

Scouting Ireland the future – follow-up by the Chief Scout and former Chief Scouts

Open letter to the Board of Directors and Members of Scouting Ireland

Dear Board Member,

We had hoped that our letter of 11th December 2020 would have elicited a response from the Board of Directors before now.

We are disappointed that we have not heard back from you regarding the proposals set out in our letter, which we believe, provide a basis for everyone in Scouting Ireland to work cohesively to support all our Scout Groups in dealing with the difficulties and challenges we are facing.

We are, more than ever, convinced that our proposals have the potential to enable our Movement to work in a collegiate manner to ensure its survival. Consequently, we urge you to adopt our proposals forthwith:

- We must put any differences and issues we have to one side for now in order to work in concert with each other to tackle the problems we are facing. We have proven over the years that when we work together with a shared sense of purpose we can achieve amazing results and the current situation our Movement finds itself in, requires us to do so again.
- The Board must set the direction for this and the CEO will have the responsibility to lead the delivery of the necessary support that each and every Scout Group needs in these difficult and uncertain times.
- The Chief Scout should resume his duties immediately to work in conjunction with the Board of Directors, the CEO, paid and volunteer staff and Provincial and County Teams in order to reassure and support Scout Groups in dealing with the difficulties currently being experienced.
- The Board of Directors and the CEO must urgently liaise with the Minister and DCYA to spell out the difficulties Scouting Ireland is facing and fully explain the strategy being implemented and the key role the Chief Scout must play.
- The Board should also seek additional government financial support to help Scouting Ireland to implement whatever initiatives are necessary to return to full Youth Programme operations as soon as practicable.
- Given the issues that need to be addressed in the coming months that the AGM and elections due to be held in April 2021 should be deferred until September or October.
- The Board should consider agreeing with the CRA to defer commencement of Scout Group registration in the Republic of Ireland until at least October 2021.
- Throughout 2021 there should be a monthly bulletin issued to provide timely updates on progress and remaining or newly identified difficulties.
- Preparations should commence shortly to hold Provincial Scouters and Scout Conferences in July or August 2021. This would result in a more collegiate approach in dealing with issues and exchanging views and should in due course reduce the amount of rhetoric posted on social media.

Scouting Ireland the future – follow-up by the Chief Scout and former Chief Scouts

- All Members should be more careful and considerate whilst using social media. The Scouters and Scout Conferences and access to the Chief Scout and his Team will help with this.

Disciplinary Process arising from the Lorna Lynch Report

We see that you, as a Board, note the conclusion of the disciplinary process arising from the Lorna Lynch Report and that you will consider its findings in due course.

The letter from the NMC set out the decision of the subcommittee it appointed which was that the Chief Scout “had not met the standards expected of him in his position by the Code of Conduct (“the Code”) for members of the NMC of Scouting Ireland”. **We do not understand why the letter did not say that he and the Commissioners were suspended from their roles until the next meeting of National Council nor why such a meeting has not yet been called.**

We would urge you to consider the matter urgently and to allow the Chief Scout to resume his role without further delay. Alternatively, please arrange for an EGM of the Company to be convened without delay so that the matter can be fully considered and debated by the membership.

Yours in Scouting

Christy McCann, Ken Ramsey, Donald Harvey, Martin Burbridge

Chief Scouts

5th January 2021