



To all Members of the District Scout Council

January 2015

## **SHARPE BEQUEST CONSULTATION**

### **Introduction**

At the recent meeting of the District Executive Committee we agreed to consult widely, within Lonsdale District, about a proposal to release some of the funds held within the Sharpe Bequest. Please consider the information, in this letter, and then provide feedback (as indicated below). If you need any further information, or clarification, then please ask.

Note that, at present, these are just proposals. After further consideration, by the District Executive Committee, we would have to seek the approval of the Charity Commission before any funds could be expended for purposes other than that stipulated in Maurice Sharpe's Will (if that is the outcome of this consultation).

### **Background**

Maurice Sharpe, who died in February 1989, left a bequest of £48,795.73 to Lancaster and District Scout Council. Subsequent approval was sought to include all Scout Groups within the area of Lonsdale District Scout Council. Under the terms of the will the Scout Council was given absolute discretion as to the investment of the money; the interest was to be used to provide capital equipment but it was stipulated [in the will] that each Scout Group applying for a grant must raise an equivalent amount themselves.

Our predecessors took the decision to maintain the capital value of the fund by reinvesting part of the interest received. This was done by using either the Retail Prices Index or Consumer Prices Index to maintain the capital value of the fund. Thus the current capital value of the fund is £99,375.94 - increased from the original £48,795.73.

The remaining interest is used to provide grants to those Scout Groups applying for assistance [under the terms of the will]. Note that during the past six years we have received - and approved - applications from 12 of our 22 Scout Groups (six have applied on one occasion, three on two occasions and two on five). In general terms we do not allocate all the money available for distribution.

### **Initial Proposal**

The District Executive Committee discussed a proposal at some length: that we seek approval to release some of the capital (amounting to £50,580.21) by reducing the value of the accumulated fund back to the original £48,795.73.

**Question 1:** *Do you agree with the proposal to release some of the capital locked-up in the fund?*

### **Further Considerations**

There are additional questions in relation to the allocation of these released funds (if this is both the wish of the members of Lonsdale District and then approved by the Charity Commission) plus two proposals about the operation of the Sharpe Bequest. The details are set-out in the accompanying pages.

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Registered Charity Number: 1027167

## **Questions / Response**

If you need any further information about these proposals please contact the District Chairman or District Treasurer. The proposals were discussed at the Leaders' Meeting on 22 January 2015. There is also the opportunity for anyone to make a response, which should be sent to the District Chairman ([ta.scout@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:ta.scout@mypostoffice.co.uk)) by 20 February 2015. When next discussing the proposals the District Executive Committee will be guided by the all views expressed. If no further responses are received it will be assumed that - overall - the proposals are acceptable.

Note that the various questions have been numbered - this may help when you respond to this consultation.

Tony Andrews

District Chairman  
for District Executive Committee

## **USE OF THE RELEASED FUNDS**

### **Why Release Funds?**

We have looked very carefully at the total value of the fund and believe that at least some of the money could be better used - to assist Scout Groups within the District.

### **Use of Released Funds?**

In considering the proposals the District Executive considered that the released funds could be used to assist Scout Groups with repairs to Scout Headquarters.

**Question 2:** *Do you agree with the proposal that the released funds could be used to assist Scout Groups with repairs to their Scout Headquarters?*

During our discussions it was also suggested that the released funds could also be used to part-fund building work at one, or both, of our Activity Centres. This would, of necessity, reduce the amount of money available for Scout Groups.

**Question 3:** *Do you agree with the proposal that the released funds could also be used to part-fund building work at one, or both, of our Activity Centres?*

**Question 4:** *Alternatively, would you be happy for the District Executive to decide to use the released funds for any justifiable purpose?*

### **Retaining a Stipulation of the Will?**

In his will Maurice Sharpe stipulated that any grants provided should be matched by an equal sum from the Scout Group. This may be difficult as large sums will, no doubt, be involved. If we do not request such a contribution then this would, of necessity, reduce the number of Scout Groups that could be helped.

**Question 5:** *Should Scout Groups granted money for repairs to their buildings be required to match the amount received from the released funds?*

**Question 6:** *Alternatively, should Scout Groups be asked to make any contribution, from their own funds?*

**Question 7:** *Would you be happy for the District Executive to vary the percentage contribution from Scout Groups (depending upon circumstances)?*

### **Other Comments**

We have considered this proposal carefully but as we involve more people there may be points we have missed.

**Question 8:** *Do you have any further comments, suggestions, or questions? If so what are they?*

## **SHARPE BEQUEST**

### **Important**

It has to be emphasised that we are not proposing to close the fund. There will be at least £48,795.73 remaining - which will continue to be invested. However, with a reduction in capital the amount of interest available for distribution will be reduced.

**Question 9:** *What guidelines should be given to the Finance sub-Committee: to start (again) to grow the value of the fund in line with inflation or use all the interest to distribute to those Scout Groups applying for grants?*

### **Explorer Scout Units**

It is stipulated in the will that grants should be made to Scout Groups and that the bequest must not be used for the direct purposes of the Scout Council. When the will was prepared Venture Scout Units, generally associated with Scout Groups, was the provision for those in the 16+ year age range. The same association with Scout Groups cannot be said for Explorer Scout Units. When the matter was last considered it was argued that as these are part of the District and cannot benefit from the Sharpe Bequest. As we are looking at other aspects, we agreed that we should look, again, at this.

**Question 10:** *Should Explorer Scout Units be eligible to apply for grants from the Sharpe Bequest?*