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8 June 2020

To: Group Executive Committee Chairs/Treasurers
Group Scout Leaders

GUIDANCE FOR GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

For the past few years, I have written, at about this time, to remind Group Executive Committees of the requirements to complete and submit a copy of the annual accounts to District. I also take this opportunity to touch upon some other, related matters. This is based on advice we have received from Headquarters (and the Charity Commission), which we pass-on to you.

Meetings of Group Executive Committees

Just in case you have not seen some recent amendments to Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR):

- Electronic voting (such as email) is allowed for decision making of the County/District/Group Executive Committee and its sub-Committees when deemed appropriate by the Chair. In such instances at least 75% of committee members must approve the decision.
- The County/District/Group Executive Committee and its sub-Committees can meet by telephone conference, video conference as well as face to face in order to discharge its responsibilities when agreed by the appropriate Chair.

As a District Executive we made use of both of these amendments. Within the District and County, Zoom and Microsoft Teams have been used for many such meetings. Our first virtual Appointments Advisory Committee meetings have recently been held - with more to follow!

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street, Lancaster, LA1 1PR

President: Mrs Suzie Reynolds DL | **District Commissioner:** Mrs Mandy Sweet | **District Chair:** Dr Tony Andrews

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Registered Charity Number: 1027167

Group Annual Accounts

It is appreciated that the Government's health advice is an added difficulty at the present time but for those Groups with a Financial Year ended 31 March 2020 much can be done in completing your accounts at year end. We've completed the District Accounts (which are currently with the Independent Examiner). Likewise, for two non-Scout accounts, of which I am Treasurer, the accounts have been finalised and are also with Independent Examiners. Albeit, in the last two instances, they have been submitted electronically. Much depends on how you maintain your accounting records and/or the relationship you have with your Scrutineer.

Detailed Guidance - Annual Accounts

It is a requirement of POR that Scout Groups keep accurate records of all monies received and expended and that, once approved, a copy of each Scout Group's Annual Accounts is submitted to the District. Thanks to all those Groups that have responded to this annual request. The data I have extracted, from the records, has been helpful during the current circumstances.

When accounts are prepared, they should include all monies received or paid on behalf of the Scout Group. For example, if Sections hold separate accounts these are to be incorporated into Scout Group's Annual Accounts.

Provided all the necessary information is included, when you compile the accounts, use whatever appropriate format suits your requirements. However, there is a suitable version that has been on the District website for several years (one formatted for electronic completion and the other for manual use) - there is a link at the bottom of this letter. This version has been based on the format recommended by Scout Headquarters (and indeed the Charity Commission). In addition to the summary of receipts and payments for the year, bank balances (at financial year-end) are to be shown. Please ensure that two trustees sign the accounts and that the Scrutineer's report is completed. If you forward the report electronically to me, please ensure that the trustees' and scrutineer's signatures are there.

The Scout Association issued additional guidance some years ago, reminding us that a Trustees' Report has to be prepared in addition. An appropriate format has been provided (also on the District website) - this needs little amendment. If you produce the same information but in a different format, then please use this.

I ask that the completed Annual Accounts (plus the Trustees' Report) are submitted to me either by post (to the address above) or electronically (e-mail address below). This should be done within 14 days of your Scout Group's Annual General Meeting (AGM). Do not assume that either the DC or I will collect one at your AGM.

Annual General Meetings

It is acknowledged, as above, that Coronavirus is an added challenge at the present time. It is a requirement of POR that each Scout Group holds an AGM within six months of the end of the Financial Year (that is to say 30 September 2020 for those Groups with a financial year ended 31 March 2020). Each Group Executive Committee must decide - in the light of current circumstances - when to hold their AGM. This will very much depend upon the Government's advice at the time and when your Annual Accounts will be completed. There are several possibilities: hold a face-to-face meeting within the stipulated timescale; postpone a face-to-face meeting until later in the year; or conduct the meeting electronically. Note that any such decision taken should be recorded in the minutes of a meeting of the

Group Executive Committee and all members of the Group Council kept informed. If you need any additional guidance please ask.

Please remember that both the DC and I are members of your Group Scout Council - so please keep us informed of the plans for your AGM.

For information, the District AGM has been scheduled for Thursday 25 June 2020 and we continue to plan ... but watch this space. The meeting could be postponed to sometime in September 2020 or we may have to consider a virtual meeting.

Assistance

If you have any questions or require any assistance (in relation to the contents of this letter, or other finance or governance matters) please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Andrews', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tony Andrews
District Chair

Link for financial resources (log-in required):

<http://www.lonsdalescouts.org.uk/leaders-pages/finance-grants/>