support Book - "Recruiting Adults: a practical guide". Some tips can also be found in the 'Resources' section of the file.