

2.5 The Scout Fellowship Executive Committee



The role of the Fellowship Executive Committee

As well as an effective Chairman ('leader'), the Scout Fellowship also needs other members to take specific responsibility for efficient administration of the business, programme and activities.

This is usually done by members of a small committee, often known as an Executive Committee (similar to Scout Group, District or County/Area Executive Committees).

However, unlike these other bodies there are no absolute rules about how such a committee should be organised within the Scout Fellowship.

Like many other issues associated with the Scout Fellowship, the emphasis should be on implementing something that works locally and successfully supports Scouting.

However, it is possible to suggest a set up for the Scout Fellowship Executive Committee and recommendations are given below.

How many people should be on the Executive Committee?

This again depends on local needs. A fairly small Scout Fellowship within a Scout Group can probably manage with just three members (Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary). A larger Scout Fellowship with a more active programme may need a larger committee amongst whom the workload can be shared.

The committee should be just large enough to efficiently manage the workload and in most cases a committee of five or seven members is sufficient.

Any more than this means that meetings of the Executive Committee become difficult to manage!

It is usual for the committee to have an odd number of people, so that any issues are put to the vote should gain a majority, one way or the other.

It is also important that the Executive Committee define a 'quorum' - that is, how many members must be present at a meeting before a vote can be taken.

Many or even all of the members of the Executive Committee will have a specific role such as those described below, although it is possible for members of the Executive Committee to have no defined role (acting as so called 'Lay-Members').

The role of sub-committees

In the case of extremely large Scout Fellowships it is also possible that sub-committees may be formed. These may either be formed as a standing sub-committee, such as a social committee which has a on-going remit, or as a short-term working committee looking after a specific event, such as providing support for a Area/County Camp or helping with recruitment in the Scout Group.

Where there are sub-committees, these are usually chaired by a member of the Executive Committee (for instance, the Treasurer will chair a Finance sub-Committee or the Public Relations Officer will chair a Recruitment sub-Committee). Wherever possible, members of any sub-committee should be taken from the general membership and should not just be existing members of the Executive Committee.

The Chairman ('leader') of the Scout Fellowship should always be an ex-official member of any sub-committee with an automatic right of attendance at any sub-committee meetings.

Positions on the Executive Committee

As stated above, there is no fixed rule about how many members may be on an Executive Committee or what roles they should fulfil. Recommendations are given below, and the first three posts (Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary) should always be filled.

Every Scout Fellowship should provide clear job descriptions for each of the Executive Committee posts and sample Job Descriptions are given at the end of this factsheet for each of the posts described (except that of Chairman).

Chairman

The Chairman is usually (although not necessarily) the 'leader' of the Scout Fellowship, selected or approved by, and responsible, to the GSL or appropriate Commissioner. The Chairman of the Scout Fellowship has various roles and responsibilities, and full details and a job description are given in section 2.15 'The Chairman of the Scout Fellowship'.

Also see section 2.7 'Running a Scout Fellowship Business Meeting' for useful advice on chairing meetings.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible to both the membership and the Chairman (or 'leader') of the Scout Fellowship for the proper management and accounting of the Scout Fellowship funds.

Generally these duties will include maintaining various bank accounts and managing petty cash, collecting monies due for items such as membership subscriptions or activity fees and settling invoices for all out-goings.

The most important job of the Treasurer is to ensure that proper financial records are maintained (including obtaining and keeping invoices, receipts, etc) and that proper accounts are prepared, audited and presented in line with the requirements of The Scout Association and the Charities Commission.

For more detail on financial matters see section 2.9 'Scout Fellowship Finances'.

Secretary

The Secretary is generally responsible for dealing with all matters of correspondence relating to the Scout Fellowship. This usually includes all external correspondence and often includes most of the internal correspondence (issuing invitations to the AGM, reminders for the payment of subscriptions etc.)

Another important job of the Secretary is the preparation of agendas and the taking of minutes for various meetings of the Scout Fellowship. See section 2.7 'Running a Scout Fellowship Business Meeting' for more details.

Public Relations/Communications Officer

It is a good idea for a Scout Fellowship to have their own Public Relations Officer to publicise their work in the local Scouting community and beyond, and possibly to co-ordinate the work of recruitment.

See section 2.18 on 'Job Description - Other Scout Fellowship Committee Members'.

Programme/Social Secretary

Most Scout Fellowships enjoy a busy programme and a good social life. They also provide opportunities for the wider Scouting community to socialise.

Where there is a busy programme of Active Support and an active social programme, it is often useful to make the co-ordination of the programme the responsibility of a member of the Executive Committee.

This often requires liaising with various people at Group, District, Area/County, Regional and National level. It can be quite time consuming to produce an integrated and attractive programme, so, having a dedicated Programme/Social Secretary means that this relieves the Secretary of this task and often makes it easier for the wider membership to become involved in organising the programme.

See section 2.18 on 'Job Description - Other Scout Fellowship Committee Members'.

Compliance with the Data Protection Acts

It is also important to note that in order to comply with the provisions of the various Data Protection Acts, any person keeping various membership records should be an 'official' of the Scout Fellowship. Ideally this will be a position elected by the membership, and is often the Secretary. It is important, however, that a member of the Executive Committee is identified as the 'Data Controller' and that this is known and understood by the membership.

Job Descriptions

Typical Job Descriptions are included in the file for the main posts on the Scout Fellowship Executive Committee. These set out mandatory, recommended and other job requirements although others may be added as appropriate.

Other Job Descriptions may be developed for other positions using a similar format.