

Board Update #6 - January 2019

Dear Member,

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Safeguarding

Those of us who are up close to the recent developments with historic cases and the changes in governance and procedures have arrived at an understanding of the need to respond to the victims with compassion and at the same time strengthen our organisation so that we can assure as an organisation, and in so far as possible, the wellbeing and safety of all our members. This understanding, of the need to respond and the need to make improvements, has been arrived at through the consideration of the situation of victims of past abuse and the conditions that enabled that to happen without consequence. We understand that it is more difficult for the average Scouter to come to the same understanding through reading the communications, or indeed the media reports, where the historic situation contrasts so much with the typical Scout Group experience today. The upcoming provincial conferences represent an opportunity for us all to collectively understand that we have moved forward, that safeguarding provisions will inform everything we do and that our moral position and response regarding past victims is correct. We are developing an updated FAQ on safeguarding generally which when issued can be used to lead a discussion.

There has been a good response to our advertising for a Safeguarding Manager which is a new position currently held by our external consultant Ian Elliott. Shortlisting and interviews are being arranged presently.

The Board are reviewing progress on safeguarding refresher training with the professional team, the Training Commissioner and the Safeguarding Manager, with whom we are in regular contact. We will ensure that resources are available for this project and that we all understand what's achievable and the path to achieving a regular refresher update for every adult in Scouting into the future in a sustainable manner.

The Independent Barrister's Report

The Independent Barristers Report has been received and is being considered by the NMC. This is in line with the legal advice received. Members of the Board and NMC will be meeting in the coming days to agree how to progress the report. The Board will update the membership thereafter.

Transition Update

The transition process entered the establishment phase with the adoption of the Group Charter and Company constitution at the EGM in October 2018. The first appointments were the election of the Board of Directors at that EGM. The Board set out to secure the future of the organisation by prioritizing those developments necessary to satisfy some of our external stakeholders that our governance changes would be far-reaching and robust. The sequence of establishing the new structure was influenced by the necessity to recover state funding and reassure our insurers. So the idea that teams are expected to largely remain in place and to carry on delivering support locally, National events, contingents internationally, programme, training etc. remains central until these operations find a place in the emerging new structures. It is a primary task of the Board to decide what shape this will have with regard to the company-only structure as set out in the governance supporting document circulated to the EGM in October 2018.

The Board has spent some time exploring the appropriate shape of departments, board subcommittees, operations teams, event and project teams. There will be a separation of the Board in its oversight function from operations generally. There will be reporting responsibility and accountability at all levels. Programme will be youth-led and our volunteer teams will include young people at every level of the structure. Built into this there needs to be a strategic approach, policy implementation measures and critical review.

In relation to the preparation of departments. Work is currently being done to begin to establish HR, Administration, Finance and Safeguarding departments. Scopes of Authority are currently being drawn up for these departments. This will be the first cohort of departments. The next set of departments to be worked on are: Adult Support, Development (Scout Provinces and Scout Counties) and Communications, to be followed by Youth Programme and Campsites & Facilities.

In relation to the Transition, staff are being invited to volunteer to come on the subcommittee to fill the final two positions.



Appointments

At the Board meeting on 6th January 2019, the Board of Directors appointed the following:

Honorary Vice President and former National Secretary Sean Farrell to lead the Motions Committee for the upcoming Annual General Meeting as the Chief Scout has temporarily stood aside. On Seán's nomination, the Board appointed Bill James and Brendan McNicholas to fill this Committee.

At the Board meeting on 6th January 2019 and following an open call and interview process, the Board appointed Colin Keane as Programme Commissioner (Venture Scouts).

Following the resignation of Aisling Kelly as both the Chairperson and a member of the Board, the Board elected Adrian Tennant as Chairperson. In accordance with the Company Constitution, Adrian's term is until the meeting following the AGM in April and he is eligible for re-election. The Board made a presentation to Aisling to thank her for the immense contribution she has made to Scouting Ireland during her short tenure and to wish her all the best in her new job.

The following interim sub-committees and appointments have been made:

Sub-Committee	Members	Communicated
Interim Transition Oversight Committee	James O'Toole, Dermot Lacey, Peter Garrard, Mary Hogg (2 others yet to be appointed)	Board update # 4

Interim Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee	Sean Murray, Niall Walsh, Annette Byrne, David O'Neill, Pat Kidney, Paul Mannion	Board Update # 3
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Activities Governance Committee	Jimmy Cunningham, Michael Devins, Stephen Synott & the Operations Manager	Board Update # 5
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Interim Disciplinary Officer	Denis Kirby	Board Update # 5
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Programme Commissioner (Venture Scouts)	Colin Keane	Board Update # 6
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Motions Committee	Seán Farrell (Chair), Bill James, Brendan McNicholas	Board Update # 6
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Open calls will be used to establish full-time members of all sub-committees and teams later this year.

Youth Forum

It was recognised by the Board in our first meeting with the Youth Representatives in November 2018 that the Youth Charter is not fully formed and that there are aspects of it that could be improved. The Youth Reps/Assembly are reviewing this and the Board have offered to meet with them directly in quarterly session to advance their agenda where we can. The Youth Charter is to be reviewed in the context of the Group Charter (where it sits) with suggested changes to be submitted to the Board for consideration. The next meeting between the Board and the Youth Reps will take place on the 3rd March 2019 in Athlone.

Two members of the Board attended the Youth Forum at Gormanstown recently and met with both the newly elected youth reps and the outgoing youth reps who had engaged with the Board in November 2018. The Board delegation invited all of the youth reps, new and old, to meet again in a workshop format to review the youth charter with them ahead of the EGM in April 2019.

The National Youth Fora were held on Sunday 20th January and Rover Focus on the 18th & 19th January 2019 at Gormanston Park, Co Meath.

These events were run by the Reps and the underlying theme for this year for Scouts and Ventures was CONFIDENCE - how to have your voice heard and how to carry out your role. A series of workshops and exercises allowed attendees to explore this theme and get to know each other. At Rover Focus topics were explored through board games. It proved a very interesting way to approach difficult topics.

All of the Fora proved challenging as a result of changes in the election process. Seven names went forward for Scouts and all were elected, with no rep from the South Eastern Scout Province. Venture Scouts elected eight Reps, with no rep from North Eastern Scout Province. Four National Reps for Rover Scouts were elected.

All voting was done electronically on their phones and 1 minute videos were submitted in advance to seek election. All sections are seeking to change this for next year.

After a meeting with two of the Directors, Ned Brennan and Dermot Lacey, the forum commenced, with topics discussed ranging from implementing quarterly initiatives in the national calendar, to writing resources on running a county forum, to programme review, chief scout awards, ensuring the commitment of CPCs, to running a County Forum and handover packs and continuity of rep teams.



Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Board approved terms of reference for the Motions Committee for the AGM on 18th January 2019 - these should be uploaded to scouts.ie shortly.

The Board also submitted a number of motions for change to the Company Constitution to the Motions Committee. We hope that these will be approved for discussion at the AGM.

The AGM will take place on the 13th April 2019 in The Helix at Dublin City University. The business meeting shall take place in the morning with a series of presentations and workshops running in the afternoon. Times to be confirmed but will depend on the number of motions approved by the Motions Committee.

Schedule of Provincial Conferences

North Eastern - 26th January

Southern - 9th February

South Eastern - Awaiting confirmation

Dublin - 17th February

Northern - 23/24th February

Western - 6th April

County Commissioner and Provincial Commissioner Meeting

The Board, with key members of professional staff, following the successful meeting of last month, will again directly consult with the County Commissioners (CCs), Provincial Commissioners (PCs) and others in senior roles in early February 2019.

As well as a full update on matters as they relate to our membership and the organisation as a whole, we will be discussing matters such as the Scout Group contributions to the Solidarity Fund, and provide a forum for discussion and feedback. As the CCs and PCs are the key support network for Scout Groups throughout the island, these meetings are vital so that the information gets to Scout Groups in a forthright, consistent, open and transparent manner.

It should be noted, and this was done successfully in many areas following our last meeting, that certain information has to be shared in a manner that protects the organisation from sensitive information appearing in the press and social media, but at the same time, affording the membership the information it needs and deserves to have in this time of uncertainty.



Questions to the Board

The Board can be contacted with questions from the membership by emailing board@scouts.ie. We will answer all questions as fully as we can. The following questions have been received from a number of sources which the Board are happy to respond to and to provide some clarity in so far as possible.

1. Has the Board accepted the Victim Support Plan as proposed by Ian Elliot?

The Board adopted a Victim Support Policy to outline our approach to dealing with victims in a caring and holistic way. This policy was drafted by Ian Elliott and work has begun on putting together a programme to better define and manage the supports we can offer. We believe this is the only moral, Scout-like and realistic response to recent revelations.

2. Is the Board going to apply a levy on the current membership?

As expressed at the County Commissioners and Provincial Commissioner meeting last month, there are no easy options. All options are on the table, the Board is working on a strategic financing approach which will include multiple sources of funding. A Scout Group contribution (whatever way it is framed) would demonstrate that we are all stepping up and caring for our fellow scouts who have been hurt. There is also the critical and sad fact that abuse of young people occurred in every Province on the island and no area within the two former associations has been without incident. The Board is of the view that it is morally wrong to ask others to assist if we don't contribute significantly to a solidarity fund ourselves. This is not to say that alternate funding options are not being sought, but we must lead the way if other potential funders are to have confidence in supporting us.

3. Has the Board reduced the spending by national teams?

Yes, the Board has approved the main operations budgets for 2018/19, which includes budgets for National Teams. As a consequence of there being a material budget deficit, the budget for all National Teams has been reduced compared to previous years.

4. Why are people still being sent on international trips when Scouting Ireland needs to save money?

All operational departments and staff activities are operating within constraints and international travel is monitored carefully by the Board. Scouting Ireland has obligations in respect of participation in WOSM events and the promotion of the World Scout Moot for example. In addition, we have personnel travelling on expenses not reimbursed by Scouting Ireland, but by other agencies, such as WOSM, directly.

5. Is the rumour of a €20 per member levy true and is the Board aware of multiple members in some families?

The details of what contribution is required for the proposed Solidarity Fund will be notified shortly. It is not a levy on youth members as such although it's understandable that it could be seen that way. Scout Groups will have to consider how to raise and pay their contribution. Further advice and support on this will be provided shortly to the PCs and CCs when they next meet the Board.

6. What is the Board going to do if members refuse to pay the extra charge?

It will be for each Scout Group to decide how the contribution is paid. We have not decided what to do if Groups decide not to help to generate funds that are absolutely necessary to the survival of the organisation, leaving it to other Groups to bear the burden. In this crisis, we need to stand together in solidarity to support those who have suffered at the hands of those who used scouting as a way to gain the trust of young people, their families and communities and to subsequently betray that trust

and irreparably harm lives. Put simply, this is about survival and doing the right thing.

7. Does the Board expect trustees of charities to pay an extra charge to Scouting Ireland on behalf of a group when the funds in the group were not raised for that purpose?

This is a matter for individual Scout Groups. Whether they use existing funds, fundraise for new monies or pass some or all of the cost to their members, is entirely up to them. If there are issues with the representation of funds already raised then Groups are challenged to raise further funds for the purposes outlined. The financial requirements caused by the historic abuse crisis was not foreseen by members of this Board before their election. The board members, who are all active Scouters, are of the view that we have a duty to the victims of historic abuse. This is not palatable, the Board knows this, but the reason for which this has become necessary is neither palatable nor acceptable either.

8. Why did the members pay insurance for years only for Scouting Ireland to need a bailout now?

The legacy associations' insurance cover has not been established in the case of each and every case. Latterly and currently, negligence in relation to sexual abuse is specifically excluded from insurance cover. Scouting Ireland does not need a bailout but does not have the funds or resources needed to properly support victims abused by scouting in the past in every Province and County of Ireland. We must also ensure that we have the best safeguarding service in place going forward, to ensure that our current membership, young and old, have confidence that they are operating in a safe environment.

The Board and management team are working and will continue to work, with our insurance advisor, insurers and others to minimise the financial impact on the organisation as a whole - including Scout Groups.

9. How come members of youth forum know more information and have had more information than group leaders and county commissioners?

We don't know this to be the case. Having said that, they are the most recent grouping to have met with members of the Board and for that reason may have more recent information on some issues. We try to issue Board Updates on a regular basis which provide as much information as can be shared as possible.

10. Are there offenders currently living in the area that our group operate in?

There are living alleged offenders. The names are all with the relevant Statutory Authorities regardless of whether they were shared previously or not. The Board does not have the names and we don't have any way of knowing where people are living.

11. Who are the offenders and can groups know if they had visited their group camps/meetings?

The details, as we know them, of alleged offenders, are notified to the statutory authorities and Scouting Ireland has been instructed by them not to conduct investigations of any kind until the statutory authorities have concluded theirs. This includes the circumstances where others may have covered up or colluded. The first responsibility of Scouting Ireland is to report, which we have done and continue to do on new cases. It is not our jurisdiction to investigate unless allowed to by the relevant state agencies. We will seek advice on what information can be shared and with who once an individual has been convicted or placed on a register.

12. Is there to be an investigation into who covered up or possibly colluded in the offences committed?

Yes. See above answer to question 11 regarding constraints. This cannot take place immediately. Where the Safeguarding Team believe that someone may have

information that can assist the statutory authorities, this is shared with them. Furthermore, anyone with relevant information, if they have not already done so, should bring this information to the Safeguarding Team as a matter of urgency.

13. Will any action be taken to rid the organisation of anyone... staff or volunteer who covered up or hid these files?

When the facts are established in any case the disciplinary code will be applied to any current members found to have behaved inappropriately at any time in the past. Where credible allegations emerge of collusion or cover up, this will be acted upon.

To be clear, only a small proportion of allegations were recorded in the historic files. Much of what has come to light in the last six months was not included in the historic files.

14. Trustees of independent groups have concerns regarding whether or not the organisation will be in situ in 12 months time.

Trustees of Scout Groups who have collected money from parents for the purpose of paying fees to Scouting Ireland in connection with their child's membership of their Group in accordance with the charter, SI registration and insurance must decide whether to honour that commitment or not.

Scout Groups that choose not to meet the registration requirements are effectively choosing not to be members of Scouting Ireland, which in turn means that they cannot avail of the services offered by Scouting Ireland at County, Provincial, and National level such as vetting/accessni, training, use of emblems, uniform, activities, insurance, etc.

Members of the Board, who are also active in their local Scout Groups, are working to ensure that funding is restored, insurance maintained and support to Scout Groups continues to be provided. This cannot be done without the support of Scout Groups.

15. Why is the Board focused on the Moot when we might not even be here in 4 months?

The Board has not focused on the World Scout Moot. Since coming into office, there has been a myriad of complex and very serious matters for the Board to consider and prioritise.

We have however made time to ensure that Scouting Ireland's commitment to the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) is being managed as well as it can in the circumstances. Progress, risk and financial development of the event is monitored by the Board as is our responsibility to both Scouting Ireland's members and to WOSM.



16. Are the rumours that the Board is taking advice from members of subcommittees true and if so who are these people?

Teams and committees have in some cases been asked to continue as anticipated by the governance proposals that were carried by an overwhelming majority at the EGM in October 2018, while others have been established by the Board in an interim form to carry out necessary functions for organisational and business continuity and compliance. The Board is open to receive, consider, accept or reject advice as they chart a course through the crises. Over the last number of months proposals received from subcommittees have been accepted, amended and/or rejected. We anticipate that this will continue to be the case. It should be noted that this is neither unusual nor a new phenomenon, nor is it unique to Scouting Ireland. All boards in large organisations devolve out key roles to subcommittees and seek their expertise on matters as they relate to that topic. For example, it is normal and a legal requirement that a board of an organisation such as ours establishes, devolves functions to, and seeks the guidance of, an Audit and Risk Committee.

17. Are these the same Subcommittees who advised the NMC/(previous) board?

There is some overlap of personnel on functioning interim committees with previous sub-committees - Audit & Risk, for example - together with newly appointed members. Members are advised of all appointments as they are made.

18. Has CCNI been communicated with in relation to the CRA/Jillian Van Turnhout's views that single registrations are the way forward for Scouting Ireland?

Scout Groups in NI are already registered but we understand that CCNI and CRA are in contact with each other. We don't believe that Jillian van Turnhout expresses a clear view one way or another. A delegation of Directors and senior professional staff recently met with the CRA and the topic of Scout Group registration was

discussed briefly but whereas no conclusions were reached on the day, work will be happening shortly to finalise this matter.

19. Why is there no helpline for victims in Northern Ireland?

There are technical and procedural issues in NI telecommunications that have taken time to resolve. The normal National Office number and safeguarding email address can continue to be used to contact the Safeguarding Team who will call victims back. A NI helpline has been ordered from BT.

20. Why do board communications refer only to groups in the 26 counties?

Board communications are directed to all members equally.

21. When are groups and members expected to move to the new company model?

Scout Groups will become members of Scouting Ireland Service on registration this month. The finances rest with the company, not the NMC, as has been the case for many years now. The returns are being received as a move to the company. We will follow this up with the issuing of the charter after the deadline for returns asking Groups to provide details of their nominated contact. This will fulfil the wish of the organisation as expressed by the overwhelming adoption of Motion No. 1 of the EGM of the 6th of October 2018.

22. When are the new departments coming online?

The governance proposal comprehends this could take over a year to establish. The current crisis may mean we need longer than this to complete the project with everyone's cooperation and goodwill. Departments will be created and put into operation on a phased basis over this time. We hope that the first of these will be in the coming months. The Board has been in contact with the Transition Monitoring

Group which has been supportive of our progress to date and will be reporting to the AGM.

23. Is it true that if a victim of bullying/abusive behaviour files a complaint they will be forced to face the alleged bully/abuser across a room in a process?

For clarity, this is related to the Disputes Process as opposed to Safeguarding. Cases being progressed through the disputes and disciplinary processes are handled with the utmost sensitivity for all involved. The DRAP can advise on the exact requirements/format for hearings, etc, and all information is freely available on the website. However, for information, it was decided in 2017 that the old Complaints Procedure was inadequate, cumbersome and not compliant in ensuring parties rights to natural justice were protected in all cases. The new system, which has been running in the background for some time now protects the rights of all involved. It operates by way of hearings as opposed to investigations. This has been successful and any member with concerns on an issue should be encouraged to follow the policy, for a local solution in the first instance and then, if necessary, the procedure for a formal complaint. [Link](#) to the Disputes process

24. Before the scandal broke, what safeguards were in place?

Before the scandal broke we were and remain compliant with Children First legislation/Children Act (2004). We have in place mandatory vetting/accessni and safeguarding training for all adult members. All allegations were and are reported to the relevant police and social agencies. We had also introduced mandatory re-vetting/accessni and refresher safeguarding training. Scouting Ireland has always had a policy on reporting, long before it became mandatory.

25. Were these (safeguards) adequate?

These are in line with best practice - since Scouting Ireland was set up these measures have protected the young people in our care. On the advice of Ian Elliott, we have revised our policies and procedures in the past number of months to

strengthen safeguarding in our organisation. This includes a revised dispute and grievances policy, a revised disciplinary policy, a victims policy, procedures for escalating complaints of alleged abuse to the Board and the appointment of an interim Disciplinary Officer. We will be advertising for a Disciplinary Officer (volunteer role) and are in the process of recruiting a full time Safeguarding Manager (professional role).

26. How have we ended up here?

We ended up here as a result of historic abuse in our legacy scouting organisations. In past times, “children were seen and not heard” and the adult’s standing in a community would take precedence over the word of a child. The people involved in these heinous crimes are clever people, who would go to great lengths to access children. Thankfully we now have better-informed children, more robust systems to check backgrounds and also the voice of the child is now heard and respected.

27. What alternatives to a Victim Support Programme were considered?

The alternative was to take an adversarial approach and fight each case in the courts - this would be a morally corrupt approach and not in keeping with our Scout Law, instead, we adopted a victim-centric and caring approach, in keeping with our ideals and ethos.

28. How does this affect my Group or County/Province?

Scout Groups, Scout Counties and Scout Provinces should continue to adhere to SI safeguarding policies and continue to provide a safe scouting environment to our youth members. The financial implications are not known yet, but all options in this regard need to be on the table. The historic cases happened to our young people in our organisations. So it only right, proper and Scout-like to offer support and assistance to those who unfortunately didn't enjoy the game of Scouting as much as we may have done.

29. How do I explain this to parents and other stakeholders?

It needs to be explained that this is an outcome of historic abuse in our legacy organisations which shamefully resulted in hurt for the victims. The situation today is very different, the 2012 review was undertaken to ensure that anyone who was in the legacy organisations and had been removed had not managed to join SI and that all alleged abusers were reported to the relevant authorities. Scouting Ireland has consistently informed the relevant authorities of reports of abuse. All incidents are reported to the designated persons in our safeguarding team who provide advice and support to Scouters as needed. If appropriate, incidents are reported to the relevant Garda/Police and social agencies. SI has also introduced mandatory re-vetting/accessni and refresher safeguarding training. Our Code of Good Practice has been updated to reflect the latest thinking. SI is compliant with Children First/Children Act (2004). The Board has approved a Victims Policy and also new policies to ensure that there will be consequences for members who ignore or breach policy & guidelines.

30. What is happening with all the negative commentary on Facebook? What will the Board do about it?

A statement in relation to social media commentary was emailed to members on the 10th of December 2018 [[BOD-OUT-23-2018](#)]. Members should be aware that what they say on social media about the organisation, its members and staff, matters. Particularly when such information is shared to non-members or publicly. Regardless of whether people are on social media or physically present with each other, the Board expects that all will behave in a scout-like and respectful manner. Those who breach such expected behaviour or who may bring the organisation into disrepute may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

31. Is there any form of assistance available to us from insurance, government or other external sources?

The Board are exploring all options in this regard. The Board and many of the professional staff are active volunteers at local level and are acutely aware of the implications of the financial challenges for the organisation, including Scout Groups on the ground. We are open to any and all suggestions to reduce the impact of addressing the challenge.

32. What do we do if a disclosure, historic or otherwise, is made to us in light of the new environment?

All disclosures should be handled in accordance with our Code of Good Practice: [CLICK LINK](#)

33. Board Update #5 stated that all Scouters must complete the Being a Scouter training course - do existing Scouters who complete Stages 1 and 2 of the old scheme need to do this training now?

Scouting Ireland's Adult Training Standards continue to apply as set out here: [CLICK LINK](#)

Board Update #5 was referring to new Scouters although this was not clear and we apologise for any confusion. However, the Being a Scouter training course is extremely worthwhile and any Scouter can book themselves onto a course - even if they have already completed their mandatory training. We never stop learning!

All feedback is welcome. Email us at: board@scouts.ie

All ideas and support in relation to securing the future of Scouting Ireland and feeding into strategic renewal can be submitted to this email address. The Board expresses its continued gratitude to all volunteers that are working hard to maintain great scouting experiences at local level despite the ongoing difficulties.