

Adopted 29th July 2006
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Parents and Friends Support Group Guidelines.

The local Scout Group is to a large extent dependant on the community it serves. A Scout Group is the equivalent of a small business in the workload required to transact its business consistent with best practice.

The tasks required of the Scout Group include:

- Staff recruitment support and management
- Property maintenance and management
- Internal and external relations (e.g. Parents, County, National, VEC, Parish, School etc)
- Equipment Management
- Administration
- Grant Applications
- Financial Management
- Fundraising
- Standards Compliance (SQS, Code of Ethics etc)
- Training
- A comprehensive and active programme in all sections

It can be seen that this list while not exhaustive is demanding and requires a dedicated team to deliver on its requirements.

The Adult Scouter team is a precious resource in the Group and should be employed to where it is most effective and most required, namely in the delivery of the Scout Programme. Insofar as possible other duties in the Scout Group should be undertaken by other people.

The Group Council has responsibility for the administrative tasks in the Scout Group. This presents an opportunity to involve non-Scouters. In particular the Group Council roles of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer could be held by persons other than the programme Scouters.

This has the effect of sharing the burden, involving more adults in the business of the Group, and frees Scouters to concentrate on programme. Maintaining a priority for the programme at Group Council is a key requirement in this model.

Establishing a Parents and Friends Support Group under direction of the Group Council offers a great opportunity to gather further adult support for the Group.

The framework for such a Group could be as follows:

The PFSG shall provide support and assistance to the Scout Group and is responsible to the Scout Group Council.

Term of Office: The Parents and Friends Support Group may be appointed annually at the Group Council AGM.

The business of the Parents and Friends Support Group could include the following:

- Fundraising
- Den/property development and maintenance
- Group event support (e.g. catering at an investiture or parents night)
- Other tasks as allocated by the Group Council

Officers: The Group Treasurer is the Treasurer of the PFSG. Up to three representatives of the PFSG, who are members of Scouting Ireland, may be members of the Scout Group Council, subject to the approval of the Scout Group Council.

Potential Members: The Parents and Friends Support Group could be drawn obviously from Parents. Often parents from the younger sections (Beavers and Cubs) are more readily recruited for the Support Group. Former Scouters/Leaders are potentially a rich support as are past members generally. They typically have enormous loyalty and affection for their Group.

The commitment required in the Parents and Friends Support Group is often far less than that of a Scouter in a section and often former Scouters can deliver high quality support in this role. Parents of Scouters have shown themselves to be very committed to Groups and might be recruited. Members of the PFSG must apply for membership of Scouting Ireland in accordance with the Constitution, Rules and policies.

Meetings: The Parents and Friends Support Group should meet as its business requires but needs to meet frequently enough to maintain momentum and continuity. At a minimum the Support Group should meet every two months. The PFSG shall hold an Annual General Meeting for all parents and friends of the Scout Group.

Social: Membership of the PFSG should be enjoyable to belong to. A social aspect to its activities will help to build and maintain camaraderie and commitment.

Size: The optimal size for this group is between 6 and 12 persons.

Identity: It is important that members of a PFSG are encouraged to share in the identity and sense of community of the Scout Group. They should be encouraged to attend appropriate Group activities where this does not detract from the programme requirements of the sections. The primacy of the role of the Scouter in programme matters is maintained. To assist their identification

with the group they could for instance be given a polo top with the Group badge or logo. Adults may only attend Scouting activities in accordance with the Rules and policies of Scouting Ireland.

Support Group Establishment: The Parents and Friends Support Group will not establish itself by accident and requires positive initiatives to bring it to reality:

- A potential list of candidates should be drawn up by the Group Council
- The candidates should be individually approached and the requirements explained to them, this should be arranged by the Group Council.
- A meeting of willing members should be called. At this first meeting a briefing on the business of the group should be given and an explanation of their role. It is also important that the first tasks for the Support Group are presented at this meeting.
- There should be a liaison person appointed by Group Council

Buíochoas: It is important that the work of adults for Scouting Ireland is acknowledged. A simple thanks is often appreciated. When the Group applies for Adult Awards it should remember those who work at support level.

Scouting Ireland at National level could support the development of Parents and Friends Support Groups at local level through the provision of promotional material, guidelines and a framework for their establishment and work.