

Board Update #11 - July 2020

- **Introduction – Forward Together, Stronger Together**

Dear Member,

It has been quite a while since our last update, and much has happened during that time (past six months). Much of which we will address in this update, which is quite substantial in size, but please stick with it!

Before we update you on the happenings of the past six months, we would like to reflect on the past two years. Scouting Ireland has for the past two years experienced turmoil and change unlike anything we have ever experienced before. Despite this, however, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers and staff on the ground, in our Counties and Provinces and at national level, we have come through this period stronger, safer and better able to manage the challenges a great organisation like ours must face. We have now established clear separation in Oversight and Operational matters. This has not been easy for any member or supporter of Scouting and has, in particular, been felt the most by our youth members. The events, revelations, behaviours and required changes, not only bring this organisation forward, but at times were required to keep it alive, have been challenging, upsetting, difficult to explain and sometimes even more difficult to understand. We continue to do our best to move this organisation forward together. Aiming toward a stronger organisation and know that we, Scouting Ireland, are stronger together to deliver the positive, safe quality Scouting our youth members deserve. They are the only reason we exist.

Scouting Ireland is a youth organisation, and we aim to be a youth centric organisation, having our young people not only foremost in our minds when it comes to decision-making, but also having their guidance and influence within our operational and oversight functions. You will see some examples of this and the great work our national Youth Reps have done with us within this update. Our young people are, and should continue to be, at the heart of every decision we, adult volunteers, make for, and as, Scouting Ireland. This includes every decision, from the largest to the smallest. We continually ask ourselves the following questions:

Does this deliver on the aim of Scouting?

How does this benefit our youth members?

Keeping these questions with us, in all that we do will ensure we are safe, positive, quality scouting to the young people we serve.

So, we have lots to update you on! In this issue you'll find updates on:

- **Recent Reports:**
 - **Historical Sexual Abuse in Scouting: A Learning Review Report**
 - **Scouting Ireland Response to Ian Elliott's Learning Review**
- **Governance review of Scouting Ireland – Brigid McManus**
- **Chief Executive Officer**
- **Covid-19 & Roadmap**
- **Myth Busters!**
- **Programme Services**

- **Youth Representatives**
- **Board Subcommittees**
- **Transition**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Charities Regulator Authority**
- **NMC and its winddown**
- **AGM**
- **Strategy**
- **County and Provincial Structures**

Recent Reports

Members will be aware of the recent reports with regards to Scouting Ireland; the Brigid Mc Manus 'Review of Implementation of the Review of Scouting Ireland Recommendations' available [here](#) and the 'Historical Sexual Abuse in Scouting: A Learning Review' authored by Ian Elliot available [here](#).

Historical Sexual Abuse in Scouting: A Learning Review Report

Scouting Ireland took the difficult but correct step of commissioning Mr Ian Elliott to undertake an independent Learning Review. This was to help us learn from the mistakes of the past so that we can ensure modern Scouting never fails our young people, our volunteers, and our employees again. This report was published on the 14th May 2020.

Scouting Ireland unreservedly accepts the findings of the Learning Review in their entirety. Mr Ian Elliott sets out 12 recommendations in the report 'Historical Sexual Abuse in Scouting: A Learning Review' available [here](#).

Scouting Ireland is committed to meeting each of these recommendations. We are determined to learn from past mistakes, and we have already taken action on all of them. The recommendations of the report are being incorporated into our strategic plan as guiding principles to ensure that they are actively learned from.

The Board of Directors of Scouting Ireland response to the report, available [here](#), sets out the changes introduced in our organisation that address these recommendations. A full suite of all documentation concerning the report can be found [here](#).

Please be reassured that:

- All disclosures made to Scouting Ireland and held within the files of the Safeguarding Department, inclusive of those included in Mr Elliot's work, are ALL reported to the relevant statutory authorities.
- Any new disclosures are reported to the relevant statutory authorities when received by our Safeguarding Department.

Should anyone have information concerning the abuse of children, wrongdoing or the cover-up of it should [report it immediately](#) to the relevant authorities and/or Scouting Ireland's Safeguarding Department: safeguarding@scouts.ie or 01 – 4956300

There is no place in Scouting for anyone who by design or by omission harms a child.

Should anyone be affected by the contents of the report please do not hesitate to avail of our services:

- **Adult:** [Click here](#) for information on our free confidential supports
- **Youth:** Crisis Textline - Scouts and Ventures

Scouting Ireland has partnered with CrisisTextline to provide support to our young people. The service is funded by the HSE and provided by CrisisTextline by their trained staff and volunteers. It is available 24/7 if you want to chat through what is on your mind anonymously. Text **SCOUTS** to **086 1800 280** to connect with a trained volunteer now. Young people in NI the same service in the UK called Shout on 85258. Standard text message rates may apply.

Governance Review of Scouting Ireland – Brigid McManus

Ms Brigid McManus was engaged by Minister Zappone to carry out an assessment of governance and safeguarding in Scouting Ireland as a follow-up to the earlier work of Ms van Turnhout's Review of Scouting Ireland 2018.

Ms McManus has stated that Scouting Ireland has put in place major changes in its governance structures since 2018 and concluded that the recommendations of the 2018 report have been implemented satisfactorily.

She acknowledges that in the case of a number of recommendations, implementation has varied somewhat from the measures envisaged at the time of the 2018 report. In her view she stated ... *'Scouting Ireland has taken a reasonable approach to developing measures it considers appropriate to its needs and that address the issues identified in the 2018 report.'*

Further she noted that ... *'It is clear from reviewing the documentation and from my discussions the huge time and effort ... has invested in delivering significant changes to the governance and organisational structure, while also dealing with other pressing and difficult issues for Scouting Ireland.'* Ms McManus went on to acknowledge that Scouting Ireland is limited by its resourcing... *'Delivering and sustaining significant organisational change, while maintaining service provision, has capacity implications. Supporting adequate change management capacity should continue to be considered by the Department as part of its on - going engagement with Scouting Ireland.'*

We are greatly encouraged by Ms McManus's findings and her conclusion that the recommendations of the 2018 report have been implemented satisfactorily. In benchmarking our progress to date, Ms McManus recognises 'the significant work and organisational effort by all involved in Scouting Ireland in the major changes already made'. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

Good Corporate Governance is essential to developing a culture that is focused on our mission of delivering Scouting to young people and putting our young people front and centre of everything we do. Ms McManus has highlighted additional areas that need to be addressed from the perspective of good governance and the Board of Scouting Ireland is progressing each of these recommendations.

Further information can be viewed [here](#).

Chief Executive Officer

Our CEO, Ms Anne Griffin, has been with us for over 6 months. The Board are happy to report to the membership that her performance in the role has been excellent and Scouting Ireland has benefited greatly from her experience and management style. Anne leads a dedicated professional staff team and is working with them to ensure that in these challenging times that the executive function continues to support our volunteers in their communities.

Despite landing in Scouting Ireland in the midst of the McManus Governance Review and the Elliott Learning Review into Historical Child Sexual Abuse, she also faced the additional challenge of leading the largest youth organisation amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Her work in this regard has been pivotal to our Road Map for returning to Scouting and she has created many strong relationships with outside stakeholders, in particular the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, that ensures that we, Scouting Ireland, contribute and influence at key policy discussions.

The Board wishes Anne well in her continued role and we know that as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease, she looks forward to meeting you all as she had intended pre-COVID-19.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has now become part of our everyday considerations as we navigate life. Scouting Ireland has produced a guide to aid us all to get back to scouting in the safest possible way. COVID-19 came upon us in March 2020 and life has not been the same since.

The whole of Scouting Ireland has contributed in every way, not just in the provision of scouting or volunteering in their community but also in caring for their families and loved ones. Everyone has contributed to keep this island as safe as possible during this time.

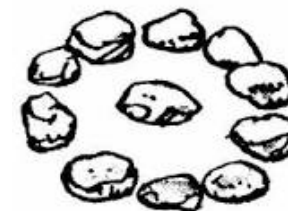
Many of our volunteers responded to the pandemic in their professional and other volunteer roles - keeping us safe and well during this time. As an organisation steeped in service, we thank you for yours at this unprecedented time.

Most importantly we also wish to acknowledge the scouters who have gone home as a result of COVID-19

We also wish to extend our condolences and support to our Scout members who have experienced the loss of family and loved ones as a result of COVID-19

May they Rest in Peace

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.



COVID-19 Taskforce

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Scouting Ireland brought together a Taskforce. The Taskforce aimed to coordinate Scouting Ireland's response to COVID-19 in our communities, towns and cities across the island of Ireland.

This was a very successful endeavour and the Board wishes to acknowledge and thank all those who served diligently on the Taskforce. Your service is

greatly appreciated. Thankfully due to the diligence of the people on the island of Ireland in adhering to national public health guidance, we did not require the level of community support that was first envisioned. That said, Scouting Ireland stood ready. The members of the Taskforce noted the huge efforts that Scout volunteers, young and old, made in various projects around the country, some nationally organised, many locally. Many Scout Groups were very quick off the mark in identifying ways to help their communities. Huge credit goes to our volunteers and staff who coordinated an effort that was recognised and appreciated by the Governments in both jurisdictions. Members of Scouting Ireland should be proud that when our Country called, we answered that call, in spades
Bravo to all!

Examples of just some on the amazing work done can be [found here](#) demonstrating the positive impact Scouting has on our young people and our members have engaging in their communities.

COVID-19 and the Getting Back to Scouting Road Map

The guidance document '[Getting Back to Scouting Roadmap](#)' is prepared in the broader context of the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, the Return to Work Safely Protocol and consultation with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Northern Ireland's guidance 'Coronavirus our approach to decision-making'. This document and any future updates of the 'Getting Back to Scouting Roadmap' should be read in conjunction with these documents and any future public health announcement in relation to COVID-19.

You will be aware that Version 3 is currently in place and will continue to be updated as advice and public health guidance changes.

We have been heartened to see so many Groups around the country not only thrive during the depths of the crisis by Scouting in a different way, but also seeing Groups out and about again, Scouting safely and keeping within the guidelines. We are aware that this is a challenging time for Scouters as we change gear from community support to getting back to putting the "out" back into Scouting, and hope that the Road Map continues to provide the latest up to date guidance for you and your Group.

Programme Services Department

The Board has received a number of queries with regards to the progress being made in the Programme Services Department. The Board have been informed by the CEO that the Core Team has been established through [open call](#) with five main project teams with one support team in place so far. The project teams are:

- Programme Support – to give direct support through resources for running activities. They are currently working on activities for September onwards.
- Sustainable Programme – to develop resources and support scouting to be more aligned with meeting the SDGs
- Youth Empowerment – to develop youth empowerment at a local level through resources

- National Activities Review – to review and advise on the current national activities programme. This is to review and improve not remove activities.
- Adventure Skills – to provide ongoing support to the nine adventure skills. The skills team leads make up this team’s membership.

Currently, there are forty-two volunteers on these teams with all provinces represented. The following is the breakdown across geography, gender and age:

TEAM MEMBERS

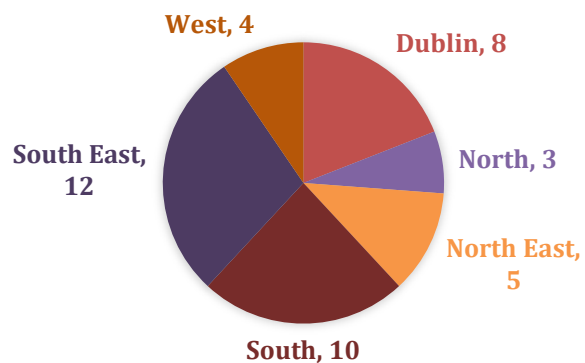


Figure 1: Geographic Breakdown Programme Department

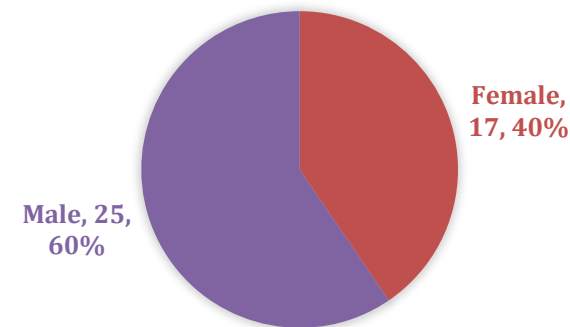


Figure 2: Gender Breakdown Programme Department

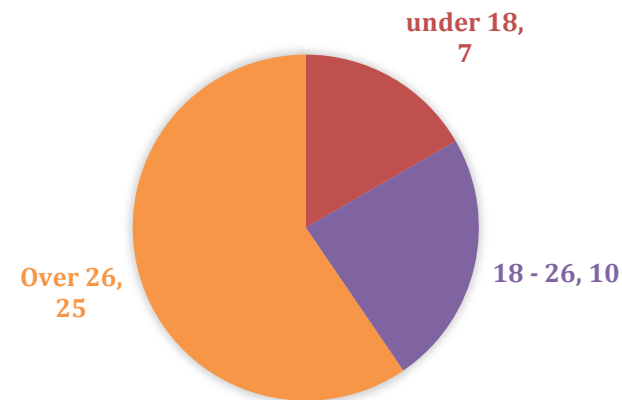
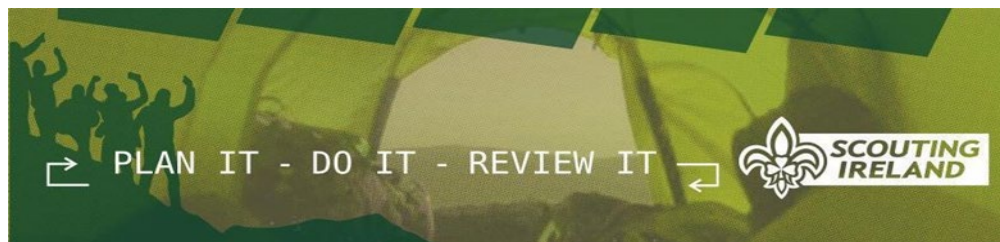


Figure 3: Age Breakdown Programme Department

The department's project team delivering programme support, will be split into five teams (one for each section). There will be an open call for members of this team. There are also two new project teams being advertised this week: [Equality & Inclusion](#) and [Chief Scout Award](#) project teams. Click [here](#) for information on volunteering opportunities.

Programme support has been using the following [website](#) to promote its resources as well as to collect the fantastic programme ideas generated in our Scout Groups to share. <https://scouting360.ie/wp/> Sustainable Programme material is available [here](#). They use this website to promote activities like the 17Days17SDGs challenge. <https://betterworld.ie/bw/>

In relation to national activities, the role of the Programme Services Department is to advise on and design appropriate activities that support programme – essentially plan. It also ensures that the activity is aligned to our programme objectives and is supporting the delivery of quality scouting and the aims of Scouting Ireland. It then passes the activities to the Corporate Services Department to deliver and run the activity – essentially do the doing! When the activity is over the Programme Services Department will complete a review of the event taking into account learnings and recommendations for the coming year.



Youth Representatives

Recently, The National Youth Reps met the Board as part of our regular and ongoing engagement. This was a very informative, but more importantly, fruitful meeting with some clear guidance and support being provided between the Reps and Board. Following on from the National Youth Forum, the National Youth Reps presented a number of motions from that forum to the Board for consideration. The Board are delighted to report that not only did the Youth Reps bring forward matters for concern from the Youth members, they also came armed with possible solutions!



The following sets out progress on the matters raised:

Sustainability Policy Proposal: That Scouting Ireland would adopt a sustainability policy which would include:

- (1) Banning of all single-use plastics from national events
- (2) All national events must provide a recycling system
- (3) On all national activities, each participating team must own and use a recycling system.

Response: The Board accepted this in principle and the CEO committed to bring the policy paper to Programme Services and Corporate Services departments to implement through project teams in each department.

Inside Out Blog Proposal – Proposed to reactivate a youth blog to produce bi-weekly articles for members.

Response: The Board were very supportive of the proposal. The CEO advised that this would form a project team within the Information and

Communications Department and this motion is timely as the Department were currently reviewing communications strategy.

Free Sanitary products at national centres: That Scouting Ireland will provide free sanitary products at all national centres.

Response: The Board accepted this in principle. The CEO will request the Corporate Services Department to investigate what is needed to deliver on this. The Venture Reps agreed that the Venture Forum would be happy to apply to be part of a project team.

Activity Consent Form (2 proposals):

(1) Scouts groups to keep activity consent forms for more than just one activity.

(2) Scouting Activity Consent Forms are produced and distributed online

Response: Both motions were accepted. It was acknowledged that there are challenges with GDPR and keeping medical information up to date, but it was felt they would be overcome. The Youth Reps were asked and agreed to work with the Volunteer Resource Management & Group Support Department review how these improvements can be implemented.

Patrols in Action Camp Series – That the Patrols in Action Camp Series be re-introduced. The Patrols in Action Camp Series was an annual summer camp during 2013-2017 led by our youth.

Response: The Board accepted that a new series of camps would be a good idea. The CEO confirmed that the Programme Services Department, the Corporate Services Department, and the Safeguarding Department

would be asked to progress this proposal. They will be updated with open calls for future project team's yet to be set up.

Vetting process for Rover Scouts: Outlined challenges that Rover only members (as opposed to "rover and scouter" members) face during vetting.

Response: The Board acknowledged the challenge as presented and committed to exploring all options to ensure that rover members are vetted. The CEO confirmed that the Safeguarding Department and the core team of the Volunteer Resource Management & Group Support Department are in the advanced stages of exploring solutions which will be sent to the Quality of Scouting Board Sub-Committee for review before coming to the Board for approval. As part of the development of the policy the core team have, since the Youth Reps and Board meeting, met with the Rover Youth Reps.

Chief Scout Award: The Rover Representatives raised challenges with the Chief Scout Award stating that they believe it is unachievable in its current form.

Response: The CEO has been asked by the Board to review the challenges outlined with the Programme Services Department.

Most importantly, the board and the youth representatives spent significant time discussing what and where youth engagement will be in our new structures for optimal youth participation. A paper from the youth representatives was presented which outlined two approaches. Following this, a discussion on what a hybrid approach of both would look like took place. The Youth Reps will continue to engage with the Transition Subcommittee to discuss, progress and present a proposal in advance of the

next meeting, which is due in September. We are excited to work on this to identify how to best ensure that Scouting Ireland is not only an organisation for youth but that it truly becomes a youth organisation shaped and led by youth.

Where do you(th) fit in?

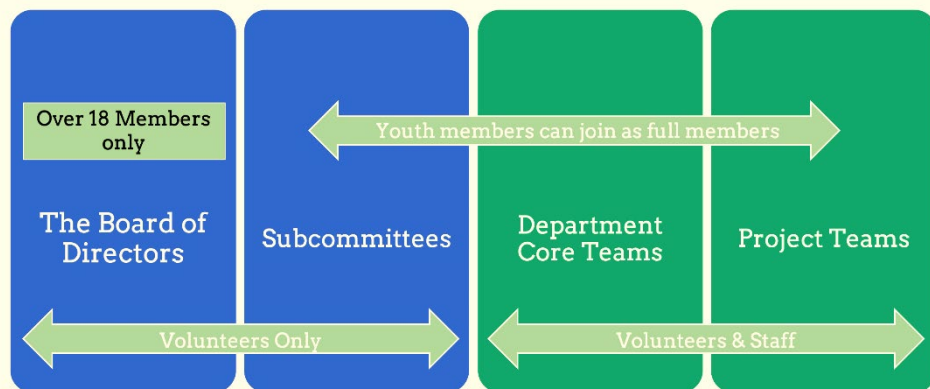


Figure 4: National Structures - Youth & Volunteers

Board Subcommittees

As with all new structures, there is a learning curve and an adaptation process. At this stage, many volunteers and members have adapted well to the new governance structures. However, some confusion still exists in terms of how these structures operate, in particular the role of Board Subcommittees.

Under the old Association model, there were over 40 subcommittees (many operated in oversight and or executive). In the GRGs presentations and proposed company model document, they correctly identified this as a weakness and suggested we reduce that to a small number of key Board Subcommittees. The Board, when established, set up several subcommittees to assist in its role of oversight including:

- Financial Audit and Risk
- Quality of Scouting
- Governance, Nominations and Remuneration
- Health & Safety
- Transition
- Safeguarding

Board Subcommittees, reporting to the Board, are part of the oversight function of the Board. They support the oversight responsibility that the Board has and are fundamental to supporting the Board's work. This structure is found in many companies and organisations. It is considered a staple of good governance.

Subcommittees are set up with specific functions in mind such as health and safety, governance or the quality of our programme. The subcommittees are considered the subject experts in those areas and provide advice, support and proposals to the Board. Scouting Ireland Board subcommittees are (as is the usual practice) chaired by a member of the Board (assisted by one or two other Board members) and comprised of volunteers and or outside experts that bring additional experience, outside perspective and technical insight to the work of the subcommittee. Subcommittees do not make

decisions; they make recommendations to the Board. All of their work goes straight back to the board for approval or further consideration. Using subcommittees frees up the Board's agenda while ensuring proper research and thought is given to all matters.

Each subcommittee is the creation of the Board, their powers are derived from the Board therefore they always remain under the Board's control. Each subcommittee's function is specified clearly in written terms of reference. The full Terms of Reference for the current board subcommittees are available [here](#).

Executive

In our new structure, the Board mandates the CEO to implement the operational and day to day management of Scouting Ireland which is delivered through departments. Each of these departments has a Core Team for operational duties and Project Teams for specific projects. Department Managers manage the department and reporting to the CEO on the activities of the department. Each department is supported and guided by a Core Team made up of volunteers and the department manager who ensure the activity of the department (implementation of the organisation strategy) is met through its Support Teams and Project Teams that are populated with volunteers. Scouting Ireland does not have a Core Team in the Safeguarding Department, as it is viewed that Safeguarding is to be solely managed, delivered and supported by professional staff. Scouting Ireland is a unique kind of company, being, primarily a National Scout Organisation, in which our members decided to adopt a company-only based model.

The most obvious difference between Scouting Ireland and another company is the reliance on and key support given by dedicated volunteers at all levels. We have a long and proud history of including volunteers and young people in all aspects of decision making, and we want to make sure that any decision we make is in line with this important characteristic. We have opportunities for volunteers and young people to step outside their scout group and commit to working on the Board (All Volunteers), in a subcommittee (All Volunteers), or a department core team (mainly Volunteers) or project team (Mainly Volunteers).

Following analysis by the Transition subcommittee in line with their terms of reference and in conjunction with regular reports of the Transition Implementation Monitoring Group (TIMG) and the McManus report, the list of subcommittees and departments are slightly different than what the Board originally set out. Like everything, once we started to operate the new governance structures and reviewed what was working and what was not, we changed some of the groupings to ensure that they are always fit for purpose.

In conclusion, all oversight sits with the Board of Directors with support from their subcommittees. All members of the board and its subcommittees are volunteers. All departments sit at an operational level under the CEO of Scouting Ireland, who is accountable to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors receives support from the CEO and their professional staff as delegated through the CEO.

This structure ensures that there is a clear separation between operations (executive), sitting with the CEO and the department, and oversight (non-executive), sitting with the board of Directors.

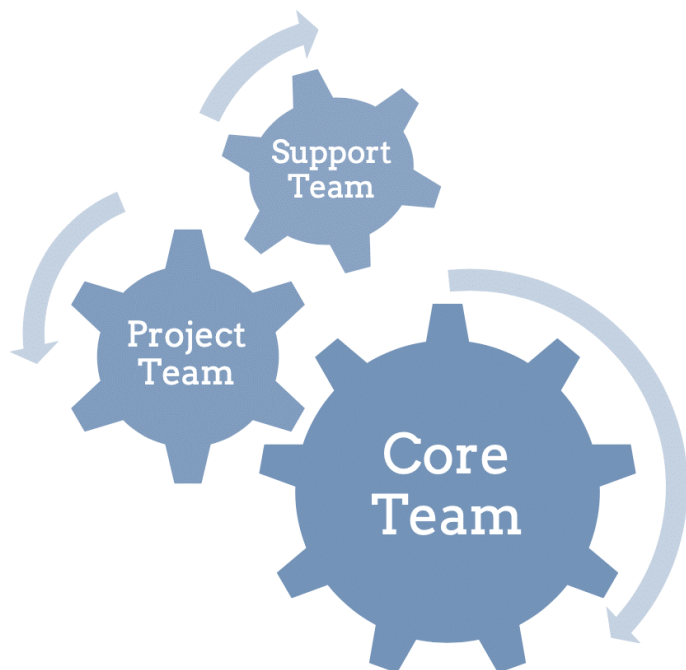


Figure 5: Department Structure

Update on Transition

The implementation of the new governance structures continues – Much has been completed and the coming months will see its completion. Full details will be provided shortly in a Transition Update to our members.

Myth Busting!

A challenge faced by any organisation as large as Scouting Ireland, is that of ensuring the correctness of the information regarding the organisation. This is made even more difficult in the face of social media. While social media is a remarkable tool which makes our lives easier, more connected and more informed, it also has its downside such as the proliferation of incorrect information. So, much like any good advice out there, volunteers and members are urged to get their information from official and trusted sources and encourage to fact check what they hear before any onward circulation.

We have heard and seen varying accounts, ranging from dismantling certain structures to alleged conspiracies between the government departments and the Board. We would like to correct some of these comments in particular, some of the common ones we hear. Again, we ask that if you are worried and not sure about something, just ask through the official channels. We acknowledge that at times, due to confidential matters or ongoing processes, that we have not been able to make all information public, we are aware that at times board confidentiality can be frustrating for some of our members.

So, for the record, here are just a few myths we would like to bust for the record:

Myth - Scouting Ireland are removing the provincial structures

This is factually incorrect. Our support structures, as discussed earlier in this update, are crucial to supporting our Scout Groups deliver scouting to our youth members. The statement that we would dismantle these would be a huge divergence from our mandate as a Board. Be assured that this is not in

our strategy nor are any such plans being discussed. Conversely, we are, as seen in the last section, wishing to move the final structural changes envisaged by the GRG to conclusion. This Board is supportive of and understands the value of the support provided by the provinces.

Myth - Scouting Ireland does not need a Chief Scout

Let's be very clear here, Scouting Ireland needs a Chief Scout. This board is not aiming to remove the role of the Chief Scout. Be assured that the Board's responsibility is to ensure the Constitution of Scouting Ireland is upheld. Articles 22 and 23 of our Constitution set out the role and functions of the Office of the Chief Scout. Notwithstanding the current ongoing situation with the current position holder which this Board cannot comment on, we are fully conscious of the need and value of the office of the Chief Scout. This was set out by the GRG, embedded in the Constitution and the will of the vast majority of the membership in their overwhelming adoption of the current Constitution in October 2018.

The position of Chief Scout is up for re-election at the 2021 AGM, as specifically set out in Article 23.1 of the Constitution. The process for inviting nominations and induction of prospective candidates will commence later this year within the pre-AGM timelines as set out in the Constitution.

We are conscious that it may be a daunting task for individuals to put themselves forward for this vitally important position in our organisation after all that Scouting Ireland has been through in recent years. However, we would urge all members to consider themselves and others, and to support those seeking election and that we all, as an organisation, fully support, respect and stand behind the election process.

Myth - The Board has not engaged with our youth members

Again, this is factually incorrect. We are committed to an organisation for young people shaped by young people. The board are engaging and consulting with our youth members and have done since coming into office. Thankfully, we have had the pleasure, support and guidance of three sets of Youth Reps since October 2018. We meet with them on a regular basis and they have been instrumental in key policy decisions, including some covered earlier in this bulletin.

The single biggest achievement that can be seen in every Scout Group across the island is the Youth Charter. This was written by the Board and National Youth Reps, sitting together and with the Board, taking the lead from the Youth Reps on this important document.

The future of the National Youth Reps is also fully in the hands of the National Youth Reps themselves. We have and continue to engage in discussions on how best the voice of our youth members is amplified within the new governance structures and our organisation. The current Youth Reps have shown great skill in navigating aspects of the governance structures. Their engagement and guidance to the Board and CEO on matters are not only appreciated, but their work can be and will be seen in many facets of our organisation, such as our environmental policy on national activities, how we store our consent forms, who the Youth Champion is in your Group to the provision in the near future of free sanitary products in our Scout centres.

However, even more fundamental to this is the huge increase in young people becoming involved nationally. They have, unlike ever before, access

and the ability to be part of the oversight function of the Board by participating in Board Subcommittees. They are shaping decisions and policy, side by side with adult volunteers and staff members at Departmental Core Teams and on Project Teams. Also, when we look at one of our most important functions as a Scout organisation, Programme, currently, our young people make up over 40% of the 42 volunteers working in that department

So, if you are wondering whether or not the Board listens to or appreciates the voice and input of our young people...well they can speak for themselves.

Myth - Scouting Ireland are seeking to remove the County support system for our Scout Groups

Similar to the piece about the Provinces, we believe one of the most fundamental building blocks in providing direct support to our Groups are through our County Support Teams. Communications previously have not been where we wanted or needed them to be. This has been noted and our communications strategies in recent times have been different, more effective and most importantly, consider our County support structures.

The board recognise the importance of County structures in supporting Groups. This can be seen in meeting the difficult decision to increase fees last year, the Board recognised that it was imperative that we better resource our counties so that they can, in turn, support struggling Groups. We made the conscious decision not to reduce the percentage of the County Rebates, ensuring that each Scout County now receives €6.50 / 10% of the fee paid, or equivalent in Northern Ireland, for every adult and youth member in their

area. Scout Counties have already made decisions at local level to support Groups and this is to be welcomed.

Myth - The Board leak information via social media

A myth that is circulating is that the Board of Scouting Ireland has been involved in the leaking of confidential information from meetings or private Board discussions. The board do not leak any confidential board information via social media.

Further, Scouting Ireland only uses its official website, mailings and social media accounts to disseminate information. There are many unofficial (as in not managed by Scouting Ireland) scouting social media accounts that have very good and have positive messages. Some however, have derogatory comments about individuals or groups on these pages or on personal Facebook pages and other social media. Scouting Ireland cannot moderate nor do we stand over any of the comments made on these.

As Scouting Ireland does not monitor these social media pages (our budgets would never stretch so far!), be assured that we will pursue any formal complaint received by the National Office regarding any un-scout-like behaviour in any forum, virtual or otherwise. We will shortly have a policy for members to refer to and use regarding our code of conduct on social media.

So, we will never share official information across unofficial social media pages, all communication will be through official channels. We do, however, accept all comments, suggestions, particularly offers of help and constructive criticism and welcome anyone who wishes to engage with our committees

and core and project teams. All we ask is that we speak to each other as Scouts, with respect and an open mind.

These are just some examples that we wished to highlight to you. The key message is simple - Fact check what you hear. Use trusted sources. Respect your fellow Scouters and Youth Members. The only loyalty that the Scouting Ireland will ever ask of any member is to our youth members.

Update on Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Department have been working closely with Tusla in the republic and Gateway in Northern Ireland on developing and refining a new suite of Safeguarding documents, these are due to be published soon. These documents are designed for our volunteers and youth members. They will equip us with a more detailed policy so that we can be assured best practice is being met and that we are compliant with all relevant legislation across the island of Ireland. Further, these documents are designed to be easier for external stakeholders, mostly parents, to understand what they can expect of Scouting Ireland and what is expected from them. Particular thanks go to the staff of the Safeguarding Department for the remarkable work that has gone into developing these policies and working diligently with Tusla and Gateway NI.

Members will note the recent advertisement for a new Safeguarding Manager. Our current manager, Mr Gearóid Begley, is retiring and we wish him well and good health into the future. During his time the Safeguarding Department has transformed our approach and operation to safeguarding in Scouting Ireland. He deserves great praise for his work during his time with us.

The process for finding a successor is well underway and we plan to complete recruitment by the end of this month. In the meantime, Scouting Ireland has been successful in securing interim expert cover pending the new Safeguarding Manager taking up their position. This ensures that we, as an organisation, have a continuity of expertise in this vitally important position.

Charities Regulator Authority – Specific to Republic of Ireland Groups

A process of communicating and consulting with Scout Groups on registration with the Charities Regulator has taken place and we can now confirm that the Charities Regulator is in a position to register Scout Groups and Scouting Ireland have a roll out plan in place (with consideration to COVID-19).

The Board has been informed by the CEO that 30 Scout Groups have begun their application for charitable registration with the CRA. The Volunteer Resource Management & Group Support professional staff are managing this registration process and are assisting with any queries or questions that Groups may have with this process. Further updates on this will be issued from the CEO.

The individual group registration with the CRA will give effect to decisions taken at a previous Scouting Ireland National Council when Scouting Ireland voted that each Scout Group would register independently with the Charities Regulator.

Training Scheme Update

The Board recently approved changes to the Wood Badge scheme which will result in members receiving Wood Badge accreditation and beads earlier within the scheme. See further information [here](#)



The CEO has reported to the Board that the VRM&GS Core Team, in conjunction with the Training Team, are working to shape our training delivery to meet the challenges of COVID-19. This will take the form of a blended learning approach. The Training Team will have further information on this training in the coming weeks, with a priority being placed on delivering *Being a Scouter* and *Safeguarding Refresher* training as soon as possible. Please keep an eye on the weekly mailing update.

Update on NMC and wind down

The wind-down of the former Association is proceeding but is taking longer than originally anticipated. The reasons for this have become more complex as a result for the most part to professional advice regarding legal matters and insurance, both of which are outside the control of the remaining NMC members. Primarily, these are related to the litigation connected to historic child sexual abuse claims. The Board is working with the remaining NMC members and legal advisors to determine what is the best course of action to ensure that the Association rests. This is to ensure that the decision of the membership and the proposal of the GRG in progressing a Company-only model is met, whilst ensuring we meet the responsibilities resultant from the historic abuse of children in Scouting.

The Board recognises the work of the existing NMC members under these very legalistic and difficult circumstances. We thank them for their continued efforts to wind down the association as safely as possible. The Board also recognises that the remaining members are anxious to complete this important work.

In the meantime, as recognised by Ms McManus in her recent governance report on Scouting Ireland, we continue to operate the company-only model. This is not only to deliver on the will of the membership, but it is how the organisation is now structured to operate meeting best practice, good governance and relevant legislation. “

Update on AGM

COVID-19 has led us to meet challenges as Scouts, not least of which is attempting to hold our 2020 AGM. Originally scheduled for April, members will be aware that we had been working to that date, elections began for new Directors, motions were received and prepared for the meeting and venue booked, etc. However, Government imposed restrictions for the health and safety of our communities, particularly large gatherings, has meant that we could not hold it in April or on our fall-back date in June this year.

It has been decided that our 2020 AGM will be held on the 19th of September. Full details will be shared in the coming weeks. The executive team, with the Company Secretary, have examined different ways that we could hold such an event at this time. All options for the attendance of company members have been, and are still being explored in light of the ever-changing public health advice and the expected new companies bill

being developed in response to the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic, as the Board are anxious that we hold our AGM as soon as is safely possible.

It should be noted, from our meetings with the Department of Children, Disability, Equality and Integration we have been made aware that we are in a similar position to many other organisations.

The only outstanding matter, from a company law perspective, is the holding of the AGM itself, and this will be met on the 19th of September 2020.

Update on Strategy

Our new three-year Strategy 2020-2023 was being finalised in anticipation of being launched at the AGM in April 2020. Subsequently, it has had to undergo a revision process to take into account how we continue to Scout during this COVID-19 pandemic and a likely global recession we now face.



This work will be completed shortly, and it is still our intention to announce this important strategic roadmap this year at our AGM in September 2020. It is the Board's view that even if the AGM cannot happen, due to the restrictions, that we will launch the Strategy separately around that time.

The strategy will be supported by an operational plan for its implementation with tangible and measurable targets against which progress can be monitored and overseen. The operational plan is delivered by our Core Teams in each of the Departments with their specific Project Teams and all under the auspices of our CEO who reports progress to the Board. Monitoring the execution of the operational plan is the key oversight tool to

ensure that our Strategy, developed through consultation with the membership and which is approved by the Board, is implemented.

International Ambassador

Members will be aware that the position of International Ambassador has recently been advertised. This is key role in Scouting Ireland, replacing what was the International Commissioner role and builds on the excellent work carried out by the previous International Commissioner. The International Ambassador will be Scouting Ireland's representative and voice on the international stage, ensuring that at European and World level, Scouting Ireland remains an active and respected member of WOSM. The Board looks forward to announcing the successful candidate on completion of the recruitment process for the new scout year.

County and Provincial Structures

As you will be aware from the supporting documents issued by the GRG for the October 2018 National Council Date ([HERE](#)) and adopted by the vast majority of the membership, the County and Provincial structures will change only slightly and in line with the majority of what the GRG described as the Group Support and Development department, or what is now our Volunteer Resource Management and Group Support Department. Chapter 3 of the supporting document states the following:

"To minimise disruptive changes and build on achievements to date, it is suggested that County and Provincial structures transform to the new structure largely as they are for the time being but with a distinctive change in emphasis of their role to that of support for local Groups. Emphasising this

collective responsibility moves us to a more sustainable model of support instead of relying on a small number of paid staff who can never have the time and resources to deliver all the support that is needed.”

Regarding the implementation of the revised Provincial structures, this important support network of Provincial Commissioners and PMST team members, such as Treasurers and Programme Co-Ordinators, will lead the way in this important work to support our Scout Groups. Work is also ongoing at national level directly with the Provincial Commissioners regarding the role of the Provincial Commissioners within their Department, as envisaged by the GRG.

A key focus of the Board is to support our Scout Groups and nurture the positive existing Provincial and County supports in establishing what the GRG referred to as the County Support Team and Provincial Support Team.

After a very successful meeting recently with the Provincial Commissioners held on the 11th of July 2020, progress is being made in this area. Further work and meetings are ongoing with the Provincial Commissioners to cement the position of both the Province and the County within the current structures. The role of our Provincial and County Commissioners in rolling this out is important.

We recognise that communication is vital to provide support. We continue to work with our structures to ensure the most effective support is provided to our Scout groups and we continue to improve and develop methods to meet this.

The Board is fully appreciative of the long hours put in and dedication of members at all levels of Scouting Ireland. If you have ideas about how to build a stronger Scouting Ireland, then do please get in touch and get involved.

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