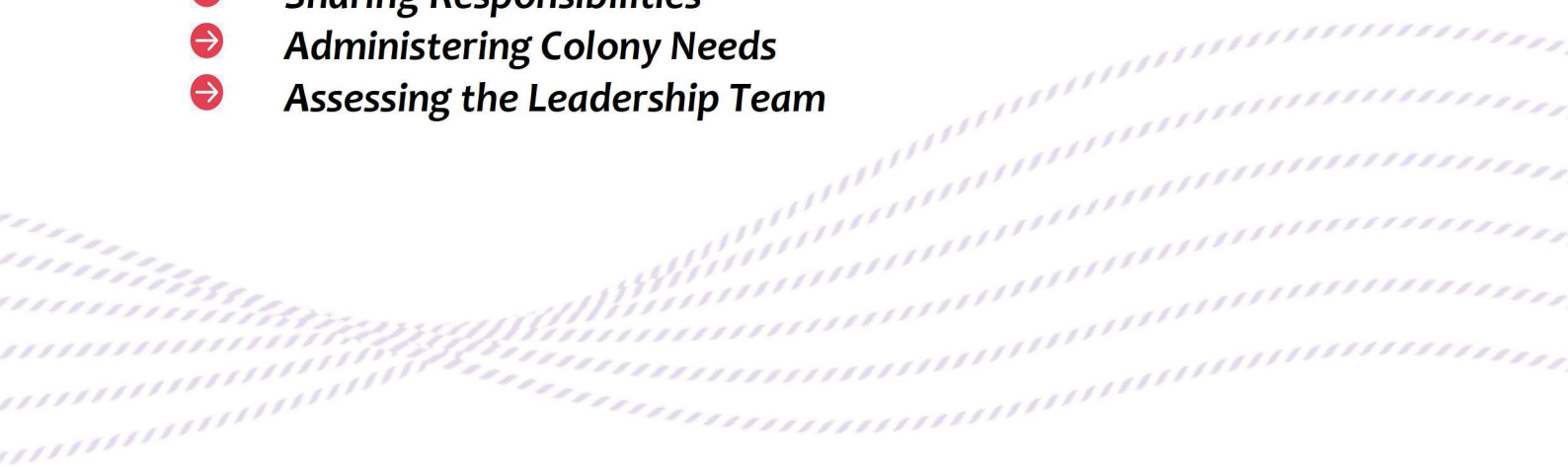

Chapter 4

SHARED LEADERSHIP

- Leadership Requirements
 - Shared Leadership
 - The Leadership Team
 - Sharing Responsibilities
 - Administering Colony Needs
 - Assessing the Leadership Team
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Leadership Requirements

Beaver Leaders are individuals who have agreed to help promote Scouting's Mission and Principles. They have a willingness to work harmoniously with five to seven-year-olds and other adults. Beaver Leaders are interested in developing their own Leadership skills.

Responsibilities:

- Provide children (5-7 years) with age appropriate challenging, weekly meetings which include all elements of the Scout Association of Malta's Beaver Scout programme.
- Ensure that the health and safety of all members is maintained continually. This is a primary concern.
- Participate in Colony planning meetings. Try and include ideas that come from the Beaver Scouts themselves.
- Develop close working relations with other members of the team and share the responsibility of managing the Colony together.
- Help carry out the weekly programme to its best potential.
- Support and participate in special meetings and activities, including outings and joint activities.
- Know and use resource material available, including materials that can be downloaded from Scoutkeeper.
- Maintain good relations with parents/guardians, and encourage activities, which involve them.
- Encourage recruitment of Colony Members **and** Colony Leaders.
- Maintain good relations with Leaders in other Sections and attend Group Council Meetings and the Group Scouters' Meeting as required.
- Take training for the position. This should include regular sharing sessions (both with leaders within the Group and/or in other Groups), special interest and outdoor activity skills.

Shared Leadership

The concept of shared leadership allows Leaders to become models of teamwork for young children. In concrete terms, it means that all Leaders equally share in the successful operation of a section. Through your good example, you will be demonstrating most of the values you want young Beaver Scouts to learn.

An effective team of Leaders uses all the concepts of teamwork, shared responsibility, belonging, cooperation, group decision-making, sensitivity towards other's feelings, supportiveness, encouragement, feedback, and compromise. What could be more important than to share the spirit of friendship, enthusiasm and good-will that is a product of enjoyable teamwork?

The Leadership Team

The Scouters in a Beaver Colony are called Colony Leaders. All Leaders must be 18 years of age and over and are to be registered and vetted within the Scout Association of Malta. The minimum number of Leaders in a Colony at full capacity (16) is 3. One of these Leaders will be registered as the Colony main Leader and is referred to as the Beaver Scout Leader or BSL. It is best to have both male and female Leaders in your Beaver Scout section.

Sharing Responsibilities

Beaver Leaders pool their knowledge, skills, interests and ideas to develop a programme which ensures that every child has a fun-filled personal growth experience in the Colony.

This task requires a close working relationship among team members. It is necessary for each team to work out its own methods of group decision-making, programme planning, implementation and evaluation.

Keep the following key factors in mind:

- ➔ Leaders have a joint and equal responsibility for the Colony's operation.
- ➔ Success requires that all members work towards establishing open communication.
- ➔ It is important to hear and encourage ideas of all members at planning meetings.
- ➔ It is important for all Leaders to support a member who is trying Leadership in a new activity area.

- The team should rotate duties throughout the year to ensure that all members can learn all functions, including conducting ceremonies.
- It is important for all team members to foster a sense of cooperation and mutual acceptance.

Administering Colony Needs

A number of tasks need to be carried out so your Colony can run smoothly. Rotate these tasks among your team members during the year. Depending on your team's particular needs and circumstances, rotate jobs by the week, month or seasonal periods of your programme.

You can expand or change the task areas described below as needed; you may even identify others for your own Colony.

Initiator

The position involves getting things started in specific areas and times. In most cases, this is done by the Beaver Scout Leader. Some of the tasks the initiator needs to do include:

- Calling and/or hosting Leadership meetings.
- Keeping a list of items which need to be discussed.
- Reminding members of the task each is expected to do for meetings/activities.
- Seeing that tasks assigned are carried out.
- Starting/Closing a Colony meeting.
- Coordinating a segment of the programme.

You can rotate this role on a weekly, monthly or bi-monthly basis, particularly when it comes to coordinating meetings of the Leadership team.

Apply the role in several ways. In fact, you may need more than one initiator. For example, you may have one initiator who calls a Leadership meeting, another who gets a Colony meeting going, yet another one who takes care of special-themed-activities over a series of meetings.

Communication is key !

Home Resources

Parents / Guardians are a vital source of support to a Leadership team. Well-organized Beaver Colonies establish a good working relationship with parents/guardians immediately. The relationship benefits Leaders, parents and children. One of the team's tasks is to boost parental interest and commitment. Do this by:

- Informing parents about the programme in a timely manner.
- Writing a short newsletter periodically.
- Keeping in touch about coming events.
- Be approachable and reachable.
- Asking for feedback about their child's involvement.

Assessing the Leadership Team

Working in a collective manner requires mutual support and encouragement mixed with generous amounts of caring, flexibility and openness. Remember the first time it was your turn to do the opening ceremony? How about the first time you led a song?

When team members are learning many new skills, they often find it easier to stay with the simple activities and leave higher profile jobs to more experienced hands. Yet, the essence of cooperative group building is that each member develops his/her abilities.

The next time your Leadership team evaluates programme events, suggest that you also spend some time sharing ideas about the team itself. Plan this informal discussion when all members have time to relax and reflect. You might like to share thoughts on questions like the following:

- Do all Leaders accept responsibility, and participate?
- Do quieter members have a chance to voice their opinions?
- Do we use community resource people in our activities?
- Do we involve parents in, or keep them informed of, planned activities?

Why not invite other Scouters from your group to your next section meeting? This person can help you explore ways to evaluate and improve both your programme and your team's performance.