

12th Harpenden Scout Group Finance Policy

12th Harpenden Scout Group (the Group) is an excepted charity by the Charity Commission for England & Wales.

The Group Trustee Board are responsible for:

- ensuring the Group's finances are properly managed including the development and maintenance of appropriate budgets to support the work of the Group
- maintaining and managing:
 - a reserves policy for the charity, including a plan for the use of reserves outside the 'minimum'
 - an investment policy for the charity
- preparing and approving the Annual Accounts and arranging their examination by an independent examiner, as appointed by the Group Scout Council at their AGM.
- preparing and approving the Group Trustees' Annual Report (including the Annual Accounts and the report from the independent examiner)
- presenting the approved Group Trustees' Annual Report and Annual Accounts to the Group Scout Council for their consideration at the Group's AGM

(See The Scout Association (TSA) Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) 5.4.6.4 March 2024).

From this point on 12th Harpenden Scout Group will be referred to as "the Group" or "we".

1. Financial Management

The Group Treasurer (Treasurer) is responsible for:

- the day-to-day management and recording of all transactions
- the payment of invoices and expenses.
- the production of the Group's end of year accounts.

The Group's year end is **31st March**.

The Group holds bank accounts with Barclays Bank, which includes internet banking facilities and is in the process of opening a savings account with CCLA. In compliance with POR, to safeguard charity funds from misuse, two signatures are needed to authorise any payment to a third party. Internet banking, where available, is set up so that dual secure logins are required to authorise all transactions.

- All monies received by the Group must be paid into a bank account(s) held in the name of the Group. Transactions can be paid in cash, cheque or via Online Scout Manager (OSM), who use GoCardless to process payments.
- All monies paid out by the Group are paid via bank transfer, or cheque by exception, with dual authorisation (as set out above). No payments are authorised without the appropriate supporting documentation.

1.1 Signatories

The signatories are on the bank mandate are:

- the Treasurer
- the Group Lead Volunteer
- the Chair

The users set up on Internet banking (which includes the ability to approve payments) are currently:

- the Treasurer
- the Group Lead Volunteer
- the Chair

Changes to the bank mandate must be approved by the Trustee Board before any changes are made.

1.2 Gift Aid

The Treasurer will ensure that the Group is registered for Gift Aid and that Gift Aid claims are made at least annually HM Revenue and Customs in respect of any financial donations received by the Group.

Parents / carers are asked to add their gift aid status in OSM when joining the group by the Group Lead Volunteer.

2. Reserves policy

The Group Trustee Board will ensure that sufficient reserves are held to continue and develop the activities of the Group. At their discretion the Group Trustee Board may designate or ring fence funds for specific purposes or projects. The allocation of such funds will be regularly reviewed.

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the group should income and fundraising activities fall short. The Group Trustee Board considers that the group should hold a minimum of £5,500 being equivalent to 12 months running costs, estimated at £5,000 plus a £500 contingency.

Where the Group holds reserves in excess of this minimum, the Group Trustees will set out the rationale for holding the additional reserves in their Annual Report.

3. Investment policy

The Group does not have sufficient funds to invest in longer term investments. The Group has therefore adopted a risk averse strategy to the investment of its funds. All funds are held in cash using only mainstream banks or building societies.

4. Financial Assistance policy

12th Harpenden Scout Group wishes every young person in the Group to be able to take part in our activities, learning skills for life and having fun. We would not want a young person to miss out due to the cost and therefore has a Financial Assistance policy for families who are concerned about covering the cost of our membership fee or any activities. Families are invited to contact the Group Lead Volunteer, in confidence, to discuss ways the

Group can support them in such circumstances. All families are notified of our financial assistance policy when joining the Group, and again when the membership subscriptions are set each year and when invites to residential experiences are sent out.

5. Income

5.1 Membership Subscriptions

The rate of membership subscriptions is set annually by the Group Trustee Board, after discussion by the Group Leadership team.

- Memberships subscriptions are paid by all youth members and are issued each term.
- We do not charge membership fees for adult volunteers or Young Leaders volunteering in any section.
- Membership subscriptions become payable when a young person has been a member of our Group for more than four weeks. We will not refund membership fees, on a pro-rata basis or in full, where a young person has been a member within that term and their membership ends within that term.
- We define “being a member” as starting when a young person first participates in our activities and ending either: when we receive notice that they will no longer be participating (or when they last participate in any of our activities, whichever is later), or when their membership is terminated by the Group.

5.2 Group events – camps and activities

We will usually charge an event fee for activities that fall outside a normal section night.

- the fee will only be used to cover the additional cost of running each event, including a contingency (which may be retained as unrestricted reserves for the Group, where it is not used). Our intention is to cover the event costs, we don't typically expect to make a profit (except fund raising events) or incur a loss from an event.
- we do not charge event fees for our adult volunteers or Young Leaders volunteering, the event cost for each member attending will include this cost.
- event fees must always be paid in advance of the event, unless otherwise agreed with the volunteer-in-charge of the trip. Places may be forfeited should a payment not be received by any due date without prior agreement, with any overdue payment remaining payable.
- any deposit is non-refundable (when there is a single payment for an event, this will be deemed a non-refundable deposit).
 - all other payments are generally considered non-refundable, especially if the payment due date has already passed or it is within 3 days of the event.
 - if attendance is cancelled to an event, the full event fee will remain payable. We will make refunds if the group can recover the cost of the activity.

- signing a young person up to an event constitutes an agreement to pay the full event fee. Should there be extenuating circumstances, payments may be waived under the sole discretion of the Group Lead Volunteer, Treasurer or Group Chair.

5.3 Refunds

Where a refund is given, we will deduct any associated transaction cost e.g. GoCardless transaction fee.

5.4 Non-payment

If a payment remains overdue for 28 days, the Group reserves the right to terminate the membership of the young person concerned. Termination of membership does not remove the obligation to settle outstanding payments.

5.5 GoCardless / OSM Online Payments

The payment facility provided is through a company called GoCardless, who are sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Parents/guardians control all payments and are protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

Parents/guardians will be sent a Payment Request email via Online Scout Manager when a payment is due.

We have different payment schedules:

- Subscriptions – this is for all termly subscription fees
- Camps and Events – this is for all other events, camps, activities and one-off payments

In the payments area parents/guardians can choose to:

- subscribe to payments which means payments will be automatically taken on the stated date, or
- make the payments manually.

Regardless of the choice, parents/guardians will be emailed each time a payment is needed and are able to cancel it if they wish to.

6. Expenditure

No adult volunteer should be out of pocket when assisting with group activities.

All expenses should be submitted to the Treasurer for reimbursement, on a timely basis, using the Group's expense claim form and all expenses should be supported by receipts.

All expenses are reimbursed by bank transfer (or cheque if required) from the Group bank account after checking by the Treasurer and the Group Lead Volunteer.

Expenditure policies

6.1 General expenses including weekly meeting costs

Each year, the Trustee Board, with input from the Group Leadership Team, sets a budget for weekly meeting costs. Sections are free to purchase items and reclaim the costs of their weekly meetings, providing the expenditure is reasonably expected to be 'in budget'.

6.2 Equipment & services

Larger expenditure over £100, for example for the purchase of equipment or services, must be approved by the Group Lead Volunteer prior to expenditure. For expenditure over £500 the approval of the Treasurer must be sought and for expenditure over £1,000 the approval of the Trustee Board is required.

The Group makes an annual donation to St Nicholas Church, to cover the cost of the Group using their church hall for meetings. The donation is approved by the Trustee Board each year.

6.3 Residential experiences and organised trips/events

The Leader in Charge of any residential experience, or a trip/event should produce a budget for the event. The aim should be to recovering all costs associated with the event (including OSM/GoCardless charges). Any request for a significant subsidy from Group funds must be made to the Group Lead Volunteer in advance of the event.

The Leader in Charge of any residential experience should summarise all incomings and outgoings, and the net surplus or deficiency, from that event and provide a copy to the Group Treasurer.

6.4 Reimbursement of uniform costs

Each adult member is entitled to reclaim the cost of their initial uniform, including a shirt, activity trousers, belt, scarf and woggle.

Adult members attending camps may also claim for a scouts branded fleece, sweatshirt or waterproof jacket.

6.5 Gifts for volunteers

The Group Lead Volunteer, Section Teams and Trustees may purchase leaving gifts to thank other adult members and volunteers for the time they have given to the Group. The value of the gift will be determined by the number of years the person has volunteered with the Group. The minimum value of the gift is expected to be in the region of £10, but this should be increased by approx. £5 for each year of service up to a maximum of £50.

6.6 Fundraising costs

Any costs incurred in fundraising activities must be claimed by the leader along with other costs, the costs must not be deducted from cash proceeds.

Approved by the Trustee Board June 2024