

7.1 - GROUP COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

P & R R4.7 sets out the functions of the Group Committee. The following statement sets out the practices in the ACT Branch. The *Group Leader and Group Committee Handbook* also contains valuable advice.

In many cases, all members of a Group Committee are parents of *Scouts*, but it is worthwhile to endeavour to attract people from a wider field and, in this way, to obtain the help of people other than those immediately connected with the Group.

The Group Leader must be the only uniformed member, but must not be chairman. Parents who are also Leaders do not become members of the Group Committee, for this can often cause conflict.

The Group Leader occupies a position of adviser to the Committee with a power of veto which may be exercised to keep the activities of the Committee in accordance with the rules of the Association.

APPOINTMENT

Members of a Group Committee are appointed or retired by the Group Leader. In the case of sponsored Groups after consultation with the sponsoring authority.)

OFFICE BEARERS

President

The duties of the President are to take the chair at all meeting of the Committee and to lead the Committee in its general function of assisting the Group Leader.

Secretary

The duties of the Secretary are to call the meetings of the Group Committee, to draw up an agenda for each meeting, to keep minutes of each meeting and to distribute copies, to receive and answer correspondence at the direction of the Committee.

Treasurer

The duties of the Treasurer are to keep a true and proper record of the finances of the Group and to present a financial statement at each meeting of the Committee. Group Committees may have considerable amounts of money pass through their hands in a year.

With the exception of Venturer Units noted below, all money received by or on behalf of a Group or any Section of a Group, must be paid into a Bank, or other similar account in the Name of the Group operated by a minimum of two signatories. (See Policy statement 4.1 on Financial Management).

Venturer Units are permitted to operate their own account, but their books must be available for inspection by the Treasurer and Auditor, and included in the annual return. Although they are included in the Group bank account and annual return, it should be noted that 'subs' collected by a Section are administered by that Section and are not at the disposal of the Group Committee. (P & R R4.8(2)). The Group funds are administered by the Group Committee acting in consultation with the Group Council.

Auditors

A copy of the annual financial statement of the Group, duly certified by the auditor (an independent and responsible person) must be submitted to the Branch Office within three months of the end of the Group's accounting year which is 1 January to 31 December.

Publicity Officer

The duties of a Publicity Officer include collecting information for, and editing the Group magazine, and passing relevant copy to the Branch Public Relations team. (See Policy Statement 5.1 on Public Statements).

Quartermaster

The duties of the Quartermaster are to keep an accurate inventory of the Group property, to check out and return in all Group equipment and report to the Committee on repairs or replacements needed. An accurate assessment of value is required for insurance purposes.

Other positions with specific responsibilities can be added as required by the Group.

Group Financial Management

(See also Policy statement 4.1 - Financial and Asset Management)

It is good financial practice for Group Committees to develop and adopt a budget for each financial year (the calendar year) so that commitments can be foreseen and plans made to raise the necessary income.

Many Groups adopt the practice of setting a per capita annual Group fee (usually modified for multi-member families) to cover basic outlays such as hall maintenance, insurance and electricity and water charges; and rely on fund-raising efforts for other expenditure such as the purchase of equipment. It is, however, for the Group Committee to decide its own strategy in this matter.

In general, Scouting practice is for activities to be self-supporting; that is a fee is charged to those participating which just covers the costs involved. On rare occasions the Group Committee may agree to undertake special fund-raising to subsidise attendance at National or International events. (See also Policy Statement 4.2 - Reimbursement of Expenses).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION

All members of Group Committees are members of the Association and, as such, are bound by the rules and policies of the Association. This applies to all the activities of the Group Committee and its members when acting in the name of, or on behalf of, the Association.

MEETINGS

It is important that the Group Committee meets on a regular basis, usually once a month.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

It is necessary also for the Group Committee to hold an Annual Meeting and, according to Branch practice, these are generally held between February and the end of April each year. All parents of

members of the Group, Leaders, friends, District and Region staff, and a Branch representative are generally invited and every effort should be made to ensure that this meeting is one of the highlights of the Group's year. A typical agenda would be :

- Prayer
 - Welcome
 - Apologies
 - Minutes of last Annual Meeting
 - Matters arising
 - Reports
- President, Treasurer, Group Leader.

The Group Leader's report should cover all the Section (Reports are very useful items of business and all should be prepared in consultation to avoid double references. If possible have them printed for distribution).

- Motion of appreciation of the retiring committee and of the Leaders.
- Announcement of the new Committee.
- Address by District Commissioner or ACT Commissioner for the Region.
(Many Groups stage displays by their youth members and this is an excellent practice)
- Other business - such as votes of thanks, presentations, etc.

AUTHORITY

This policy statement was approved by the Branch Executive Committee on 24 March 1993 and amended on 25 June 1997.