

HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Your guide to being a member of our Group Executive Committee.





For further information, advice and support contact:
Matt Butterfield
County Development Officer
E: matt.butterfield@gls-scouts.org.uk
T: 07766 540 057

Greater London South Scout County registered charity no. 303883
gls-scouts.org.uk glscountyscouts.org.uk

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Compiled, designed and edited by Matt Butterfield

WELCOME

Thank you for agreeing to become a member of our Scout Group's Executive Committee. Your skills, energy and input will help to make a difference to our Group.

Who are we?

Although the 'Executive' bit in our title makes us sound very formal and important, it is actually not like that at all! Our committee is made up of the parents of children from within our Scout Group.

Like most committees we have a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary and we aim to have a parent from each section in the Group on the Executive Committee. This means that we have a good spread of opinion and all the sections are represented. We very much believe that many hands make light work and that no one person should ever have to do too much!

Our meetings are very informal and we enjoy chatting about the things going on in the Group and making the right decision to support the work of our leaders.

As a member of our Group Executive you help ensure that the Group fulfils the aims of The Scout Association and help make decisions regarding our Groups property, finances and the support we provide to our Leaders.

By becoming a member of our Group Executive Committee you become one of our trustees. Without good and committed trustees, no charity can hope to succeed. Our Executive Committee Members can often be the invisible volunteers in Scouting but they are responsible for the management and governance of Scouting in our Group and play an important part in helping to make Scouting happen.

It might not be the most glamorous or visible role – but that doesn't make it any less essential. This guide is designed to help you in your role as a member of our Group Executive Committee. It should not be seen as a technical guide, but should point you in the right direction when getting started in the role. If you are new to Scouting or the role you may find it useful to read the 'Understanding Scouting language' section at the back of this guide first.



THE GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Group Executive Committee's role is to support the Group Scout Leader and ensure the effective administration of the Scout Group.

The Committee aims to make sure that our Scout Group has the facilities and resources needed to deliver good Scouting in the Group. This includes:

- the maintenance of the Group's property and equipment,
- the raising of funds and the administration of the Group's finance,
- the insurance of persons, property and equipment,
- Group public occasions,
- assisting with the recruitment of Leaders and other adult support/

Members of the Group Executive Committee

The Group Executive Committee is made-up of people from four different areas.

- **ex-officio members** - Some people are members because of their role in Scouting, these are:
 - Group Scout Leader,
 - Group Chair,
 - Group Treasurer,
 - Group Secretary,
 - Assistant Group Scout Leader (if any),
 - All Section Leaders (i.e. individuals holding a Beaver Scout Leader, Cub Scout Leader or Scout Leader role) subject to that Section Leader expressly indicating to the AGM (in writing or orally at the meeting) that they are willing to perform such a function,
 - Explorer Scout Leader (if stated in the partnership agreement) and subject to that Explorer Scout Leader expressly indicating to the AGM (in writing or orally at the meeting) that they are willing to perform such a function,
 - The sponsoring authority or its nominee (if applicable),

The District Commissioner and the District Chairman have the right of attendance at meetings of the Group Executive Committee.

- **elected members** – these are elected by the Group Council at the Annual General Meeting and there are normally four to six of them;
- **nominated members** – these are nominated by the Group Scout Leader in consultation with the Group Chairman at the Annual General Meeting and there must be no more than the number of elected members
- **co-opted members** – these are chosen annually by the Group Executive Committee for their skills to be on the committee and there must be no more than the number of elected members.

Ideally, between the nominated members, elected members and co-opted members, the Group Executive Committee should include a parent of at least one Member from each of the sections in the Group.

The Group constitution covers the membership of the Group Executive Committee in detail and can be found later on in this guide. The membership is set up this way to ensure that the interests of the Group Council and the Group Scout Leader are represented, and balanced. It also serves to broaden the membership of the Executive – possibly to bring in people from other parts of the local community.

The co-opted members are often used to bring particular skills into the Executive Committee, perhaps because of a particular project that is being undertaken or problem that is being tackled.

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Group Executive Committee has an ongoing and personal responsibility to act responsibly on behalf of the Scout Group. They must not, for example, decide to take a chance and save money by not insuring Group property. The Policy, Organisation & Rules of The Scout Association (POR), sets out the details and must be referred to.

All members of the Group Executive Committee are the charity trustees of the Scout Group. As such they are responsible for complying with all the legislation applicable to charities. As a member of the Committee it is important that you are aware of these responsibilities.

Charity trustees are responsible for carrying out their role with due regard to the purpose of the charity and acting as a reasonable person. Trustees can, in some circumstances, be liable for financial loss incurred by the charity and must therefore consider their decisions very carefully. Trustees are unlikely to be liable if they: act reasonably; work within the governing document (in our case *"Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association"*) and take proper and appropriate advice when they don't know enough to make the decision or are required to do so by law.

There are also some excellent documents available without charge from the Charity Commission to support you (the Charity Commission is the body responsible for regulating the work of charities in England and Wales). It has an excellent website (www.charity-commission.gov.uk) where you can download some useful documents.

Who can be a trustee?

Trustees come from all walks of life and generally the wider range of people we can have represented on our Executive Committee, the better. However there are some people who are not able to serve as trustees. If you answer 'yes' to any of the following you will not be eligible:

- under 18 years of age
- convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty, unless the conviction is spent,
- an undischarged bankrupt,
- previously been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the court or Charity Commission.
- under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986

Responsibilities of trustees

Trustees:

- Ensure compliance with charity law and the requirements of the Charities Commission,
- have ultimate responsibility for the work of the charity (our Scout Group),
- must act in the best interests of the Group,
- take decisions about the future of the Group,
- ensure the Group remains sustainable,
- consider likely future challenges and prepare the Group to face them,
- ensure the Group is working within the law,
- be accountable for the Group,
- support the Group Scout Leader,
- monitor to ensure the Group is meeting its objectives,
- ensure the Committee is working effectively and efficiently.

The role can be very challenging but it can also be extremely interesting and rewarding. Taking on this responsibility can give you the chance to exercise your existing skills and develop new ones.

Please note: Anyone disqualified under section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 because of bankruptcy or conviction for an offence of dishonesty or deception cannot become a charity trustee.

The Charity Commission provides useful supporting information to help explain the role of a charity trustee. You might consider obtaining (from www.charity-commission.gov.uk) the following useful publications:

- CC3 – *The essential trustee: what you need to know*
- CC3a – *The essential trustee: an introduction*

These resources clarify what the charity trustee must know, the responsibilities placed upon them and their commitment to acting properly.



MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION

There are two types of membership of The Scout Association – Member or Associate Member.

Members:

Young people who join a section, make the Scout Promise and become Members of The Scout Association. Adults who, by choice or because of the requirements of their appointment, become Members of The Scout Association, make the Scout Promise and pay a membership subscription.

Associate members:

Some adults may choose to become Associate Members. This involves signing a declaration, paying the membership subscription but not having to make the Scout Promise.

Adults in Scouting

Most adults in Scouting will hold an appointment, which means they have a defined role that they have been appointed to. Their role will be recognised by an appointment card. Group appointments are approved by the Scout District.

Group Chairmen, Group Secretaries, Group Treasurers and other members of the Group Executive Committee, including Group Supporters, are not required to be Members of The Scout Association but are encouraged to consider their options. They could become Members or Associate Members.

Trustee Indemnity Insurance

As a result of a change in Charity Commission rules (which, until June 2007, precluded Scouts from buying a Trustee Indemnity Insurance policy), cover can now legally be purchased.

Broadly, a Trustee Indemnity Insurance policy is designed to cover Trustees in the event that they are held personally liable for the loss of charity assets or for making a decision which results in the charity sustaining a loss in financial terms. It does not cover acts which the trustee knew (or should reasonably have known), would constitute a breach of trust, so deliberate malfeasance would not be covered.

Having considered the merits of such cover, The Scout Association elected to arrange a national policy to cover trustees of any Scout charity. That includes members of executive committees of Scout Districts, Counties and Groups, as well as those who manage other Scout assets such as building or campsite committees.

The provision of cover is designed to protect people who, having acted responsibly and honestly, find themselves being held to account. An obvious example might be where they have sent a cheque to pay for insurance, it is mislaid in the post and an uninsured loss occurs.

The premium is paid centrally by The Scout Association on behalf of all UK Groups, and as such, they have set a limit of indemnity they see adequate for the membership, so no additional cover need be purchased.

Who is covered?

Any person elected, co opted or appointed to act as a trustee to Scout assets (these will usually be the members of an Executive Committee).

What are they covered for?

Personal liability to make good a loss to the charity caused by their joint or several action.

What is not covered?

Criminal actions and acts which the trustee(s) knew (or should reasonably have known) could result in a breach of trust. Acts taken in reckless disregard of whether a breach of trust might occur or not.

YOUR ROLE AS A MEMBER OF THE GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

There are a wide variety of roles which need to be undertaken in any Scout Group. Some are as part of the Group's Committee structure, and others involve much more practical tasks.

As a member of the Group Executive Committee you will attend the Committee meetings and where possible assist with the work of the Committee. This could be by taking part in the general discussions and decision making process of the Committee, by specifically delegated responsibilities given to you as a role holder or by being part of a sub-Committee. All of the tasks undertaken by members of the Group Executive Committee need to ensure that the Group can provide great quality Scouting for our young people both now and in the future.

What are you a member of?

You are a member of a Scout Group, and are more than likely an existing member of the Group Scout Council. The Group Scout Council is the electoral body which supports Scouting in the Scout Group.

The Group Executive Committee is accountable to the Group Scout Council. In reality the Group Scout Council meets just once a year. This meeting, the Annual General Meeting, must be held within six months of the Group's financial year end. The Group Scout Council receives annual reports and sets up the Group Executive Committee for the following year.

Membership of the Group Scout Council is open to all adults with appointments in the Group, as well as the parents of youth members in the Group, and Patrol Leaders. Other supporters, including former Scouts and their parents, may be admitted to the Group Scout Council. It is possible, in fact highly desirable, to include all of those who support the Group.



How does the Scout Group work?

The Group Scout Leader is the lead volunteer manager of the Scout Group. They are responsible for providing leadership and support to every adult and young person involved in the Group. They work with the Group Chairman to ensure the effective running and administration of the Scout Group.

The Group Chairman and the Group Executive Committee support the Group Scout Leader and ensure the effective administration of the Scout Group. The Group Scout Leader nominates the Group Chairman and the relationship should be one of partnership and mutual support.

The leaders in the Group work with their team of adults (who perform a variety of roles), to deliver an exciting and attractive programme of activities for young people in the Group. Their work is coordinated through the Group Scouters' meeting (chaired by the Group Scout Leader), which includes the Section Leaders and Assistant Section Leaders.

The Scout District

Your Scout Group is part of a Scout District, which provides support to a number of Scout Groups and encourages them to work together. The District is managed by a District Commissioner (DC). They are likely to be supported by a team of Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs). They will often hold a specific appointment such as ADC (Cub Scouts), with responsibility to develop this particular area of Scouting across the District.

The Scout County

Your Scout District and Group will also be part of a Scout County, which is managed by a County Commissioner (CC) and they are likely to be supported by the County.

Scout Active Support

Scout Active Support Units are based in Scout Groups, Districts and Counties and are made up of a team of adults that provide direct support to Scouting locally.



WHO CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED?

- YOUR KEY COLLEAGUES

The Group Chairman

The Group Chairman is nominated by the Group Scout Leader to:

- work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader,
- lead the Group Executive Committee, to provide sound administrative and financial support to the Group
- maintain and develop the Group as part of the community,
- keep in touch with the Scout District.

Talking to the Group Chairman is important, as you both need to understand the responsibilities of your own and each other's role, you, as an Executive Committee Member, need to understand:

- your role, what is expected of you and where you fit within the Group,
- how the Scout Group is structured and how it operates,
- the Group Chairman's priorities,
- the Group Chairman's and GSL's preferred ways of working.

And in turn, the Group Chairman needs to understand:

- your need for information in a timely manner
- your ideas about how you intend to do the job
- your priorities and preferred way of working
- how they can support you.

The Group Scout Leader

Although your contact will mostly be with the Group Chairman and other Group Executive Committee members, it is important to know and be in regular contact with the Group Scout Leader.

Other Group Executive Committee members

Other members of the Group Executive Committee will have different functions, skills and strengths. Establishing a good method of working is very important, so try to meet them as soon as possible. The Group Executive Committee will function most effectively when you work as a team, with a good understanding between you all.



KEY ELEMENTS OF YOUR ROLE

Being a member of the Group Executive Committee involves more than just attending and sitting in a meeting. It involves making a positive contribution to the work of the Committee. Collectively you are responsible for directing the affairs of the Group, ensuring that it is financially stable and well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it was set up. The Group Executive Committee has an ongoing personal responsibility to act properly on behalf of the Group. You can do this by being well prepared. There are three key stages:

- before a meeting,
- during a meeting,
- after and in-between meetings.

Things to do before a meeting:

- keep the date free in your diary,
- read the agenda and any supporting papers, thinking carefully about the issues to be discussed,
- prepare any part which you have agreed to undertake,
- inform the Secretary if you are unable to attend,
- inform the Secretary of any additional matters that need to be discussed at the meeting.

Things to do during a meeting:

- ensure that you arrive on time and have brought any required supporting papers,
- listen carefully throughout the meeting,
- actively contribute to the meeting,
- take notes about anything you agree to do, ensure that you are clear about what is expected of you and what timescale or budget you have to work to,
- help to keep everyone involved,

Things to do after and in-between meetings:

- complete any actions that are your responsibility,
- read the minutes when they arrive,
- keep the Chairman advised of progress, asking for help if you need it.

Remember that it is not the talk at the committee which achieves things. It is the action between meetings and people working together that makes the progress.

Sub-committees

The Group Executive Committee may establish any number of sub-Committees to manage the work that it deems necessary. Sub-committees can be set-up for a wide range of purposes to do specific short or long term tasks and can be formed and dissolved at any time. Sub-committee members do not need to be on the Executive Committee but they could be.

Typical sub-committees might be:

- Fundraising sub-committee.
- Communications sub-committee.
- Group Headquarters sub-committee.
- Social sub-committee.

Any sub-committee will require a separate chairman. Having a separate team for these duties lifts a huge weight from the leaders, and having a separate chairman ensures that they are organised and focused. It is normal for the chairman of a sub-Committee to be drawn from members of the Group Executive Committee.

If you become involved with a sub-Committee its worth checking with your Group Chairman or Group Scout Leader (GSL) to see if any remit or guidelines exist for it. If not, it may be worth the Chair of sub-committee and the Group Chair GSL drawing one up. This will help ensure that all parties are aware of the expectations, main tasks and key criteria of the sub-committee.

Regular reports to the Group Executive Committee will allow them to keep track of the progress of the sub-committee, ascertain whether any additional support is required, and review the sub-committee's key targets.

Taking these steps early on will help make any sub-committee more effective and focused.



THE GROUP'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Scout Groups are required to hold an Annual General Meeting within six months of the end of the financial year.

The meeting is to:

- receive and consider the Group Annual Report presented by the Group Executive Committee, including the annual statement of accounts,
- approve the Group Scout Leader's nomination of Group Chairman and nominated members of the Group Executive Committee,
- elect a Group Secretary and Group Treasurer,
- elect certain members of the Group Executive Committee,
- appoint an auditor or independent examiner or scrutineer, as required by POR.

Although the AGM has a formal function, it is an ideal opportunity to:

- promote the Group – to current members and the wider community,
- highlight the successes of the past year,
- plan for the future activities of the Scout Group,
- meet and communicate with the parents of the Group's members and the other members of the Group Scout Council,
- have an exciting, inclusive meeting that may lead to the recruitment of adults in to the Scout Group.

The Group Chairman will work closely with the Group Scout Leader and other members of the Group Executive Committee, including Group Supporters, to ensure the event achieves its aims.

The biggest challenge is often getting people to turn-up. The formal part of the meeting needs to be conducted properly, and to achieve the aims above. However, this does not need to put people off attending.

The chief thing that you need to do, as someone very clearly part of the Group, is to turn up yourself. Hopefully you will be able to encourage some others to come as well. It is an opportunity to involve others and to spread the workload wider

Social Events

Social activities are an important part of the life of the Scout Group. They are good ways to:

- keep people interested,
- allow everyone to unwind,
- involve more people,
- raise funds or awareness.

When planning, it is important to remember that social events should not detract from the real purpose of the Scout Group, which is to deliver Scouting to young people.

UNDERSTANDING SCOUTING LANGUAGE

Scouting language can be confusing and off-putting for newcomers, with a range of terms, abbreviations and jargon to contend with. This basic guide is intended to explain some Scouting terms for the newcomer.

Group

The local unit of Scouting that is managed by a Group Scout Leader (GSL).

Section

Each Group will include one or more Scout sections, e.g. the Beaver Scout section, for a specific age range of young people.

Beaver Scout section

The Beaver Scout section is for young people aged 6 – 8 years. Each Beaver section is known as a Colony. The Colony may be divided into small groups of young people called Lodges.

Cub Scout section

The Cub Scout section is for young people aged 8–10½ years. Each Cub section is known as a Pack. The Pack may be divided into small groups of young people called Sixes, each led by a Sixer.

Scout section

The Scout section is for young people aged 10½ –14 years. Each Scout section is known as a Troop. The Troop may be divided into small groups of young people called Patrols, each led by a Patrol Leader.

Explorer Scout section

The Explorer Scout section is for young people aged 14–18 years. Each Explorer Scout section is known as a Unit. Most Explorer Scout Units will be based within the Scout District (with a few attached to Scout Groups).

Scout Network

The Scout Network is for people aged 18–25 years. They are based in Scout Districts.

Leaders.

Each section will have a group of adults who run it, usually led by a section leader, who will be supported by other adults in Scouting, including assistant section leaders, section assistants, instructors and Occasional Helpers.

Some of these voluntary roles may be described in a couple of different ways, for example:

DC:	District Commissioner
GSL:	Group Scout Leader
ABSL:	Assistant Beaver Scout Leader
CSL:	Cub Scout Leader
SL:	Scout Leader

National Publications

The Scout Association has produced a number of specific guide to provide help to Group Chairman, Treasurers, Secretaries and Group Supporters:

- A guide for The Group Chairman.
- A guide for The Group Secretary.
- A guide for The Group Treasurer.
- A guide for The Group Supporter.

These guides can be downloaded along with lots more information from the development pages of our County website at www.gls-scouts.org.uk

THE MODEL CONSTITUTION OF THE SCOUT GROUP

In the absence of an existing formally adopted Constitution to the contrary, the following represents an ideal Constitution and will apply where the circumstances and the support allow.

a. The Group Scout Council

The Group Scout Council is the electoral body, which supports Scouting in the Scout Group. It is the body to which the Group Executive Committee is accountable.

- i. Membership of the Group Scout Council is open to:
 - Scouters;
 - Group Scout Active Support members (including the Group Scout Active Support Manager and Group Scout Active Support Co-ordinators – if appointed);
 - Colony, Pack and Troop Assistants ;
 - Skills Instructors;
 - Administrators;
 - Advisers;
 - Patrol Leaders;
 - all parents of Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts and Scouts;
 - the Sponsoring Authority or its nominee (if applicable);
 - any other supporters including former Scouts and their parents who may be admitted by the Group Scout Leader, the Group Executive Committee or the Group Scout Council;
 - Explorer Scout Leaders (if stated in a Partnership Agreement);
- ii. The District Commissioner and District Chairman are ex-officio members of the Group Scout Council.
- iii. Membership of the Group Scout Council ceases upon:
 - the resignation of the member;
 - the dissolution of the Council;
 - the termination of membership by Headquarters following a recommendation by the Group Executive Committee.
- iv. The Group Scout Council must hold an Annual General Meeting within six months of the financial year end to:
 - receive and consider the Annual Report of the Group Executive Committee, including the annual statement of accounts;
 - approve the Group Scout Leader's nomination of the Group Chairman and nominated members of the Group Executive Committee;
 - elect a Group Secretary and Group Treasurer;
 - elect certain members of the Group Executive Committee;
 - appoint an auditor or independent examiner or scrutineer as required.

b. The Group Executive Committee

- i. The Group Executive Committee exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment. The Committee is responsible for:
 - the maintenance of the Group's property and equipment;
 - the raising of funds and the administration of the Group's finance;
 - the insurance of persons, property and equipment;
 - Group public occasions;
 - assisting with the recruitment of Leaders and other adult support.

ii. The Group Executive Committee consists of:

Ex-officio Members

- The Group Chairman;
- The Group Secretary;
- The Group Treasurer;
- The Group Scout Leader;
- The Assistant Group Scout Leader;
- The Explorer Scout Leader (if stated in a Partnership Agreement and subject to that Explorer Scout Leader expressly indicating to the AGM (in writing or orally at the meeting) that they are willing to perform such a function);
- The Sponsoring Authority or its nominee (as applicable);
- All Section Leaders (i.e. individuals holding a Beaver Scout Leader, Cub Scout Leader or Scout Leader role) subject to that Section Leader expressly indicating to the AGM (in writing or orally at the meeting) that they are willing to perform such a function.

Nominated Members

- persons nominated by the Group Scout Leader;
- the nominations must be approved at the Group Annual General Meeting;
- the number of nominated members must not exceed the number of elected members.

Elected Members

- persons elected at the Group Annual General Meeting;
- these should normally be four to six in number;
- the actual number must be the subject of a resolution by the Group Scout Council.

Co-opted Members

- persons co-opted annually by the Group Executive Committee
- the number of co-opted members must not exceed the number of elected members.

Right of Attendance

- the District Commissioner and the District Chairman have the right of attendance at meetings of the Group Executive Committee.

iii. Ideally, between the nominated members, elected members and co-opted members, the Group Executive should include a parent of at least one Member of each of the Sections in the Group.

iv. The Group Executive Committee may establish any sub-Committees that it deems necessary.

v. The Group Scout Leader and the Group Chairman will be ex-officio members of any sub-Committee of the Group Executive Committee.

vi. Any fundraising committee must include at least two members of the Group Executive Committee, in addition to the ex-officio members. No Section Leader or Assistant Leader may serve on such a fundraising sub-Committee.

vii. A Scout Group is an educational charity. Members of the Group Executive Committee are the charity trustees of the Scout Group.

viii. Only persons aged 18 and over may be full voting members of the Group Executive Committee because of their status as charity trustees.

ix. Certain people are disqualified from being charity trustees by virtue of the Charities Acts.

x. Charity trustees are responsible for complying with all the legislation applicable to charities.

- xi. Some Groups may also need to register as a charity. Scout Groups registered as a charity in England and Wales will be required to make an annual return to the Charity Commission. See POR Rule 13.3 for more details.

c. The Group Scouters' Meeting

- i. Membership of the Group Scouters' Meeting consists of the Group Scout Leader as Chairman, all Section Leaders and Assistant Leaders and the Group Scout Active Support Manager. Explorer Scout Leaders may be included if stated in the partnership agreement.

- ii. The role of the Group Scouters' Meeting is to:

- consider the well-being and development of each Member of the Group;
- ensure the progress of each Member through the programme;
- plan and coordinate all the Group's activities;
- to keep the Group Executive Committee advised of the financial and other resource requirements of the training programme.

d. Conduct of Meetings

- i. Only members as defined above may vote in meetings of the Group Scout Council and the Group Executive Committee.

- ii. Decisions are made by a majority of votes cast by those present at the meeting. In the event of an equal number of votes being cast on either side the chairman does not have a casting vote and the matter is taken not to have been carried.

- iii. The Group Scout Council must make a resolution defining a quorum for meetings of the Group Scout Council and the Group Executive Committee and its sub-Committees.

THE POLICY, ORGANISATION AND RULES OF THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION

With approximately 9,000 Scout Groups in the United Kingdom and its dependent territories, a support structure is clearly necessary. *The Policy, Organisation and Rules* of The Scout Association is referred to as POR. It is update at least once a year and contains the rules and policies of The Scout Association, as well as explains as simply as possible how that structure of Scouting is organised.

You should use this guide in conjunction with POR. The latest version can be found on our national website at scouts.org.uk/por

This guide assumes that the constitution of the Group follows the ideal constitution as described in this guide and POR, Rule 3.23. Your Group Chairman or Group Scout Leader will have further details of your Group's constitution and will be able to tell you if it varies from POR.

We advise Group trustees to refer to their constitution regularly to remind themselves what the charity's purposes are and how it should be run.

