

1 Introduction

This policy document is produced to set out the standards by which the finances of the Warminster Scout Group (www.warminsterscoutgroup.co.uk) and any individual Section accounts for Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers are to be managed.

It contains information that is useful to parents / carers as well as leaders of the Sections / Group.

This policy takes effect from 1st April 2020 until such time as it is superceded.

This policy is reviewed annually and has been agreed via email vote of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

Once approved, it is then notified to the Group Executive at the next ECM (Executive Committee Meeting), whilst also being uploaded to the website.

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2 General Information

2.1 Budget and Finance Sub-Committee

The Warminster Scout Group has a sub-committee of the Group Executive Committee that is charged with the task of creating and approving the Annual Group budget, and then submitting it to the Group Executive Committee for ratification. Ideally this ratification is obtained at the last Group Executive Committee meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The sub-committee monitors the finances of the Sections and Group, recommends a Group budget for future years including subscription increases, manages Gift-Aid and oversees the end of year accounts process (whereby end of year accounts for Group are produced, scrutineered / audited, signed off, submitted to District).

The sub-committee should meet at least in February and September but can meet at more frequent intervals or agree items via e-mail as required.

The sub-committee is comprised of the Group Chairman, Group Scout Leader, Group Treasurer and two additional members of the Group Exec

2.2 Group Treasurer

The Group Treasurer is responsible for the day to day management and recording of transactions for the Warminster Group accounts (including any suspense accounts), along with payment of invoices and expenses. The Group Treasurer is also responsible for the production of the Group budget which is set before the Budget and Finance Sub-committee, along with the Year End accounts for the Warminster Scout Group.

2.3 Bank Account

The Warminster Scout Group operates a current account and a savings account currently with HSBC on behalf of all the sections within the Group. Bank fees are presently not incurred for day to day banking facility. There are four approved signatories on the accounts. To withdraw funds requires two signatories. Online access to the accounts is available to the Group Treasurer for the purposes of account monitoring only.

All subscriptions are paid to the Group current account.

2.4 Policy and Template documents

This policy, along with template documents for Standing Orders, Gift Aid, Expense Claims are stored on the Warminster Scout Website at :

<http://www.warminsterscoutgroup.co.uk/policies-and-information.html>

3 Parent / Carer Information

3.1 Subscription Payments (Subs)

Subscriptions are paid to the Warminster Scout Group account. Subscriptions are set by the Group Executive Committee at the start of each financial year, although they reserve the right to vary subscriptions part way through the year if finances dictate. If this should happen, at least 30 days notice will be given to parents / carer.

We encourage payment by Standing Order as this spreads the cost through the 12 months and reduces the time that Section Leaders need to spend at the beginning of meetings collecting subscriptions. If payment by Standing Order creates a problem, parents / carers should speak to their children's Section leader. Payment by cheque or cash can be accepted, but is not encouraged due to the administration this creates. Cheques should be payable to the '**Warminster Scout Group**' and clearly marked on the back with the name of the child/ren it covers.

Currently the monthly membership rates following investiture are as follows:

- Scouts: £7.50
- Cubs: £7.50
- Beavers £7.50
- Explorers £7.50

Completed standing order forms should be returned to your bank (or those with online access to their accounts can complete this directly). Please ensure your child/ren's name is used in the 'Reference number' field for your standing order.

3.2 Gift Aid

Included with the Standing Order form for payment of subscriptions is a Gift Aid form. Where possible and appropriate we encourage parents / carers to agree to Gift Aid as this enables the Group to obtain additional funds without there being an increased cost to the individuals. Money raised from Gift Aid is retained at Group Account level and is used in part to subsidise a 'Hardship' fund.

Completed Gift Aid forms should be returned to your child's Section Leader.

3.3 Non-payment of subscriptions

It is the parents / carer responsibility to make sure that payment for subscriptions is regularly made once the 'introduction' sessions have been completed.

If finances are an issue at any stage then families are urged to contact the Section Leader / Treasurer in confidence so options can be discussed and agreed. A small 'Hardship' fund is available at Group level to support this.

Where payments are not received by the date due, parents / carers will be contacted (either via email or in person) the following month by the section leader or the Group Treasurer. A second reminder will be sent after a minimum of 4 weeks. If payment is still not forthcoming parents / carer may be asked to remove their child/ren from the Section.

3.4 Other Activities (Camps / Day Trips etc)

The costs for camps and other day trips are normally charged by attendance. They are usually budgeted on the basis of 'at' or 'slightly below' actual costs. For all UK camps and events the costs of the appropriate number of adults attending is normally factored into the cost for each young person, although on occasion this may come from Section or Group funds. Where a Young Leader is attending solely in their leadership role the same applies.

On occasion a small surplus or deficit may occur, for example where food costs are lower than budgeted or transport higher than budgeted.

Where this happens, and after any refunds have been considered and processed, if the positive balance equates to:

- 10% or less of the fee charged to participants this is retained by the Section, or in the case of Group / Family Camps or events by the Group
- More than 10% of the fee charged to participants the parent / carers will be offered a refund or the opportunity to donate some or all to the Group funds.

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Where a loss occurs no refunds will be considered and the deficit for the camp or event will be debited from the relevant Section fund. In the case of Group / Family Camps or events this will be pro rata based on expected attendees.

Refunds for camp and other activities (where an additional fee has been charged) are only considered if there is a surplus after all income and expenditure has been processed, and only offered in exceptional circumstances.

3.5 Leaving the Group

When a child paying by Standing Order leaves the Warminster Scout Group, the parent / carer will be contacted by e-mail to remind them to cancel their Standing Order subscription. A second email will be sent for the second month that subscriptions are still being received.

Where standing order payments are still being received more than 3 months after the child/ren leaving, the Warminster Scout Group reserve the right to treat this as an unrestricted donation to the Warminster Scout Group. No refunds will be made beyond 3 months of the child/ren leaving the Group.

3.6 Refunds

No refunds are made where a child does not attend weekly meetings or other events and activities covered from Section / Group funds.

4 Group Leader / Section Leader Information

The Warminster Scout Group account is operated on a 'Receipts and Payments' Accounting method and subscriptions by standing order are received to the Group account. Activities for the Sections are paid for largely using the subscriptions that are received, and in some cases additional fund-raising activities.

The Group account is managed using an Excel spreadsheet that records budget information, income, expenses, and year end accounts. A second Excel spreadsheet is used for reconciliation of the standing order payments that are received to the Group account.

4.1 Subscription split

Currently £3.75 of the subscriptions received stay with the Group (to pay for things such as insurance, leader training, equipment, utilities, equipment and Scout Association Levy). The remainder of the monthly subscription is "credited" to the appropriate Section each month (via internal transfer to suspense account) to pay for the weekly activities and the badges for those in that Section.

The Group Treasurer will send out a mail to Section Leaders each month, once the Group account bank statements have been reconciled. This will confirm the amounts which are to be paid to the sections as well as any members for whom subscriptions have not been received.

Section leaders / Group Treasurer will follow up non-payment of subscriptions with parents / carers.

4.1.1 Children 'moving up' between Sections

When a child moves up between sections it is important that the 'Subscription' Excel is updated by the Group Treasurer so that subscription payment allocations can be done correctly from Group to Section.

When children move between sections, the following should be done:

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1. Section Leader of section that the child/ren is moving from - Section leader should contact the Group Treasurer (copy to the Section Leader of the new section) to advise the date when the child/ren are expected to move.

The Group Treasurer will then adjust the monthly 'Subscription' Excel monitoring sheet to show that any standing order subscriptions received at Group should be credited to the new Section the month following the expected move date.

2. Where the Section Leader of the new Section contacts the Group Treasurer to advise that a child has moved up (but the 'leaving' Section hasn't advised the Group Treasurer), then subscriptions from the immediate month going forward will be credited to the new section. Crediting of subscriptions prior to this point will not be done.

4.1.2 Leaving the Troop

Where a child leaves the Troop (or is confirmed as having left) the Section Leader will send contact details to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will then make contact with the parent / carer regarding cancelling of any standing orders or overdue subscriptions

4.2 Expenditure from Group Account

Expenditure from Group Account is, as far as possible, kept to a minimum by negotiating discounts on everything from broom handles to tents. Where appropriate a float can be provided by cheque from the Group Treasurer. **Any work / services over £250.00 (with the exception of Quartermaster hut work) must have 3 quotes before action is taken.**

4.2.1 Approval Limits

Expenditure from Group Funds **upto £750** can be paid direct by the Group Treasurer against an appropriate 'Expenses' form.

Expenditure from Group Funds **between £751 and £1,250** must be agreed by at least two members of the Executive Committee (excluding the Group Treasurer).

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Any expenditure from Group Funds **over £1,250** must be agreed by the majority of the Finance sub-committee. These agreements can be obtained via email or at a sub-committee meeting.

4.2.2 Uniform

The Group pays the cost of one piece of uniform (shirt / polo shirt / hoodie) per Section Leader / Assistant Section Leader / Section Assistant per year, with requests for replacements considered as required.

4.3 Expenditure from Section Accounts

When each Section's Leadership (Section Leaders, Assistant Leaders, Section Assistants and Young Leaders) team discuss and agree each term's programme, the budget should be considered and expected expenditure should be agreed in principle.

4.3.1 Approval Limits

Any expected expenditure **less than £500** can be approved by the Section Leader.

All expected expenditure from Section (not camp) accounts **over £500 but less than £750** must be agreed by the Section Leader (SL or CSL or BSL) and at least 1 other person in their Leadership team. Notification of this agreement should be emailed to the Group Treasurer for record keeping purposes (and to support invoices that may then be received from suppliers).

If agreement on an item of expenditure cannot be reached then the matter must be referred to either the Group Scout Leader or Group Treasurer for consideration before action is taken.

All expected expenditure from Section (not camp) accounts **over £750** must be approved by the Finance sub-committee before action is taken. Such matters should be referred to the Group Treasurer who will then arrange for a decision to be made either via e-mail or at the next Finance sub-committee Committee meeting.

4.4 Receipt of Cash and Cheques

Any cash or cheques that are received must be securely handled. It is suggested as 'good practice' that a receipt stating the name, date and amount should be given to the payer and

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this should be done using a 'duplicate receipt' book so that a copy is kept. Any cash or cheques received should be given to the Group Treasurer as soon as possible. **Under no circumstances should cash received ever be used to 'net-off' expenses.**

4.5 Expenses

All details of expenses claimed must be clearly and fully recorded on the "Receipts & Expenses Form" which is available to download from the website. Receipts for all expenses should be submitted with the form, and the form should be completed specifying whether the specific expense is to be paid at Group level or Section level.

Forms must be submitted to the Group Treasurer no more than 6 weeks after an expense was incurred. Expenses will normally be processed within 1 week of the Group Treasurer receiving them, and will be paid by cheque.

4.5.1 Expense form approval

Individual Expenses totaling **upto £250** require signature only by the person claiming the expense.

Individual Expenses totaling **more than £250** require approval by the Section Leader (or in the case of the Section Leader claiming the expense, approval is from the Group Scout Leader, or where the Group Scout Leader is claiming the expense, approval is from the Group Chairman). This approval can be via signature on the expenses form, or e-mail to the Group Treasurer.

4.5.2 Lost receipts

Expenses will normally only be paid against receipts, but it is accepted that on occasion receipts may get lost. In this situation the claimant must state on the "Receipts & Expenses" form that the receipt has been lost. It should be noted that in this situation payment for the expense is at the discretion of the Group Treasurer and / or the Group Chairman.

4.5.3 Mileage

Mileage expenses incurred either during, or to support, scouting activity can be claimed by uniformed leaders within the group from section accounts on the basis of 40p per mile.

Distances must be shown on the expense claim form including From: and To: postcodes to enable validation if required.

4.6 Advances / Floats

Individuals may request the Group Treasurer to supply an advance on expenses to be incurred.

In this situation a “Receipt & Expenses form” should be completed detailing the request and amount required. Invoices / receipts will subsequently be required to support the advance and must be submitted, along with any remaining advance, immediately after the expense has been incurred.

Advances will be paid as a cheque.

4.7 Section Accounts

As we have charitable status we are not allowed to accrue funds but due to the significant cost of certain activities in the programme the Sections are not required to spend the entire balance of their funds each month, however they are encouraged not to retain significant funds over the year.

Finances are reviewed at each Finance and Budget Sub-Committee meeting.

4.8 Additional Activities and Costs

There are occasions where certain weekly meeting activities are very expensive and in these situations the Section’s Leadership team may request an additional payment from families to assist with the cost.

These requests will be kept to the minimum as it is expected that all weekly activities should be covered from the Section funds where possible and planned in advance (See ‘Expenditure from Section Accounts’).

Section Leaders are required to report these circumstances to the Executive Committee for review.

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4.8.1 Camps / Other day trips etc.

Funding for camps or activities at a Group Level must be agreed at the Executive Committee. Funding for camps or activities at a Section level can be agreed within the limits of the approval authority for the Section.

Accounts for Group funded activities should be presented to the Group Treasurer after all the income and expenditure has been received / paid. These should include all receipts and any income / expenditure books used for the event. A statement of account (showing opening balance, income, expenditure, closing balance) should be presented at the same time.

4.8.2 Equipment

The cost of Group equipment (e.g. tents etc) is one of the major costs for the Group and requires being repaired / replaced on a regular basis. As a result it is the Groups intention to budget for this cost via fundraising however the Group reserves the right to charge the cost to the sections.

===== End of Policy =====