
Chapter 10

MEETINGS AND CEREMONIES

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Meetings

Safety

Safety should be the number one priority at any meeting, whether indoors or outdoors. Together with the rest of the leadership team, review the programme to highlight potential hazards and risks, and then take action to minimise them. Discuss specific rules of behaviour; for example: Beavers must stay with their Colony / Lodge or ask permission before leaving the Colony / Lodge.

Rules should be explained clearly. They should be written down and placed somewhere visible for all to see and ensure that they are enforced.

A fully equipped first aid kit and health forms must be at hand at all meetings/activities. The Scout Association of Malta requires that ALL leaders undergo a First Aid course. Adequate First Aid facilities, equipment, and personnel trained in first aid are a Scouting requirement for any organised meeting or activity. Leaders should be aware of the location of the nearest doctor or medical facility.

The Scout Association of Malta also requires that ALL Leaders be qualified food handlers. Since some meetings/activities are based on or include preparation and presentation of food, Leaders are required to train themselves in the proper handling and storage of food items. This will ensure food safety for both leaders and children at all times. When organizing an activity/meeting which includes preparation and/or presentation of food, it is especially important that Leaders discreetly enquire with parents/guardians about any food allergies that the children may suffer from. This will help the leadership team prepare adequately and in advance.

Dressing for the Weather

The importance of proper clothing for outdoor activities cannot be stressed enough. Ensure that parents are aware of any activities being held outdoors well in advance. For your peace of mind, you might want to give the parents a kit list of items needed well in advance so that they can prepare accordingly.

For example:

Outdoor activity in Winter: thick rain jacket, sturdy waterproof shoes, gloves, beanie...

Water games at headquarters in Summer: towel, sun block, spare t shirt, sunhat...

Early Arrival

It is extremely important that members of the leadership team arrive on site prior to the Beavers arrival.

Use the time to discuss details about the programme so all team members are fully aware of what will be happening during the meeting. If any other Scouter or helper is giving a helping hand with the evening's activities, invite that person to join the briefing session too. This is also a good time to locate and prepare all the equipment and materials you will be using during the meeting/activity.

Gathering Activity

Together with Keo (the Beaver Scout Leader), greet the Beavers warmly as they arrive. Involving the Beavers in an activity/game requiring minimum explanation during the gathering time period on arrival at Head Quarters is always a good idea. It is especially important to closely supervise children of this age. Remember, they are your responsibility while at your Head Quarters. Meetings should start promptly. If some Beavers are always early or late, communicate with their carers to clarify meeting times.

Physical Setup

Familiar routines are essential to Beaver-aged children. They react very positively when they feel secure and security is fostered when they know where the Colony meets, where equipment is stored and how to get to the bathroom. If you do not provide structure, you may find your Beavers harder to handle and less cooperative.

Keeping Things Moving

Even though attention span increases greatly from age five to seven, the Beaver programme requires varied and changing activities. The frequency will be dependent upon the age mix within the Colony, the type of activity and the degree of the Beavers' interest. One can encourage an individual Beaver to overcome disinterest, however if the leadership team notices that overall enthusiasm is dipping, one should move on to a new activity before the present one begins to drag.

The choice of games/activities and how they are sequenced makes a difference. Beavers have different energy levels throughout the meeting. Outside factors also have a bearing on their behaviour (for example: if your meeting is following a party they, might be tired or hyper). Judgement on the best type of activity - active or quiet games, crafts, or a calming song can make a big impact on how well the meeting progresses. There may be times when adjustments to the planned session need to be made; some examples are:

- ➔ When what you are doing is not working and the Beavers are not enjoying the activity;
- ➔ Taking advantage of opportunities that come your way (i.e. a police officer is near that night and would like to drop by and say hello); or

- ➔ Something may occur at the location or within the group that requires changes for safety reasons.

Over-programming

Because of the need for frequent change, it is important to have many activities at hand prepared for a meeting. Long-range planning makes this easier because, if the week's games, songs or stories do not suit the mood of the evening, simply swap with a future idea.

Backup Programmes

Having one or two back-up programmes ready to use is something every Colony should be prepared for. If the programme is not working as planned or something disrupts the evening it is advisable to have an alternate "Plan B" programme ready like some simple crafts ready to go.

Reading Emotion and Interest Levels

This is a learned skill which you will develop as you watch and work with Beavers. Although your instinct may be to introduce a quiet activity to your over-excited Beavers, the results can be disastrous. Perhaps you will find it is more effective to slip an active game into that time slot.

Try not to be a slave to your schedule; do not force Beavers through an activity simply because the plan says that is what is due. Although encouragement and your own enthusiasm may create the enthusiasm and interest you need from the Beavers, it does not always happen.

Just before the closing of the meeting/activity, arrange a quieter type of activity. The chance of accidents increases when you send completely charged-up Beavers on their way home.

Keeping Families Involved

Some Colonies use newsletters, e-mails and social media, while others put phoning committees to work to inform parents/guardians of special events. All these methods seek to keep communication open between the Colony/Scout Group and the parents/guardians. Hold regular informal meetings with the parents/guardians so as to keep abreast on information about your Beavers.

Ensuring Beavers Get Home Safely

Most Colonies develop a system with parents about arrangements for going home. Whether each parent meets his/her child outside of the premises or a parents' car pool is organized; make sure you account for each child.

Make it clear to parents/guardians that you must be informed if they want to change arrangements especially if it is someone not known to you that will be collecting the child after the meeting..

Ensure that all leaders or a designated leader closely monitor the departure of the children; keep your Colony Record Sheets handy so if a parent/guardian does not arrive when expected, you can phone them up. It is important that children are collected at the appropriate time. This will avoid unwanted stress both on the child and the Leader.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies have been a tradition in Scouting for many years. For all members, these special activities help create the sense of community, which is such an important component of the Beaver Scout goals.

These moments are especially important to Beaver-aged children because they are such a new experience. Young children particularly enjoy regular routines, and the familiar cycles like opening and closing ceremonies become anchor points in a sea of new and unfamiliar activities.

The special language and actions of ceremonies also emphasize the magical quality of creative weekly meetings. When you are visiting another Colony, there is something very inspiring about seeing your Beavers' faces light up when they hear the call for "Fall In." When preparing any ceremony, remember this basic rule:

KEEP IT SIMPLE, MAKE IT FUN
(KISMIF in short).

INVESTITURE CEREMONY

When a new member joins Beavers, the child becomes a "Kit" – the term used to describe a young beaver. The Kit may wear the activity uniform but not the Group neckerchief (Scarf).

To be eligible for Investiture, the Beaver must have:

- Attended to Colony meeting for 3 months,
- Completed the Membership Award,
- Must know the Beaver Promise and Motto and
- Be familiar with the opening and closing ceremonies.

If the Investiture is to be performed for only one Beaver, it would be good practice to avoid having a Beaver stand alone and instead have a leader or an elder Beaver accompany the child during this ceremony.

Procedure

Before starting the ceremony, one of the leaders explains the procedure and the importance of the investiture ceremony briefly.

An older Beaver accompanies the new Beavers and calls out the beavers' names introducing them to the leaders. Beaver scout Leader asks the children to do the Scout Sign (with the right hand) while saying the Beaver Scout promise and placing the left hand on the Beaver Scout Flag. The Group Scout Leader will then put the neckerchiefs around the neck of the children and slide the Beaver's woggle. The Beaver Scout Leader will then place the cap on the Beaver's head and give him/her the Membership Award Badges and the Scout Association of Malta's Official Investiture Certificate.

You can invest one or more Beavers at once since they repeat the promise after the Beaver Scout Leader in unison.

The newly invested Beavers shake hands with their Leaders (Scouting's left handshake) and then proceed to re-join the rest of the Colony.

EAGER BEAVER AWARDS - A CELEBRATION OF GROWTH

Once a year all Beavers are presented with the Eager Beaver Awards:

- Eager Beaver One – *I'm Unique*
- Eager Beaver Two – *I'm an Achiever*

These are presented in a ceremony designed to emphasise personal growth and development. This ceremony is a celebration and provides personal opportunity for each Beaver Scout to be recognized in terms of their own growth and development **without being compared to anyone else in the Colony or other Sections.**

Together with the Beavers, talk about changes that have taken place in their behaviour like:

- How they listen better when someone is talking.
- How they are trying harder to live up to their Promise and Motto.
- How much they have grown.
- How they play games with more skill.

- How they share more with other Beavers.

Parents should be encouraged to attend these ceremonies as they mark an important milestone in their Scouting journey. This may also include group discussions, refreshments and games. These celebrations serve to heighten the experience in a variety of ways:

- In some Colonies, displays are prepared. Beaver Scouts get to showcase the crafts and other items they have been working at in the months prior to the ceremony. The child's own personal growth and development can be seen through these projects. Where possible involve the children. Let them do the introduction/explanation of their project.
- Beavers draw a scene from a book / movie / play. Leaders can then show them off during the next Eager Beaver Award ceremony.
- Leaders build a fancy height marker on a wall in the shape of maybe a tree found in the Beaver's environment. Each Beaver takes his/her turn to get his height taken. Each month invent a fun activity including a 'height checker. Leaders should get involved too and mark their own height in too making it more fun for the children.
- Leaders take photos of each Beaver every six months and placed in 'special pages'. Every now and then show these special pages to the Beavers so that they can see the difference in their own growth for themselves – taller, longer or shorter hair, lost a tooth, etc etc. Always ensure that you heighten the good things.

MOVING-ON CEREMONY

The Moving-On Ceremony formally recognizes the occasion when a Beaver Scout has concluded the journey within the Colony and now the time has come to move-on to the next challenging journey – the Pack section.

A Tangible Symbol

A few months before the Moving-on Ceremony, Beavers may be presented with their new coloured woggle to indicate that they will now be preparing to move-on to Cubs. This provides special recognition for those Beavers who will be moving-on, and an opportunity to introduce and discuss the concept of the Moving-On Award with all the Beaver Scouts.

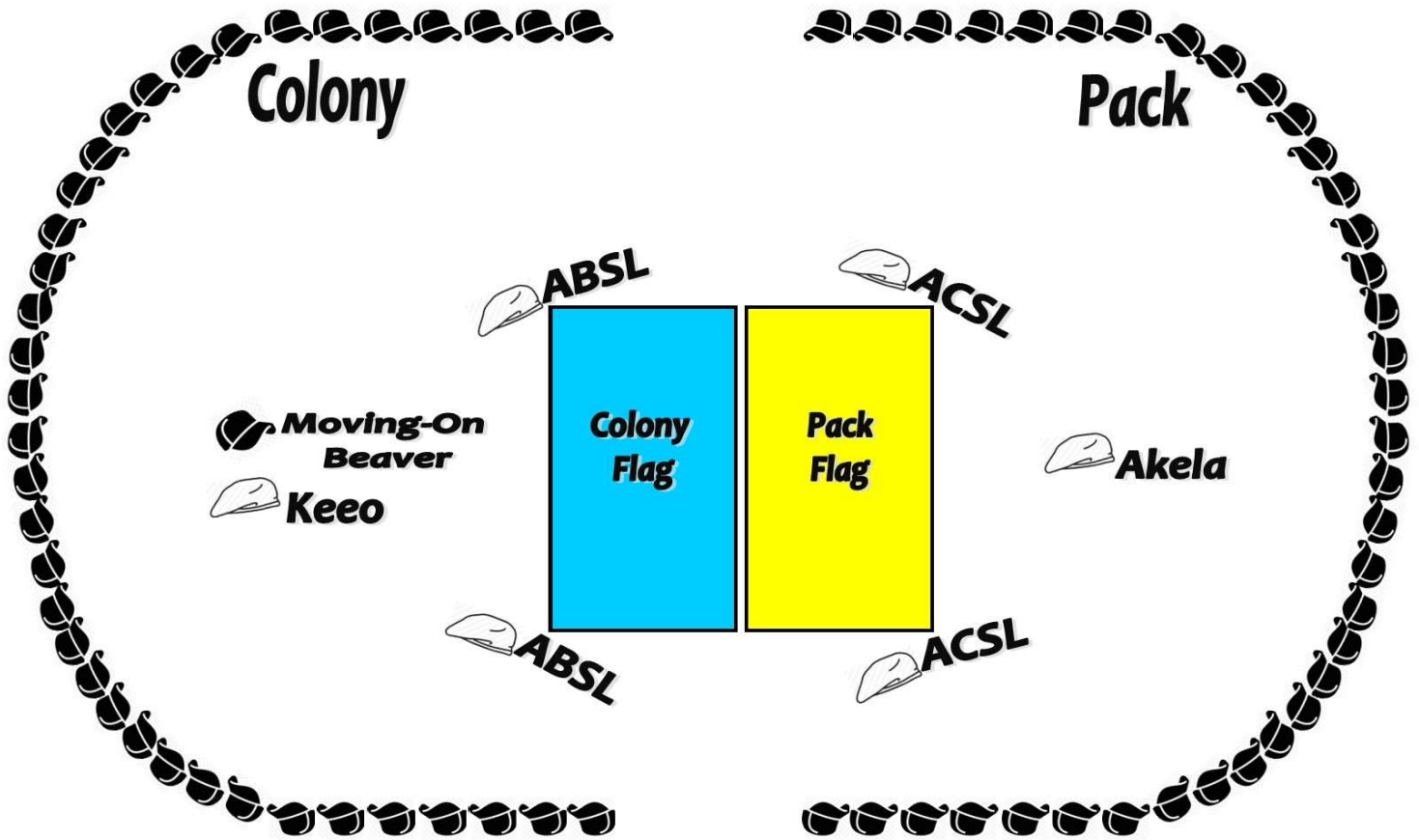
Moving from one section to another is particularly important. Beaver and Cub leaders must work together to make it a successful, meaningful experience for all Beavers involved. As part of the Moving-on procedure, a Beaver should attend cub meetings for a minimum of 3 months and start working on the Tenderpaw Section of the Cub Programme. To make this process easier the Moving-On Award's requirements overlap with those of the Tenderpaw Badge. This ensures that no time is lost in introducing the Beavers moving-on to Cubs to the Cub Programme.

It is important that the Beavers are excited and happy about moving-on to the Pack. The Colony is not losing a Beaver but **has produced** a busy Beaver who is about to become a good hunter in the Pack. It is a time for all Beavers to share in the happiness of the occasion.

The Leaders may present a scrapbook of all the material summarising the Beavers' growth and progress to the Beaver who will be moving-on to Cubs. During the Moving-on process, it is very important to understand that Keeto is not required to instruct the Beavers on the Cub Programme. This job is solely Akela's responsibility.

Procedure

- Both Colony and Pack sections form a horseshoe facing each other. (See Diagram 1 in the following page).
- Inside both horseshoes the Section Leaders stand facing each other. The G.S.L calls the group to "Alert" and briefly explains the purpose of the ceremony. (See Diagram 1 in the following page).
- The Assistant Section Leaders of both sections stand in the middle of both horseshoes holding the Colony's and Pack's flags outstretched one next to the other. (See Diagram 1 in the following page).
- The Beaver Scout Leader calls out the name of the Beaver/s Moving-On from the Colony to the Pack. He/She says a few words briefly introducing him/her to the Pack leaders and Cubs and wishing him/her well on his future in the pack. (See Diagram 1 in the following page).
- The Beaver Scout passes under the flag where he is met by his new sixer in the Pack. The Sixer changes the Beaver's woggle with the coloured woggle of his new Six. Together they get out from under the flag where they are greeted by both Akela and the rest of the Pack. (See Diagram 2 in the following page).
- The Pack then form a circle and carry out the Grand Howl. This brings the ceremony to an end. (See Diagram 2 in the following page).



Moving-On Ceremony - Diagram 1

Moving-On Ceremony - Diagram 2
Welcome and Inclusion of a New Cub

