

Make a difference

Getting involved in Scouting as a Secretary

Introduction

Ask a young person why they stay in Scouting, and they will probably say because they 'get something out of it.' This is true for adults in Scouting too!

Being an adult in Scouting can be challenging but also very rewarding. What adults get out of Scouting, depends on what they put in! Adults stay involved for a variety of reasons and some are the same as for young people – it is fun, there is chance to make new friends, and adults get the same opportunity for adventure as young people. There is also the chance for adults to see young people develop and grow, and know they have contributed to it by passing on their skills and abilities and investing time in them.

Giving is often just as rewarding as receiving, and giving your time and effort to Scouting will certainly be very rewarding!

Before you were asked

Before you were asked to carry out a role in Scouting, an amount of preparation will have taken place. Somebody will have:

- thought about the job that needs to be done
- discussed the skills and the type of person needed to do the job
- identified people to ask.

You have been asked to volunteer because we believe you have something valuable to offer in this role.

Outline of the role

You will have been invited to be the Secretary of either the Group, District, or County Scout Executive Committee. Your main contact will be the Chair of the Committee, and either the Group Scout Leader (GSL), District Commissioner (DC), or County Commissioner (CC). These abbreviations will be used throughout for simplicity.

The main tasks of this role are as follows:

- acting as Secretary of the Council and Executive Committee (i.e. preparing invitations, preparing agendas, taking minutes)
- maintaining records (i.e. minutes, legal and historical documents, registration documents, insurance policies, vehicle registration, and so on)
- supporting the Group, District or County in its administrative responsibilities (i.e. writing and receiving letters, obtaining necessary licences, obtaining insurance, applying for Council Tax relief and so on)
- completing and returning the Annual Census and forwarding a copy to the Treasurer
- working with the GSL/DC/CC and Chairperson in making arrangements for the Annual General Meeting.

There is no fixed time commitment - the time required to fulfil the role varies. It is probable that you will have Executive meetings between three and six times each year, in addition to time spent with the Chair and other Administrators (such as the Treasurer), and supporting fundraising events.

Requirements of the role

There is no maximum age for appointment although you must be over 18, and a Warranted leader cannot hold the post of Secretary. You are also required to be able to hold the position of Trustee.

Before you decide

Scouting will be delighted if you say “yes”, but it is important that you make this decision based on all the facts.

1. Start by asking some questions about the role, so that you have a clear idea about what you might take on – for example:
 - What does the role involve?
 - Where, and when, will I be asked to do the role?
 - Who will I be working with?
 - Who will I be responsible to, and for?
 - What equipment and facilities are available?
 - Will I have to wear uniform, make a Promise or complete any learning?
 - How long do you want me to do the role?
 - How much will it cost?
 - How much time will it take?
 - What help will I get?

Some of these questions may have already been answered by the person who asked you to get involved, but make sure you have as much information as you need. Remember too, that the details are open for discussion – you may not want or be able to do everything that has been asked. Roles can be flexible to meet your needs as well as Scouting's.

2. Meet some of the people involved – you might want to see who you might end up working with, find out what they think about Scouting and why they are involved, and you could ask to meet the person who would support you if you took on the role.

First, there is the Chair and GSL/DC/CC who are best placed to inform you about local Scouting and the Secretary's role. Second, there are the other Secretaries who are fulfilling the same role as you in different areas, who might be able to give you a picture of the role and what is involved.

3. Get hold of more information – the publications *Supporting the Group – Secretary* and *Policy, Organisation and Rules* are available from the Scout Information Centre (0845 300 1818) or online (www.scouts.org.uk/scoutbase).

Your decision

Scouting clearly hopes that you will say 'yes'. If you do not feel able to help, it would be better to have a clear 'no' or 'not at the moment', than 'a perhaps' that never happens. If you do not feel that the role suggested is right for you, but do feel that you wish to help in some other way, let us know. There is always plenty to do.

Procedures

Before starting a role in Scouting, local Scouting is required to make sure there is no reason why you should not be involved in a Movement for young people. We do this in two ways. One is by seeking references from people who know you well. The second is by a criminal records check and by checking our records to see if you have been involved in Scouting before. These checks are designed to safeguard our young people and the Movement's assets. They are completed quickly and in confidence.

You will be asked to complete a CRB form, and may be required to attend a meeting of the local Appointments sub-Committee. The person who recruited you can explain this to you and

may even go with you. There is also a learning requirement that you need to complete, however this should be discussed with you before you start in Scouting.

The Scout Council elects the Secretary at the Annual General Meeting. Once the appointment is approved you will take over the role.

Be part of it!

Scouting has a lot to offer both young people and the adults that work with them. At times it will be a challenge, but there is the fun and sense of satisfaction from making a worthwhile commitment that more than makes up for that!

There are almost 100,000 adults who are regularly involved in the United Kingdom as Members of the Movement. Many more provide back-up support. Go on, be one of them!