

Online Annual General Meeting Gásoga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland (the 'Company')

Advisory Note from the Core Team of the Programme Services Department

To: Board of Scouting Ireland (the 'Company')

CC: Attendees of the AGM

Under the new structures, the Department Core Teams do not have the facility to participate as the comparable teams/committees did previously. We, the volunteers on the team, have, of our own volition, written this advisory note for the Board and attendees at the AGM on the motions or topics which fall under our remit or may influence the way we work. The note makes general points and is not to be interpreted as referring to individual persons or their performances.

Notes on Motions 1 & 2:

That this Annual General Meeting of Scouting Ireland establishes the principle that all Youth Members participating in any National Activity, with an assessment leading to the achievement of an award, must be of the age of the relevant programme section on, or before, the last day of the National Activity.'

That this Annual General Meeting of Scouting Ireland establishes the principle that all Youth Members participating in any National Cub Challenge, must be of the age of the relevant programme section on, or before, the last day of the National Activity.'

Main points:

- This has been a reoccurring issue at recent National Councils, which have agreed on a model whereby the age limit for events leading to an award is set on the 31st August.
- The motion argues that youth members of age for an activity (presumably on the last day or the day after the event, although this unclear) be allowed to participate. However, given that activities move on the calendar, this can result in youth members who were presumed that they were eligible for an event being extremely disappointed – this is especially relevant for the Venture Scout and Rover Scout sections when the summer expeditions can range across two months for logistical reasons.
- Age limitations are a crude tool, but it is better that they are consistently applied to provide structure and certainty to young people. With a set date, young people can, if they so wish, calculate what activities leading to an award they will be eligible for years in advance.
- Both exploratory notes use the term 'exclude' which does not reflect practice on national activities whereby young people over the age can and do participate in activities leading to award, although it may impact on the team's capacity to win in terms of competitive events.
- The overarching approach to youth programme should be one of inclusivity and attention to individual personal development.

- Both exploratory notes do not accurately define the Scout Age Section 12, 13, 14 , (15), nor do they define the Venture Scout and Rover Scout sections, which will also be affected by this motion.

Context point:

- It was generally understood that the meetings of the company structure would not consider such specific operational matters, and that other platforms and mechanisms would be put in place to address such matters. It is disappointing that these have not materialised resulting in motions such as this being put before the AGM.

Recommendation:

- Vote against. Retain the principle of a single consistent date which provides certainty for youth members and Groups. While also continuing the practice of allowing team leads/camp chiefs discretion to permit young people attend according to their personal development.
- The Board should ensure appropriate forums are put in place to allow for the discussion and decision on this and similar motions other than a company AGM.

Notes on Motions 5:

That this meeting reminds the Directors of Scouting Ireland Services CLG of the World Adults in Scouting Policy, which is also a policy of Scouting Ireland, and demands that this policy is properly implemented within the company, and in particular that the operational structures, roles and management systems are designed to ensure that the organisation remains volunteer-led and staff-supported.

Main points:

- The Programme Services Department, including the Core Team and several project teams, have been operating, using the structure agreed upon by the Board, for nine months.
- The transition process involved in the Department essentially starting from scratch which has been slower than expected and desired (a previous Youth Programme Team of 14 people leading teams totalling over 100 was, in essence, disbanded, save for some volunteers in the Adventure Skills Teams). The Core Team operates well and has a very positive relationship with the Department Manager.
- Due to the transition process, the new structures, and on-going issues within the organisation, a lot of good will has been lost, which is reflected in the low response to open calls – although, it should be noted that the open call process has resulted new and very capable people populating the teams.
- The generic company structure imported by the Board is not conducive to the running of national youth programme supports as understood and expected by the membership.

- Standing teams and discernible team leads for programme sections, adventure skills, and other areas would provide greater clarity and direction for the programme.
- Ambiguities around the responsibility for national activities are common.
- It remains unclear how Provincial and County structures relate to the Department
- It also remains unclear whether the new structure is capable of providing the level of youth programme support previously enjoyed under the old structure.
- The selection and appointment process of the Core Team was run by paid staff and lacked sufficient checks and balances to ensure buy-in from the wider membership. In previous structures, elections/appointments to these positions allowed the membership to become familiar with candidates and their agendas, and for them to agree or disagree, this participatory and tangible process has been lost resulting in a distance between the Department and Scout Groups.
- The Department Managers and Departments are answerable to the CEO, who is in turn answerable to the Board. However, as the CEO can only direct paid staff and financial resources, rather than the volunteers; it remains unclear what happens in the case of disagreement between the CEO and volunteer core team or project team members, and the impact that would have on the professional assessments of Department Managers and CEO.
- The motion's explanatory note outlines that the 'nature of the organisation is to be fundamentally changed in a way that was not previously intended or notified.' Our experiences and observations concur with this.

Recommendation:

- The team is not making a recommendation re voting
- A review of the current Department structures be implemented, especially concerning the programme services.
- The Board adheres to all Scouting Ireland policies and is informed by advice from WOSM.