

## 2.4 Overview - Running a Scout Fellowship



### Introduction

The organisation and running of a Scout Fellowship need not be complex. However there are certain rules that must be followed to comply with the *Policy, Organisation and Rules* of The Scout Association. There are also guidelines for 'best practice' that will help ensure that your Scout Fellowship is successful in all that it does.

These rules and guidelines are given below, starting with those rules that apply to all Scout Fellowships and requirements that any Scout Fellowship must meet.

### Working with young people

There is potential within the Scout Fellowship for any member to be responsible for organising the activities of young people or to be left in charge of young people, often at short notice. It is therefore essential that all new members of the Scout Fellowship are subject to the same assessment procedures as any potential Leader or Helper.

In fact, your GSL or appropriate Commissioner has a responsibility to "ensure that all members are 'fit and proper' Members of the Association (as is required for those holding warranted Appointments for such matters as Child Protection)". In practice this means that every Scout Fellowship must have a way of ensuring that these vetting procedures are carried out.

These procedures are conducted by National Headquarters at the request of local Scouters and exist to check that any adult who will be responsible for young people has no personal history that should exclude them from being placed in a position of such responsibility.

All Group Scout Leaders, District and Area/County Secretaries and District and Area/County Commissioners are aware of these procedures and every Scout Fellowship should have an established procedure for making applications for such assessment.

A Group based Fellowship should ask their Group Scout Leader to initiate such an enquiry. A District or Area/County based Fellowship should request their District or Area/County Secretary to make such enquiries (or Appointments Committee charged with this responsibility). A regional or nationally based Scout Fellowship should ask either the Secretary of their sponsoring Area/County or the National Commissioner Scout Fellowship (or his/her nominee) to make such checks. In each case, these people will be able to provide the proper paperwork to start the process.

Each Scout Fellowship will have a Chairman (or equivalent leader) and it is their responsibility (on behalf of their GSL or appropriate Commissioner) to ensure that such checks are carried out. This responsibility may be delegated to the Fellowship Secretary or the Executive Committee collectively, but it is the ultimate responsibility of the GSL or Commissioner and their appointed Chairman (or equivalent) to ensure that these checks are carried out.

It is recommended that any form used as an application to join any Scout Fellowship is based upon the official wording of the Adult Appointment Application (Form AA) produced by The Scout Association and that the form seeks the agreement of the prospective Member for enquiries to take place. All such information should be treated in the strictest confidence.

For convenience, Form AA can be used, although the section on training is not strictly relevant to membership of the Scout Fellowship.

No prospective Member can be allowed to organise any activity on behalf of The Scout Fellowship or The Scout Association. Nor can they be left solely in charge of young people until the enquiry process is complete and satisfactory answers have been received.

Whilst many potential members of the Scout Fellowship may come from within Scouting, and whilst enquiries may already have been made, it is up to the Group Scout Leader, District Secretary etc to decide whether or not a new enquiry is required. This applies even in circumstances where the prospective member is already known to members of the Fellowship. Personal details should always be forwarded for checking.

Every Scout Fellowship member should also be aware of and understand The Scout Association's Child Protection Policy. You may find it useful to arrange a visit from your Area/County's Child Protection Advisor.

## **Adventurous Activities**

Much of The Scout Association's Programme is based around Adventurous Activities. The risks associated with such activities can be managed to ensure that Scout Fellowship members and any young people for whom they are responsible have a safe and enjoyable time.

The Scout Association lays down certain rules associated with such activities and details of these are contained in *Policy Organisation and Rules*.

All too often it is tempting to bend the rules, giving the reason as "it was a Fellowship activity and the rules don't apply" or "it was a non-Scouting activity and we're all over eighteen".

Although some degree of common sense can be used, the rules which govern Adventurous Activities should always be applied to Scout Fellowship activities. There are three main reasons for this:

- Rules are there for a good reason and prevention of any accident is better than a cure. Sensible safety rules should always be followed for the sake of all concerned.
- When activities take place in accordance with The Scout Association's rules, then all members of the Scout Fellowship are covered by the Association's insurance, regardless of age. This applies not only to personal insurance but also for third party liability insurance for the organisers.
- It sets a good example to other Members of the Movement, especially those who also think that the rules may not apply to them.

Following sensible rules and being seen to apply those rules promotes a professional image of Scouting for all to see.

Before undertaking any Adventurous Activity (whether organising such an activity as a social event for the Fellowship or as an activity for members of the youth Sections) it is essential that checks are made as to which rules may apply.

If in doubt, advice can be sought from a number of sources, including the Group Scout Leader, District or Area/County Commissioner or from specialist activities advisors in the Area/County or at National Headquarters.

Remember - lack of knowledge is not an acceptable excuse for breaking these important rules.

## **Activity based Scout Fellowships**

Scout Fellowships who specialise in providing support by way of Adventurous Activities (for example, those specialising in canoeing, hill walking, climbing etc) have a special responsibility to ensure that they actively promote compliance with the Activity Rules of The Scout Association.

It is equally important that these Scout Fellowships comply with the Activity Rules themselves, and lack of familiarity with the rules is again no excuse for not complying with them.

## **Finance**

Like all these in The Scout Association, Scout Fellowships are subject to the same requirements for proper money management. This is an important aspect in the proper running of a Scout Fellowship, and full details of how this can be achieved in various types of Scout Fellowship is given in section 2.9 'Scout Fellowship Finances.'

## **The key to a successful Scout Fellowship**

### **Flexibility**

Once these essential requirements are met, how you run your Scout Fellowship is largely up to you! The success of the Scout Fellowship has always been the flexibility of its organisational structure. Each Scout Fellowship is free to do pretty much whatever it likes in support of Scouting so long as they have the backing of their GSL or appropriate Commissioner and are trying to achieve 'Best Practice.' The following provides an outline structure for the organisation of the Scout Fellowship at every level within Scouting.

The guidelines should not be treated as a set of 'rules', but as a series of recommendations designed to enhance adult support to local Scouting.

If the models and examples given don't fit local circumstances feel free to adapt them. So long as the mandatory rules above are followed, every GSL and appropriate Commissioner is free to organise and develop the Scout Fellowship as they see fit.

### **The Chairman ('Leader') of the Scout Fellowship**

Every Scout Fellowship must have a 'leader' who is usually (but not always) the Chairman of the Scout Fellowship. Traditionally these are elected by the membership, but the Group Scout Leader or appropriate Commissioner must always give their agreement to the election of a Chairman. This role is an extremely important one since the Chairman (or 'leader') is not only responsible to the membership of the Fellowship but is also responsible for the work and conduct of the Scout Fellowship within Scouting.

Full details on the selection, agreement and role of the Chairman (or 'leader') of the Scout Fellowship is given in the factsheet 'The Chairman (or 'Leader') of the Scout Fellowship'.

## **Agreeing a remit/review process**

Every Scout Fellowship should have an agreed 'remit'. This defines what their primary function or role should be with regards to providing Active Support to Scouting. This is agreed between the GSL or appropriate Commissioner and the Scout Fellowship.

A remit should be developed for every existing Scout Fellowship and all new Scout Fellowships (see section 2.3 'How to Start a Scout Fellowship'). This should then be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. For full details of this process see section 2.11 'Agreeing the Remit for a Scout Fellowship'.

## **The Scout Fellowship Constitution, rules or guidelines**

Individual Scout Fellowships should clearly understand their remit and a record of it should be kept, to review success each year.

It is useful to include the remit of the Fellowship within a document of wider scope. This may be the form of a Constitution, or as a set of Rules or Guidelines.

Such a document should be a 'living document', subject to appropriate change and updating with the agreement of the membership. There should be a clearly defined procedure for agreeing changes to the document and the document should not be considered as set in 'tablets of stone'.

Depending upon the formality of the document, it may include issues such as:

- the remit of the Scout Fellowship (as a minimum)
- the procedure for making confidential enquiry's about prospective members
- the need to follow proper accounting practices
- the need to comply with *POR* with regards to Adventurous Activities
- the structure and role of the Committee
- how the Fellowship is managed and administered
- specific membership conditions
- how membership subscriptions are calculated, paid and/or raised.

Many of these issues are discussed below and a sample Constitution is given as appendix A.

## **The nature and frequency of Scout Fellowship Meetings**

Every Scout Fellowship should hold an Annual General Meeting, and details of this are given in section 2.8 'The Scout Fellowship - Annual General Meetings'.

The AGM aside, the frequency and style of Scout Fellowship meetings are completely flexible to meet local needs. Some Scout Fellowships will meet regularly to discuss forthcoming activities and others may only come together to actually provide Active Support and to socialise. Many Scout Fellowships meet monthly, some more often and some less frequently.

It is perfectly feasible that an Executive Committee (see below) can conduct the business of the Scout Fellowship without the majority of the membership attending planning meetings.

On the other hand, some Scout Fellowships like to meet together to plan their programme and organise the detail of individual activities. This involves all the members in the process and helps people to feel a part of decision making process. Although meetings can be conducted in a lively manner it is the role of the Chairman to ensure that business matters are properly addressed (see section 2.7 'Running a Scout Fellowship Business Meeting').

Some Scout Fellowships like to combine business with pleasure, and once any necessary business is out of the way they will move on to a social activity.

The main point to remember is that how, where and when the Scout Fellowship meets is completely subject to local needs and can always be changed to suit the needs of the membership and local Scouting.

## **The role of the Executive Committee**

It is important that the Chairman of the Scout Fellowship is properly supported by the membership and this is done with the support of a Scout Fellowship Executive Committee. As well as the Chairman this will usually consist of a Treasurer and Secretary and possibly other posts, such as a Public Relations/Communications Officer, Programme/Social Secretary and so on.

Each of these posts should be clearly defined and it is recommended that Job Descriptions be produced for each of these positions, along with any others that are created. For more details see section 2.5 'The Scout Fellowship Executive Committee'.

## **Communication with other Sections in Scouting**

Maintaining effective communications with other Sections in Scouting is essential. If the Scout Fellowship is to provide Active Support to all areas of local Scouting, GSLs and appropriate Commissioners should ensure that the Scout Fellowship is represented at all meetings. This is so that the youth Sections and organisers of activities and events actively involve the Scout Fellowship in the planning process.

It is however unlikely that the Chairman of the Scout Fellowship can attend all of the necessary meetings and it is probable that 'liaison officers' will be appointed to ensure that direct lines of communications can be established.

For full details on the purpose and role of liaison officers see the section 2.10 'Acting as Liaison for Your Scout Fellowship'.

## **Minimum/maximum numbers**

There are no absolute rules governing the minimum or maximum numbers in any given Scout Fellowship. Like many things associated with the Fellowship, flexibility is the key and the important thing is to go with whatever works under local circumstances.

There is a sensible minimum number for any branch of the Scout Fellowship below which it will be impossible to organise activities and to provide support. What this minimum number is depends on what the individual Fellowship does and the sort of activities they are trying to organise. It is unlikely that a branch will thrive with less than six members and a minimum realistic number is probably closer to a dozen. Ideally

the Scout Fellowship will have enough members to be called on to support any Scouting or community event.

So long as a Scout Fellowship is properly organised and well run there's really no maximum number. A typical size for a Group based branch of the Fellowship would be 18 to 24 and many District based branches of the Fellowships thrive with between 30 and 40 members. Some activity based Area/County or Regional/National Scout Fellowships may have many more.

As attendance at meetings and activities is arranged on a 'come when you can' basis, there's no reason why the Fellowship shouldn't have 50 to 100+ members on the books. This would especially be the case where the Fellowship is formed around a service activity such as maintaining a campsite.

## **Membership**

The Scout Association is committed to equal opportunities for all, and the Scout Fellowship is open to any person over the age of 18.

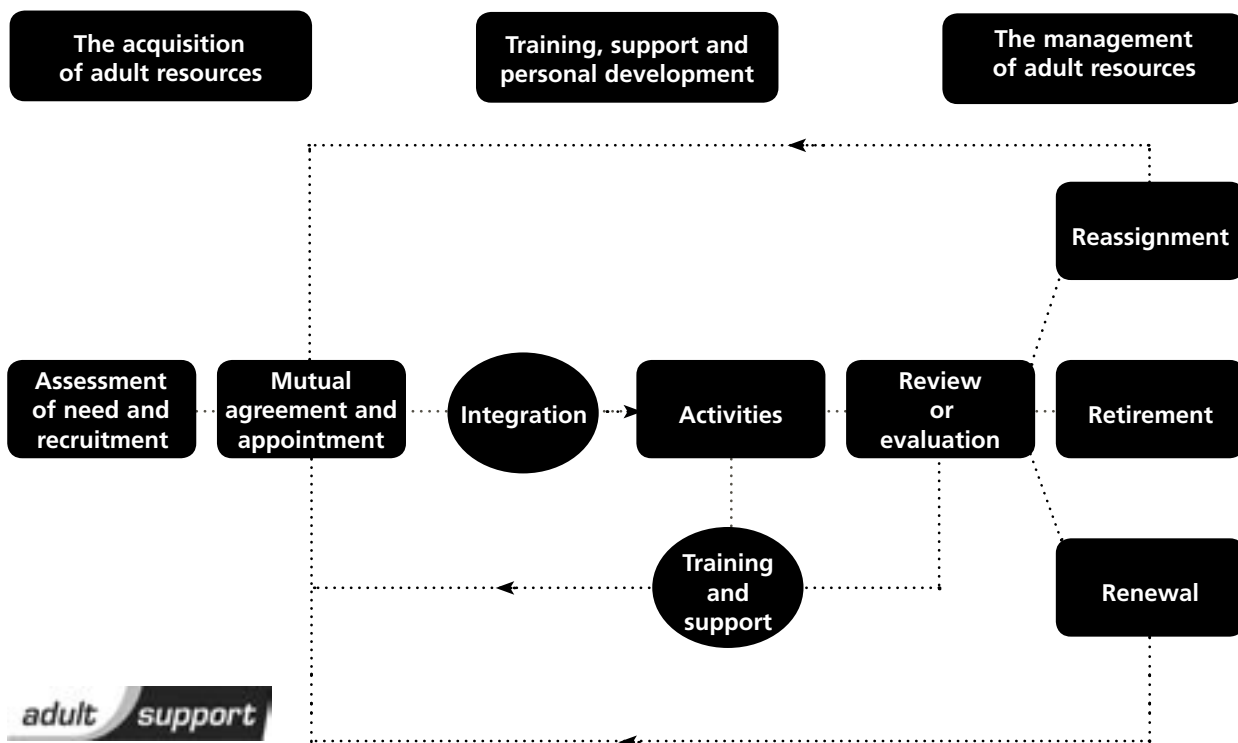
Members may become Full Members of the Scout Association and as such take the Scout Promise and agree to follow the Scout Law.

This Promise is not to be undertaken lightly and any person who wishes to support Scouting but who does not wish to make the Scout Promise may become an Associate Member. Full Members of the Scout Association are entitled to wear uniform (including the World Membership Badge), but this is not compulsory.

Individual Scout Fellowships are not encouraged to restrict membership in any way, except where an agreement to abide by the Rules or Constitution of the Fellowship is sought as a condition of membership. Warranted Leaders, Young Leaders and members of the youth Sections over the age of 18 are also encouraged to join the Scout Fellowship, although this should always be as a secondary role within Scouting. The Scout Fellowship is an ideal organisation for those adults who cannot take a more active role within Scouting, but who never the less wish to help provide Active Support.

The Scout Fellowship are often made up of parents, supporters, spouses, members of the Scout Network, those between warranted Appointments and so on. Indeed, many people may dip-in and drop-out of the Scout Fellowship at times when they are unable to provide more direct support to the youth Sections. Within the 'Adults in Scouting' model this would take place at the 'Review or evaluation' stage of the process, with members choosing 'reassignment' to the Scout Fellowship. Equally, members of the Scout Fellowship may also choose to re-evaluate their own position within Scouting and choose 'reassignment' to a more direct role, such as taking out a Warrant with a training Section.

## The Adults in Scouting model



It is also interesting to note that the Scout Fellowship also has a role to play in 'Training and Support' by providing Active Support to those adults in Scouting who have a more direct role with the youth Sections.

This flexibility of membership means that the Scout Fellowship has a great role to play in retaining adult members and supporters during those periods when they are unable to commit a great deal of time directly to the youth Sections.

Once admitted as a member of the Scout Fellowship, membership can only be suspended or withdrawn under specific conditions and with the agreement of the GSL or appropriate Commissioner.

## Support for the Scout Fellowship

There is a great deal of support available for the Scout Fellowship. Details of this is given in the 'Resources' section.

## Sample Constitution

This constitution is an example only and is not a recommended model or form of words. It is based upon a real District Scout Fellowship Constitution and will require modification for use in other Districts, or at Group or County level Scout Fellowships.

Although changes may be required for use in activity based Scout Fellowships, it does provide an idea of the points that should be included.

It is suggested that the Constitution be agreed by the GSL or appropriate Commissioner as well as by the membership of the Scout Fellowship.

# Sample constitution for the Bob a Job Scout Fellowship

## I. Name

The Name of the Fellowship is to be the “Bob a Job” Scout Fellowship, as approved by the District Commissioner in February 1983 and herein referred to as the “Bob a Jobs”. It is formed as a Scout Fellowship with East Folesworthy Scout District in accordance with the *Policy, Organisation and Rules* of The Scout Association (amendment No. 3, dated August 1998).

## 2. Membership

Membership is open to any person subject to the conditions of *POR* Rule 10 and the following additional conditions;-

2a) Any member of the “Bob a Jobs” may make nominations for membership. Following such a nomination a majority vote of the full membership will be required to either approve or deny the nomination. The nomination and vote will be deemed invalid if the nominee is not invested within four months of the vote. In such cases a new nomination and vote will be required.

2b) Prospective members may not come into direct contact with Beavers Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Explorer Scouts or members of the Scout Network or be responsible for any Scouting activity unless they hold a valid Scouting Warrant or have been cleared by the District Secretary to do so. It is the responsibility of the Fellowship Chairman and the Executive Committee to ensure that a valid Warrant is held or that details of prospective members are passed to the District Secretary for approval.

2c) New members must pay a joining fee.

2d) i) The “Bob a Jobs” may appoint honorary members

ii) Honorary membership is given to people who in the opinion of the “Bob a Jobs” have been of outstanding service or assistance to the “Bob a Jobs” but who are not able to be members

iii) Honorary members are not allowed to vote at meetings

iv) Nominations for honorary membership may be made by any member and agreed by a majority vote at the following meeting of the full membership.

2e) All members must provide some degree of Active Support to Scouting.

## 3. Administration and organisation

3a) Within the “Bob a Jobs” there will exist five Executive posts, these being:

i) Chairman

ii) Vice Chairman

iii) Treasurer

iv) Secretary

v) Lay Member.

3b) In order to comply with the Data Protection Act (1998), a Record Keeper shall be elected by the membership to act as 'Data Controller' and keep membership records and other relevant information.

3c) All Executive Committee posts and the post of Record Keeper should be nominated and seconded by a member of "Bob a Jobs" each year at the Annual General Meeting. A vote of no confidence can be proposed by any member of the "Bob a Jobs" after a period of six months. If carried, new elections will be held.

3d) The position of Chairman is subject to the approval of the District Commissioner and a list of all nominees for the position of Chairman will be passed to the District Commissioner for approval prior to the AGM.

3e) The purpose of the Executive Committee is to manage the day to day affairs of the "Bob a Jobs" and to make recommendations to the "Bob a Jobs" at business meetings where majority decisions are required.

3f) Where a decision of the "Bob a Jobs" is required, a vote will be held at the formal monthly business meeting. A 'majority' is then deemed to be the majority of the members attending that meeting.

3g) Matters requiring majority decisions are:

- i) Change to the Constitution
- ii) Election of posts as in 3c) above
- iii) Commitment of the "Bob a Jobs" to activities as defined below
- iv) Any other matters as deemed necessary.

#### **4. Finances**

4a) The Treasurer is responsible to the "Bob a Jobs" for the collection of subscriptions and the preparation of the annual accounts in March of each year or the preparation of a statement of account when requested. The annual accounts must be inspected or audited in accordance with the requirements of *POR* and the Charities Commission. A copy must also be forwarded to the District Treasurer.

4b) The cost of the annual Scout Association Membership fees payable for those members who do not pay through other sources should be met by "Bob a Jobs" general funds and not raised by the "Bob a Jobs" annual subscriptions.

4c) Subscriptions are paid annually before 31 December. The amount of annual subscriptions and the joining fee are to be decided annually.

4d) A bank account (as defined in *POR*) must be maintained by the "Bob a Jobs".

4e) A period of 28 days is allowed for the payment of subscriptions after the due date. After 14 days have elapsed voting rights are suspended and after 28 days it will be assumed that the member has left "Bob a Jobs" unless notified otherwise.

4f) The "Bob a Jobs" should offer suitable remuneration to any Scout Group whose premises or facilities they use.

#### **5. Activities**

5a) The primary purpose of the "Bob a Jobs" is to provide Active Support to Scouting in Folesworthy, in accordance with the remit reviewed and agreed annually with the District Commissioner.

5b) Activities can be organised by any member of the "Bob a Jobs" who will then hold full responsibility for all organisational procedures connected with that activity.

5b) All activities should be organised and conducted in accordance with the current edition of *POR*.

5c) The “Bob a Jobs” should provide a facility for helping youth Sections, the Scout District and the general community whenever requested and subject to the availability to meet such requests.

5d) The “Bob a Jobs” should also provide a programme of varied social activities suited to the interests of the membership. This is not however the primary purpose of the Scout Fellowship or individual membership. This constitution is subject to change at any time subject to the requirements of 3f) i) above and any subsequent amendments should be agreed by the District Commissioner and dated and signed by the current Chairman.

Read and approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (District Commissioner)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read and approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman of Scout Fellowship)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_