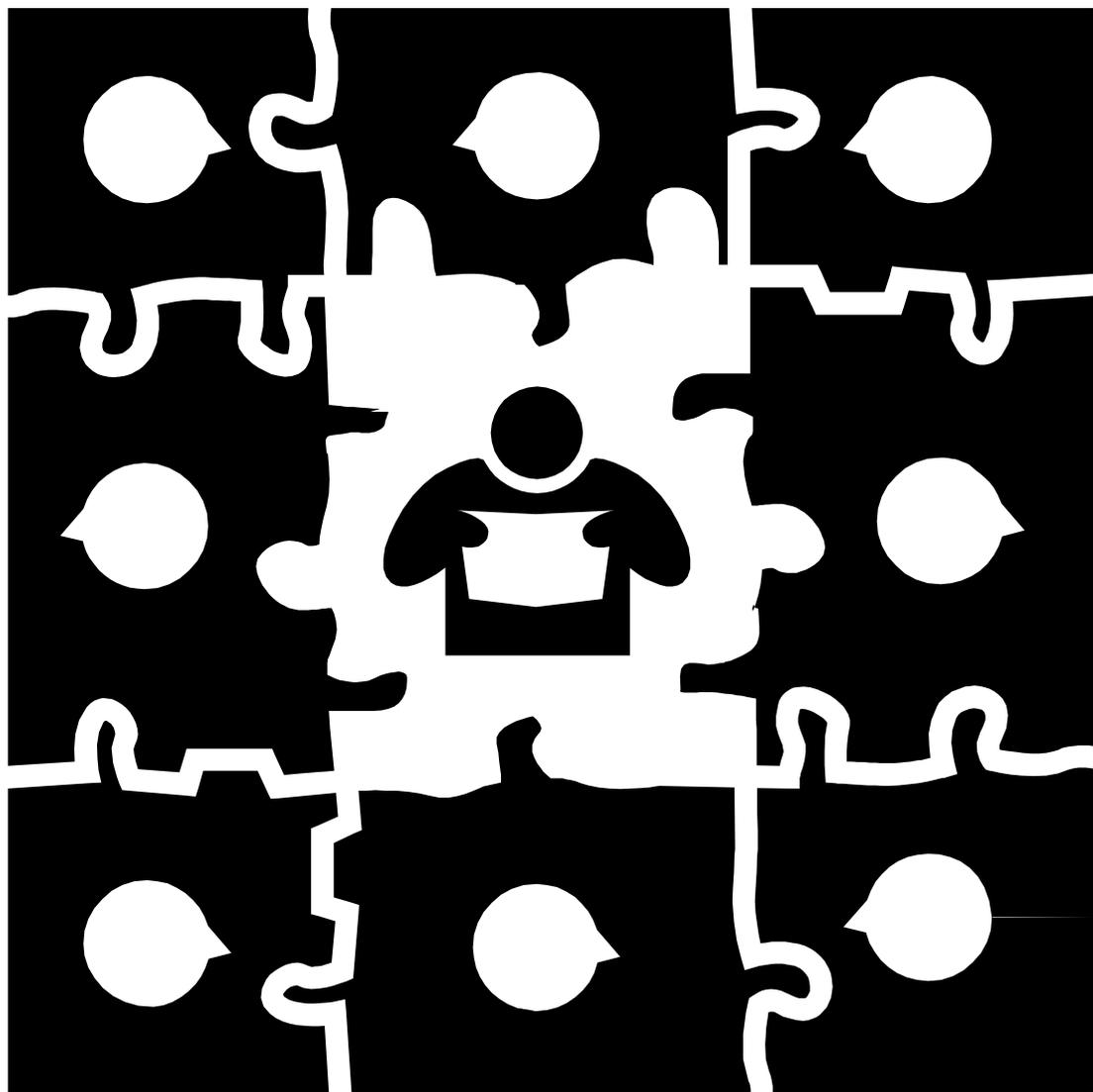


Supporting
The Group Secretary
- a guide to the role





Supporting the Group Secretary– A Guide to the Role

An Australian Scout Publication

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This booklet is designed as a starting point for those who become involved as the Secretary of a Scout Group.

It is not designed as a technical guide but to point you in the right direction in the first few weeks and months.

Policy and Rules of Scouts Australia and your state Rules are referred to in this booklet.

It contains the up to date Rules of Scouts Australia.

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Congratulations on becoming the Group Secretary. It is an extremely important role in Scouting and it is hoped that you will enjoy your involvement.

This booklet is designed to help you get started and point you in the right direction in the first few weeks and months.

If you are very new to Scouting you may well find it useful to read the 'jargon buster' ***Understanding Scouting language*** first. You will find it at the end of this booklet.

THE GROUP SECRETARY'S DUTY STATEMENT

- See that the Group Chairman is kept fully informed on all correspondence pertaining to the Group.
- See that notices of regular meetings of the Group Committee are sent out in sufficient time, giving date, time and place of meeting.
- Prepare, in consultation with the Group Leader and Group Chairman, an agenda for each meeting.
- Keep minutes of all meetings of the Group Committee.
- Despatch a copy of the minutes, with appropriate action points highlighted for attention, to each Group Committee member.
- See that Branch, Area and District notices and other important notices are brought to the attention of the Committee.
- Assist the Chairman with the preparation of the Annual Meeting and Annual Report.
- Maintain an accurate record of the expenditure of Petty Cash allocated for postage, etc.
- Undertake other secretarial duties of a Group nature as may be required from time to time.
- Liaise with the District Association/Executive Secretary and refer to him/her for advice as necessary.

- Take the necessary steps to obtain a postal box or post office address for the Group advising all necessary authorities-banks, insurances, etc.-of this. Clear weekly, or more frequently, distributing items through Group letterbox system at Group Headquarters.

Note: *Each Section plus GL and Group Committee should have internal letterbox, preferably located near door in hall, which is to be cleared at least weekly on meeting nights.*

- Ensure the Group Committee receives at least one copy of a "Scout" magazine and that this is circulated to the Committee members.

How did you become the Group Secretary?

In constitutional terms you were nominated and seconded before being elected by the Group Committee. No doubt before this there was some discussion with you and even some mild persuasion. You may even be reading this booklet because you have nearly been persuaded and want to find out a little more. Further details about the Scout Movement are available in *Introducing Scouting* or from the website www.scouts.com.au

What are you Secretary of?

You are Secretary of the Group Committee and part of the Group Executive Committee.

The Group Committee exists to support Scouting locally. The Group Committee usually meets monthly, with an Annual General Meeting being held as soon as practical after the end of the Scouting year, which finishes on the 31st March. The Annual General Meeting receives annual reports and sets up the Group Executive Committee.

Membership of the Group Committee consists of the Group Executive (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer), the Group Leader and parents of the young people in the Group. It is also open to past members of the Movement, and members of the community interested in supporting the Group. Leaders of the Sections

or the young people of the Group do not attend this meeting.

How does the Scout Group work?

The Group Leader leads the Scout Group and has a team of key people to help.

The Section Leaders each lead their team of assistants, helpers and the young people in their Section. Together they are responsible for the delivery of the program for the young people who are members. Their work is coordinated through the Group Council meeting which includes all Section and Assistant Leaders. The Group Leader chairs this meeting.

You, the Group Secretary, work closely with the Group Chairman who leads all of those who provide help and support to the Group in other ways. This is an important job and one which clearly needs sound administrative support.

Why do we need a Group Executive Committee?

The Group Executive Committee exists to manage the Scout Group. It supports the Group Leader and is responsible for:

- the maintenance of Group property
- the raising of funds and the administration of the Group finance
- Group public occasions
- assisting in the recruitment of Leaders and other adult support
- appointing any Sub-Committees that may be required
- appointing Group Administrators and advisers other than those who are elected.

Who are members of the Group Committee?

The Group Committee includes ex officio members, nominated members, elected members and co-opted members. This sounds rather complicated but the list looks like this:

Ex officio members:

- The Group Leader
- The Group Chairman
- The Assistant Group Leader

- The Group Secretary
- The Group Treasurer
- The Sponsoring Authority or nominee (Sponsored Groups only).
(The District Commissioner and District Chairman have the right of attendance.)

Nominated Members

- Members of the Group Committee nominated by the Group Leader.
(Usually parents, so that a parent of a young person from each Section is involved.)

Elected Members

- Members elected by the Group Committee.

Co-opted Members

- Members co-opted by the Executive Committee. (Other people who the Group Executive believe are important to the Committee's work)

That sounds like quite a good team to help you, but remember they will be looking to you for administrative support.

EXPECTATIONS OF GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It is expected that members of the Group Committee will:

1. Attend meetings regularly and when this is impossible, send an apology and strive to catch up on what I have missed.
2. Seek to understand the job assignment of the Committee, interpret it to others, and work to complete it in the allotted time, and to the best of my ability.
3. Participate in the deliberations with preparedness, objectivity and humility. Allow other members to make their point, not talk over or across and avoid private discussions.

4. Share the time of discussion with other members and stick to the topic.
5. Assume responsibility for some of the work assignments of the Committee.
6. Listen and seek to understand and utilize the ideas of others.
7. Help in the making of Committee decisions and support those made by the Group.
8. Evaluate my contribution to the Committee and encourage the Committee as a whole to evaluate its own work.

Next time you say it was a poor Committee meeting, perhaps you should ask *“What could I do to try to make it better?”*

THE GROUP COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to assist the Group Committee to evaluate its job, and help to build a strong, prosperous Scout Group. How does your current Group Committee rate?

- Has the Committee a copy of Policy and Rules and the relevant Branch Group Committee Rules or By-Laws?
- Are they aware that the important job of the Committee is to assist the Group Leader?
- Has the Group Committee contributed its part to the current Group Plan?
- Has the Group Committee set its own performance targets for the current year?
- Does the Committee send a letter of welcome to the parents of new members?
- Is the letter of welcome followed up with a personal visit or induction session?

- Has the Committee prepared a budget for anticipated expenditure based on Group Council priorities?
- Has the Treasurer been authorized to make prompt payment of regular expenses?
- Has the Group a development program to ensure growth or maintenance of members?
- Has all the necessary training equipment been provided?
- Has the Group Committee a Quartermaster?
- Have all Group/Section accounts two signatories and are they in the name of Scouts Australia?
- Does the Committee take a full and active part in Group activities?
- Is the Group HQ and other property in the name of Scouts Australia?
- Is the Group HQ and equipment insurance realistic, considering present day values?
- Is the Group's HQ in good condition, well maintained, clean and tidy inside and out?
- Are neighbours, Council and local community generally proud to have the Group in their midst?
- Do we have adequate Group social activities?
- Are our public relations such that the community is aware of the Group, and does it enable the Group to take a leading part in the community?

- Has the Group a Public Relations Officer?
- Do we help in finding Leaders?
- Do we make enough use of Sub-Committees?
- Does the Group Committee prevent internal upsets by promoting good relationships within the Group?
- Has the Committee (with Section Leader approval) visited a Section?
- Can the Committee give the lead with enthusiasm and optimism?

WHO CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED?

The Group Chairman – A good place to start. After all, one of their key responsibilities is to lead the team who provide the administrative and financial support for the Group.

Your relationship with the Group Chairman is going to be crucial to the success of both of your roles, so you need to talk it through.

You need to understand:

- the responsibilities of your own and the Group Chairman's role

You should understand:

- about the Scout Group
- the Group Chairman's priorities
- the Group Chairman's preferred methods of working.

The Group Chairman needs to understand:

- your need for information
- your ideas about how you intend to do the job
- how they can support you.

The Group Leader will be able to provide you with vital tools for your role:

- Policy and Rules of Scouts Australia

- Your Branch Rules
- Personnel Committee Handbook (if required)
- The Group Leader and Group Committee Handbook.

These books set out the structure and rules of Scouts Australia and define the responsibilities of all who have roles within it. They recognize that Scouting happens principally in Scout Groups and so emphasize the importance of your role, the Group Secretary.

Your predecessor – the retiring Secretary

Hopefully your predecessor, if there was one, is available so that they can hand over the reins. Whether they did the job for a long or short time, they still have the experience of their time in the role. It would be silly to waste it.

Arrange to meet with the retiring Secretary so that the hand over can be smooth both for you and all the other people involved. There will be some things that you will need to collect, in particular minute books or folders and records of those involved in the Group.

Your predecessor may well be the best person to introduce you to your immediate colleagues.

You may well have your own ideas. It is hoped that you have seriously considered how you wish to fulfil your role. Remember that change can be unsettling for people. It is important to have a good understanding of the current situation even if your way of proceeding is likely to be very different to that of your predecessor.

The District Secretary

One of the main responsibilities of the District Executive Committee is to 'supervise the administration of Groups'. The District specialist in administration is the District Secretary, so this is very much someone with an interest in helping you to fulfil your role.

There is clearly a need to establish a working relationship so that you know what is expected of you by the District. What is more important is that you have an ongoing source of help and advice.

The District Secretary will also be in a position to introduce you to other Group Secretaries in the District –another source of support.

An experienced Group Secretary from another nearby Group.

Having someone to talk to who:

- understands your situation
- has experience of similar situations
- is not directly involved
- is frequently helpful.

If such a person is nearby, either physically or on the phone, and someone to whom you easily relate, you have a wonderful support.

Someone doing the same job in another, nearby, Group also fits the bill. You may need to be selective as you need someone who is on your wavelength, not just in close proximity to you. They will have been new to the role at some time and so will have an understanding of your needs. You have something to offer to them in the freshness that you bring by being new to the role.

YOUR KEY COLLEAGUES

The Group Chairman

The Group Chairman is nominated to:

- work closely with and support the Group Scout Leader
- lead the team of non-Leaders who 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.

The Group Treasurer

The Group Treasurer is elected to advise the Group Committee and the Group Executive Committee on financial control and expenditure and to co-ordinate the Group's budget. The key tasks are to:

- comply with the rules of Scouts Australia and the laws of the land relating to finance

- produce an annual budget following consultation with the Group Council and the Group Committee
- monitor the Group's income and expenditure against the approved budget
- receive and account for all monies in the Group (including Sections)
- pay out only as authorized by the Group Committee
- ensure that 'cash floats' held by others are properly accounted for
- ensure that accumulated funds are invested wisely
- ensure that proper inventories and insurance of Group property and equipment are maintained.
- keep in touch with the District Treasurer.

The Group Leader

Whilst the Group Secretary will principally work with those who support the Scout Group there will be situations when you will need to work directly with the Section Leaders. This will particularly stem from your role in providing and collecting information.

It is important that in doing so you are aware of the Group Leader's priorities and preferred working methods. You should also keep him/her well informed of your dealings with the Sections.

Working relationships

It goes without saying that if you are to do your job well you all need to work as a team with a very good understanding between you all. Good relationships do not just happen, they need to be formed.

A meeting with each, soon after you become Group Secretary, or whenever there is a change of holder of one of these key roles, is a sound start. It will give you the opportunity to:

- be clear about each others role
- decide how you can best work together.

Remember that by working together and combining your strengths you will each receive support and be able to do a better job.

You may find that a meeting of the Group Leader, Group Chairman, Group Treasurer and yourself would help to put everyone's role into context.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ROLE

Based on the duty statement, the key elements of the Group Secretary's role are to:

- provide sound administrative support to the Group
- make information received available to members of the Group
- keep in contact with the District Secretary
- keep such records as the Group Leader and Group Chairman require.

It is now time to explore each in more detail.

Provide sound administrative support to the Group

Unless you keep your election a secret it will not be long before you start to receive correspondence. There will also be a need for you to send things to other people. In both cases it is essential to be organized.

We would usually date a letter which we send to someone else. It is good practice to record the date when you receive something. Just writing the date on the top corner works.

Increasingly people telephone rather than write and so a log of telephone calls and the key contents make sense. If you also include those which you make to others, you will be able to follow the thread of events. The log will also enable you to keep track of your telephone expenses.

When you receive correspondence you will need to decide what action to take. It is likely that:

- some you will be able to answer yourself
- some will require reference to one of your key colleagues
- some will require a decision by the Group Executive Committee or Group Committee

- some will contain information for distribution to others.

In any event you should try and take action as soon as is practical. If it will be some time before you can take all the action required you should let the sender know.

Preparing for meetings

There are three key steps to preparing for a meeting:

(i) meet with the Chairman to agree to the agenda

The starting point for each meeting must be the outcomes from the previous meeting. In preparation for your discussion with the Group Chairman you should review the progress of issues from the previous meeting.

These ongoing issues, together with any new issues, will form the key elements of the agenda. There are also likely to be some routine issues due to the time of the year, although it helps to keep these to a minimum.

It is important to encourage all committee members to tell you at an early stage about any issues that they may wish to raise. This ensures that the meeting can be planned and that issues are included in the agenda. This means that others can think about them and the Chairman can allocate them time for consideration at the meeting.

At this stage the Chairman may decide that there is no need for a meeting. If this is the case, most people will be pleased to have some time for other things. Please be sure, however, that the decision is made when in possession of all the facts and do let everyone know in good time.

In planning the agenda you will need to think about:

- the information that members will need in order to come to the meeting prepared (Discussion can focus on the issues if members start with a common understanding. A full explanation either as part of the agenda or in a supporting paper is essential)

- the venue for the meeting
(Everyone will need somewhere to sit and the room needs to be at a comfortable temperature. It is much better if a committee meets around a table rather than in classroom style. The table gives everyone somewhere to put their papers and everyone can gain eye contact with the Chairman. It also helps you to see who is speaking.)

(ii) make the arrangements

Whether the venue is to be at the Scout Hall, someone's home or another venue there are things to do.

- book the date and time
- check that the facilities required will be available, e.g. kitchen facilities if you plan to provide refreshments
- check how you gain access, e.g. who will let you in or where to collect the key
- make arrangements with anyone whom you need to help you set up the room, e.g. arrange the furniture
- check room is accessible for all likely participants.

Good venues get booked up fast and so you may find it easier to set meeting dates well in advance and to book for a whole year.

(iii) send out the papers

Send out the papers in good time. People need time to read them and to think about the issues. About two weeks ahead makes good sense.

Sending out the papers for a meeting much earlier usually means that late items crop up and cannot be included. This means that people are not prepared at the meeting itself. Bear in mind that some people are prone to lose things that come out too early.

Only send the papers to those who are members of the Committee. You should arrange with the Chairman if others should receive them on a regular basis or if there are special reasons for someone to receive a copy.

At the meeting

At the meeting there is a great deal for the Secretary to do, so you need to be well prepared and to arrive in good time.

(i) on arrival

Check that everything is as you had arranged and set up those aspects that you had agreed to undertake.

Remember to make sure that any newcomers will be able to park their car and find the meeting room.

(ii) before the meeting starts

This is a time fraught with danger for the Secretary. You may wish to speak with some individuals before the meeting gets underway. Some people will wish to use the opportunity of meeting you to deal with issues unconnected with the meeting. You, on the other hand, will wish to get yourself fully prepared for your role during the meeting itself.

Don't be afraid to make a simple note and agree to contact people on another occasion. It is all too easy to become blown off course, especially when you are new.

(iii) during the meeting

Inevitably some people will have forgotten their papers so be prepared and have a few spare sets available. You need your own copy.

You will need a record of who is present and of any apologies received. It helps to have a list of names on which those attending just initial against their name. You can then use the same list to record apologies.

At the start of the meeting when the minutes of previous meetings are agreed, remember to have the record copy available for the Chairman to sign and date.

Sample Agenda - Group Committee Meeting

- Chairman*: *Welcome and introduce newcomers
Apologies (Secretary records those present)
Absent (these should be contacted within 24 hours by Chairman to acquaint them of meeting results and ensure enthusiasm maintained)*
- Secretary: *Requests acceptance of minutes of last meeting (which were previously issued to all or they may be read at the meeting)*
- Chairman*: *Requests confirmation of minutes
Items arising from minutes (Secretary should have these listed on agenda)*
- Secretary: *Correspondence received and sent since last meeting*
- Treasurer: *Financial report (including progress toward budget) in writing, with copies for all members
Accounts for payment
Status of payment re Group levy (numbers outstanding – do not name)
NB Chairman, Secretary and GL should follow up*
- Group Leader: *Membership status at present, new members, dropout, (with reasons) and action taken, and number of dropouts to date in year
Waiting list position
Information/requests from Group Council, District, Area, Branch
NB Should be in writing and handed to Secretary for attachment to minutes*
- DA Delegates: *Report from District Association meeting*
- Fundraisers Rep: *Fundraising report*
- PR Officer: *PR report
Family roster report*
- Chairman: *General business
Coming events (program)
Sum up, especially who is to action what
Next meeting – when and where*

Supper – Most important that meeting ends with a relaxing chat

NB *Sub-Committees should also run on similar lines, especially the keeping of accurate minutes and reporting of monetary situation*

* While Chairman is used in these notes, some Groups elect a Group President who chairs the Group Committee meetings (i.e. in these Groups read Group President for Group Chairman)

Your role is to record what happens during the meeting. This does not mean everything that is said but the key facts, i.e., a summary. You should record:

- the topic being discussed
- the key factors or issues (you can refer to papers presented without having to record all the details, so long as a copy is kept on file)

- the key points from any discussion
- the decision reached or the matter reported
- what action is to be taken by whom and by when.

If you are not sure what has been agreed at any stage ask the Chairman to restate the position. Similarly they may ask you to remind the committee what has been agreed so far. There are likely to be some items on the

agenda on which you will need to report. This will happen when you were responsible for action stemming from the last meeting.

It can be helpful to include with the agenda a simple report or list of actions completed since the last meeting. It often means that there is no need to reopen the discussion.

(iv) at the end of the meeting

Make sure that you have a clear understanding of all that has been agreed and that you have copies of any papers which have been brought into the meeting by others.

You will particularly want to know that the arrangements for the next meeting have been agreed. It can be an extremely arduous task to telephone all the committee members to agree a date. It is far better to have agreement when they are all together.

(v) before going home

Before you go home there are several people to speak to:

- those who helped you set up the meeting
- your host for the meeting, be it the householder, if you have been at someone's home, or the caretaker or keyholder responsible for a meeting room
- the Chairman, to agree the after and in between meeting's work, especially when they will be available to discuss the draft minutes.

After and in between meetings

(i) the minutes

Prepare the draft minutes whilst the meeting is still fresh in your mind. You will have your notes, but the support of your recent memory will be invaluable.

It is the Secretary's job to produce the minutes, but you need to agree them with the Chairman before they are circulated. Agree with the Chairman when the minutes will be ready and when he/she will be available to go through them.

Minutes should be no longer than necessary and include:

- the topic being discussed

- the key facts or issues
- the key points from any discussion
- the decision reached or the matter reported
- what action is to be taken, by whom and by when.

Minutes should be circulated as soon as is practical following the meeting, normally within two weeks. Don't be tempted to save postage and wait until the next agenda is ready before sending out the minutes. Many of the actions will not have happened if the members don't receive a gentle prompt via the minutes.

(ii) taking action

It goes with the role that you will be responsible for a good deal of the action following a meeting. You may need to take some action even before you prepare the minutes. It makes good sense to note these items at the time they are decided. Preparing the minutes will give you your own action list. Be prepared to place the items in order of priority and then work methodically through the list.

- some things may need direct action from you which means that you can control the timing
- some things may need action by others who were not at the meeting and they need to know of the decision
- some things require you to involve others and so you may be in their hands when it comes to timing.

(iii) follow up

In between meetings there is plenty to do. We have already stressed the importance of the relationship with the:

- Group Chairman
- Group Treasurer
- Group Leader

and a regular update is essential. You may find it best to make contact with each of them individually, but it can also be useful on occasions to meet as a Group.

Those who have taken on action points from the meeting deserve your support as well. They may wish to seek clarification about what they agreed to do. You, on the other hand will want to be certain that they understand what

they agreed to do and, more importantly, when it was to be done by.

You do need to impress upon them all your need to be kept informed so that you are able to track progress, keep things coordinated and arrange for help if problems arise.

You will quickly learn how to work with each individual. Some will see a telephone call to check progress as nagging, whilst other will welcome the reminder.

Sample Minutes - Group Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on.....at.....in.....

Present: Ian Thompson (in the chair), Nigel Brittain (Secretary), Lisa Smith (Treasurer), Simon Mason (Group Leader), Katherine Brown, Tom Green, Don Drane, Jennifer Corner, Paul Cutts, Mick Evans, Gordon Fairbrother, Maureen Smith

1. Welcome and Introductions for newcomers – Tom Green and Katherine Brown
2. Apologies for absence were received from Lawrence Birch and David Chestnut
3. The Secretary, Nigel Brittain, moved, seconded by Mick Evans, that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as an accurate record. (Passed)
4. Matters arising from the minutes:
 - (a) it was noted that the new patrol tent had been delivered and Group Leader reported that it had already been used at the Troop Frostbite weekend.
5. Correspondence received and sent was read.
6. Financial Report
 - (a) Current balances
Current account - \$300
Deposit Account - \$1545
High Interest Account - \$3277
 - (b) Review of Group Budget
The Treasurer reported that Group finances were in line with expectations, although quotes for the property and equipment insurance were higher than anticipated. The new patrol tent had been purchased at a special discount which saved \$27.
 - (c) Payment of Area and District levy. The amount payable will be \$519.20. It was agreed that the Treasurer should transfer the funds from the current account to meet this liability and make payment.
The Treasurer, Lisa Smith, moved, seconded by Maureen Smith that the Treasurer's report be accepted as a true and accurate record. (Passed).
7. Group Leader's Report
 - (a) Three new Joey Scouts have been invested into the Group. No further changes.
 - (b) Information received from Branch was tabled. See attached.
8. Fundraising Sub-Committee Report
 - (a) The proposed garage sale. The garage sale is to be held on September 17 at the Den. Arrangements are well under way. Don Drane and his team will provide further information at the next meeting.
9. PR Officer Group Newsletter to be distributed next week.
10. There being no further business, the Chairman recapped the decisions made by the Group Committee, actions to be taken and by whom and set the date for the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm. Next meeting will be held on.....at.....

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

A Scout Group is required to hold an Annual General Meeting as soon as possible after 31st March each year.

The meeting is held to:

- adopt the Annual Reports of the Group Leader and the Group Committee
- adopt audited accounts
- elect office bearers for the ensuing year.

The AGM also provides an opportunity to promote what the Group has achieved in the past year and its plans for the future to the parents and the local community. There is a need to work closely with the Group Leader if the AGM is going to achieve all that it could.

The biggest challenge is often to get people to turn up. They won't if it has a history of being a long drawn out meeting. There is, however, a need to conduct the formal part of the meeting in a proper fashion.

The Group Secretary's role is the same as at any other meeting and has the usual three stages:

- preparing for the meeting
- at the meeting
- after the meeting.

You are likely to have gained some experience of other meetings before you get to your first AGM, and so you will be able to apply some tried and tested routines.

There are some issues which deserve some thought well beforehand:

- will there be guests, or even a guest speaker, and if so who will look after them?
- who will actually arrange what, given that several aspects of the Group may be involved?

It is a good idea for the report and accounts to be circulated in writing. This means that the Group Chairman can concentrate on the highlights in your comments. You may choose

to send out the report and accounts in advance. In any event a written report is useful to send to those who were not at the AGM to let them know how active the Group has been.

You should also remember that if you are to continue in the role of Group Secretary the meeting will have to re-elect you.

Sample AGM Agenda

Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome by the Group Chairman
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the previous AGM
4. Reports by
 - Group Chairman
 - Group Treasurer
 - Group Leader
 - Section LeadersReports moved and seconded
5. Election of office bearers
6. Appointment of Auditor for the coming year
7. Opportunity for invited guests to speak
8. Opportunity for speakers from the floor
9. General Business
10. Guest Speaker

Meeting Closed – Refreshments

Make information received available to members of the Group

(i) Distributing information

You will often be the person who receives information needed by a range of others in the Group.

You need to establish a system for distributing information. The system needs to be reliable and quick. Ideas include:

- pigeon holes at the Scout Hall or other point which everyone uses
- regular postal or personal delivery
- delivery to the Section meetings.

(ii) Group Diary

Many Groups find it useful to publish a Group Diary. This means that everyone involved has a clear idea of what is happening when and

can plan their time accordingly. In a very active Group it also ensures that the Group's facilities are not double booked.

This usually is coordinated by the Group Leader, but it is a good idea to have Committee dates and details included in this diary.

Having dates planned a year ahead is not uncommon in Scouting, and therefore a published diary will give good advanced warning.

(iii) Group Newsletter

Keeping people in the Group up-to-date with what has happened and what is about to happen is essential if everyone is to feel involved. It is a significant task and one that is best not done by the Group Secretary.

The Secretary will no doubt be a contributor to the newsletter, but this is one workload that needs to be shared. Discuss with the Group Chairman the appointment of a Group Newsletter Editor.

Some Groups have found that much of the newsletter can be produced by the young people in the Group. Their involvement can often help readership as their parents look for their child's contribution.

Keep in touch with the District Secretary

An open dialogue with the District Secretary means that the Group is always well informed and situations can be identified early so that they never grow into problems. It also makes it easier to make the call for help if you are in regular contact.

Keep such records as the Group Leader and Group Chairman require Group Directory

There is certainly a need to keep a record of the names, addresses and telephone number of all those who hold an appointment or office in the Group. This includes:

- the Leaders, Assistant Leaders, helpers and adult support members
- members of the Committee.

There may indeed be others. It is useful if all of those involved are included in a directory and

that everyone has a copy. If they do not, it will be the Group Secretary who they will turn to when they need to make contact.

Records and archives

There will be some records that you will need to keep safe. Already mentioned are minute books or folders and records of those involved in the Group. There may well be others and you need to ask so that you are sure of the Group Leader's and the Group Chairman's requirements.

The Group should also have a list of all its youth members. This will be kept by the Group Leader.

Some of the information may be sensitive or confidential and you need to agree who may have access to what.

Holding information about members requires an outline knowledge of the requirements of Commonwealth and State privacy legislation.

Legal documents

The Group Secretary is responsible for ensuring that documents relating to the ownership of property and equipment and all other legal and official documents, together with documents of historical importance or interest are kept in a safe place. If this is the case, the Secretary must keep a register of such documents and details of their location.

OTHER TOPICS

MEMBERSHIP OF SCOUTS AUSTRALIA

Members

Members are those who are invested as Scouts, accept the commitment of the Scout Promise and are current members of a Branch according to Branch Rules.

- *Youth Members*: Young people for whom the youth program is provided (boys and girls, young men and young women) within the age ranges defined for each Section.
- *Adult Members*: Persons appointed to a special leadership or non-uniformed role in the education of young people or

in the management of the Association at Group, District, Branch or National level.

- *Life Members/Honorary Members:* Adults appointed in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Association and its Branches in recognition of long and distinguished service to Scouting.
- *Scout Fellowship Members:* Adults affiliated with a Fellowship attached to a formation of the Association.

Associate members

Those persons who support the Aim and Principles of the Association but have not made the commitment of the Scout Promise. These may include:

- Parents.
- Supporters who give material, fundraising and other support.
- Distinguished citizens whose patronage, encouragement and support are welcomed.
- Sponsors of Scout Groups.
- Associate Venturer Scouts.

Participants in school or community based Scout programs.

Group Bank Accounts

The Group will have a bank account, as it is not appropriate for Group money to be held in the private bank accounts of individuals. In practice, a Group is likely to have a current account and some form of interest earning or investment account for money not immediately required.

The Group bank account/s must be operated by the Group Treasurer and other persons authorized by the Group Executive Committee, and is based on TWO signatures.

It is usual that the other people authorized by the Group Executive Committee to operate the bank account/s include the Group Chairman and Secretary and the Group Leader.

The requirement for two signatures on each cheque exists to safeguard both Scouting and you, the individual. This requirement is in your governing document, Policy and Rules (P&R). Members of the Group Executive who fail to

operate the system correctly may find themselves personally liable for any losses. One of the commonest causes of misappropriation of Scout Group funds is failure to use the two signatures system sensibly or honestly.

OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

People

We have already listed several people who can give you help. These were chiefly those in your own Group and District.

Similar structures exist for the Area or Region of which your District is part. There is also Scouts Australia's Branch Headquarters where a wide range of specialists are there to help.

You may also find that there are other local organizations, also working with young people, who have particular expertise. It is worth remembering that we can work with and not compete against these other organisations.

Publications

Scouting has a wide range of books, booklets, and information sheets available for your use. Many of these can be accessed via the website www.scouts.com.au

UNDERSTANDING SCOUTING LANGUAGE

Abbreviations, terms and jargon

To the newcomer, Scouting can seem to have a language all of its own and far too many people talk in abbreviations, which can be a barrier to newcomers. This 'jargon buster' is designed to give you, the newcomer, a basic understanding of the terms used.

Group The local unit of Scouting that will consist of one or more Sections and be led by a **Group Leader**

Mob A Joey Scout Section

Pack A Cub Scout Section that will be divided into Groups called

Sixes, each led by a **Sixer** and **Second**

Troop A Scout Section which will be made up of a number of **Patrols**, each led by a **Patrol Leader** and **Assistant Patrol Leader**

Unit A Venturer Scout Section which will be managed by a **Unit Executive Committee**

Crew A Rover Section which is led by a **Crew Leader**

Each Section will have its own Leaders, usually a Section Leader supported by Assistant Section Leaders together with Appointed Helpers.

JSL Joey Scout Leader
AJSL Assistant Joey Scout Leader

CSL Cub Scout Leader
ACSL Assistant Cub Scout Leader

SL Scout Leader
ASL Assistant Scout Leader

Youth Helper A young person over 15 years of age helping in the Joey Scout, Cub Scout or Scout Section

VSL Venturer Scout Leader
AVSL Assistant Venturer Scout Leader

RA Rover Adviser

The terms **Leader** and **Scouter** are both used to describe adults who are fully trained.

Some adults working on Committees may wish to become adult members of the Movement. This option can be offered and the usual sign up process must occur. These members may choose to wear uniform. They must have a duty statement.

Besides the Leaders, the Group will have a team of other adults who provide support chiefly with administration and fundraising. These will be led by a **Group Chairman**. The Group Chairman is strictly speaking the Chairman of the Group Committee which meets monthly and holds an Annual General Meeting and includes all those, especially the parents, who are connected with the Group.

The Group Executive is made up of the Group Chairman, Group Secretary and the Group Treasurer. Some Groups are 'sponsored' by, for instance, a Church, and they are the Sponsoring Authority.

Your Group will be part of a **District**, which exists to provide support and promote cooperation between Groups. The District will be led by a **District Commissioner (DC)**. The District Commissioner is likely to be supported by a team of **Assistant District Commissioner (ADC)** and **District Advisers (DA)**. These will each have specific responsibilities. The District looks for support from an Area or Region, which will be led by an **Area Commissioner (AC)** or **Regional Commissioner (RC)**. Similarly to the District there will be a team of **Assistant Area Commissioners (AAC)** or **Assistant Regional Commissioners (ARC)**.

Both Districts and Areas/Regions have Executive Committees in line with the arrangements within the Scout Groups.

The Scout Group Structure

