



ROVER SCOUTS

# Leading *a* Rover Crew

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## **A Scout Association of Malta Publication**

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**THE *Scout* ASSOCIATION  
OF MALTA**



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## INTRODUCTION

**The Crew and its Programme is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal training methods of the Rover Section, including Induction Training and formal training offered by The Scouts Association of Malta to help you gain a better understanding of how to make your Crew, and the Rovers that make up your Crew, successful in achieving through Scouting what it is they want.**

**The booklet provides a great starting point but is no substitute for being enthusiastic and participating with a well run Rover Crew. Hopefully you will gain a better understanding of how the Rover Section works and be able to use this to become a valuable part of the Rover Section, and perhaps more importantly, your own Crew. But, above all, you should learn how to have a lot of fun doing it!**

# LEADING A CREW

## QUALITIES OF A ROVER CREW COORDINATOR (RCC)

Given that Rovers are self-determining, the ultimate responsibility for the running of a successful Crew rests with the RCC. This is possibly the most important job a Rover can assume at any time in their Roving career. The responsibilities of a RCC are outlined in Guidelines for Roving.

Ideally, a RCC would be over 20 years of age, but in small and new Crews this is not always possible. Certainly both they and the Assistant RCC should be fully-invested Rovers. Many Crews insist that all office bearers be fully invested members of the Crew, while others are more flexible. Some Crews consciously elect a younger Rover to fill an executive position so that the next generation of leaders in the Crew can start gaining some experience. This also means that the opinion of younger members of the Crew can be sought.

At the very least the RCC should attend a Rover Sectional training course or equivalent either before, or during, their term of appointment. The Assistant RCC should also try to attend, so that they can put their learning into practice before they succeed the RCC. Some Groups have rules requiring RCCs to either have been trained or to undertake their training during their term of appointment.

The RCC needs to have some self-motivation. They are the ones responsible for motivating everyone else in the Crew to get things done. They should have good time management, goal setting, organisational and people skills. All of this is a lot to ask of a young adult. As a matter of fact, all they really need is some common sense and a desire to do a really good job. The rest of these things they can learn along the way – that is the idea after all.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE ROVER CREW

One person can only do so much, so the team that is behind them is all important. In a Rover Crew, the RCC cannot, and should not, do everything to keep the Crew running. They will need to learn to act more as a manager, and they will need a support team to succeed in this role.

The teamwork aspect of the Executive is all important to ensuring long term success in leading the Crew. If the team does not work well together, this adds extra strain to the jobs each person takes on and can lead to the “burn out” of one or more members of the Executive. It is particularly important that the RCC pays attention to this, as looking after the members of the Crew and the Crew Executive is an important part of their job.

The Crew Executive would normally consist of the RCC, Secretary, Treasurer, and two other members. These positions are described in the Guidelines for Roving, with the responsibilities of each individual clearly identified. It is also important to remember that when a new Executive is elected, the experience gained and procedures developed by the current Executive should be passed on to make each successive Executive better equipped to deal with running the Crew.

The Rover Mentor is normally included in most discussions of the Crew Executive as a guiding influence, and some Rover Crews acknowledge the Rover Mentor as an ex-officio member of the Crew Executive in their Constitution.

### Working as a Team – The Key to Effective Management

The RCC needs to identify member's strengths and weaknesses to firstly make sure they are allocated suitable tasks to do, and secondly to help them develop the other skills they may be lacking, so that both the individual and the Crew may benefit. An important key here of course is communication, and this is an area in which we can always look to improve our skills. Ensuring everyone is kept informed and that messages are passed and received accurately is crucial to having a successfully functioning team.

### Looking After Each Other

With the exception of the help and guidance from the Rover Mentor, the Crew will be left to govern itself. Therefore, it will be up to all of the members of the Crew to look out for each other. Developing good interpersonal relationships will be important to the Crew working well together. This does not mean that everyone must be the best of friends with everyone else, but members should respect each other and look out for one another. This is one of the things that makes Crews so important in a Rover's life. It becomes a tremendous source of support and friendship. These friendships develop Crew loyalty, which will again enhance the Crew's ability to work together to achieve their goals. A well developed sense of Crew loyalty also tends to make friendly competitions with other Crews a bit more interesting!

### Leadership Styles

It is well recognised that different leadership styles are required to work with different people and in undertaking different responsibilities. Generally within Rovering, leadership can be simplified to balancing the achievement of a set task with developing a group of people, while addressing the needs of each individual within the group. How the RCC sets about balancing these requirements is known as the leadership style.

Different styles will be required for different tasks and for different groups of people.

The style adopted in being a Chair of a committee organising a national activity camp will be different from those required for organising a weekend camp with your own Crew.

There is no one correct style that RCCs can use all

the time. Styles must vary to suit the circumstances. Each individual or any group of people will have different skills, different expectations and different reactions to situations. Tasks will be different. The effective RCC will recognise these differences and adapt accordingly to the situation. This concept of leadership based on considering the task, the individual and the group is known as **situational leadership**.



Situational leadership requires the leader to use the most appropriate style to suit each specific situation. Different styles include:

- **telling (directive)**
- **selling (persuasive)**
- **sharing (consulting)**
- **delegating (shared decision making).**

Each of these styles has its advantages and disadvantages and a combination of them is often required to address the needs of any group of people. These concepts are further developed during Rover Sectional Training and a good understanding of them will help you to get the best out of the teams you will need to deal with, both in Rovers and in your day-to-day life.

### Motivating Others

The ability to motivate others and inspire are essential characteristics for effective leaders. The importance of leading by example cannot be overemphasised for Rovers.

The ability to recognise potential and to be able to work with both individuals and groups is essential in Scouting. Managing difficult situations, delegating, resolving conflict and using effective communication strategies are all skills useful to a leader.

A motivated group of people who want to be there and want to participate in any given project, is the most important asset you can have. Usually, no matter what the obstacle, the motivated people will find a solution and get on with the job, and many times they will undertake more arduous tasks in more adverse conditions than almost any paid workforce.



Motivating others is most definitely an art, though it is something that, with practice, you can become very good at. It is getting others to want to do what it is you would like them to do. Whilst it is a complex task that requires a different approach with different people, there are some basics that are common to most situations.

1

Firstly you must lead by example. You should be the most motivated and enthusiastic person in the room – people will only want to work as hard as the person in charge. This has a contagious effect and will help others to find enthusiasm for your cause. Secondly you should be prepared.

2

If it is clear that there is a definite focus for people's efforts and a definite goal in mind, others will be more likely to help you. Explain clearly what is expected from each of the people involved and focus on the positives of the task at hand. This might be something as simple as the opportunity to have a good time, learn a new skill or achieve a personal goal, but it gives people a good feeling about what they are signing up for. Be careful not to overlook the negatives or people may get upset when they find them out later.

3

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you should gain the respect of the people you want to do things for you or with you. If you don't have their respect, they will be unlikely to want to help you. This part will be entirely up to you to achieve but a good rule of thumb is that in order to gain respect you must first treat others with respect – respect for their abilities, their beliefs, their potential and their own goals and aspirations.

## Chairmanship

Managing a small group of people in a predominantly democratic organisation usually means there will be a need to develop your abilities as a Chairman, to facilitate others to achieve their goals for themselves – not doing the work for them. This takes a lot of time and practice but discussed below are some basic skills for a starting point.

In general terms, the role of the Chairman is to guide the meeting to a timely resolution of its aims by leading, but not controlling, the discussions. It is important the Chairman does not bring bias to the debate but instead ensures that all sides of the argument are presented at the meeting and that he or she facilitates discussion to achieve the best outcome for the Crew. This means that, to a degree, the Chairman may need to keep their own opinions to themselves so as not to sway the meeting, but on the other hand they need to make sure important points and perspectives are not overlooked. They should also encourage input from those who are a little more reluctant to speak up.

Different styles of chairmanship may be used, depending on the situation. These range from applying a very formal meeting protocol, to leading a round table discussion, to sitting back and letting it all happen around you. Sometimes it is useful to "set up" or pre-arrange some people to present different points of view in order to encourage discussion. Each of these styles has their advantages and disadvantages and a mix of each during any one meeting is often needed to achieve the best outcome.

The Chairman should also keep in mind they have a responsibility for the effectiveness of the meeting. With this comes a degree of authority which allows the Chairman to achieve this aim. This authority includes choosing the order of speakers, ejecting disruptive members, truncating discussions that carry on for a long time and so on.

## Running a Meeting

Running a meeting is something you have to learn by actually doing it. However, below are a few ideas to help make it run more smoothly. Above all, preparation and knowledge of the issues likely to be raised are critical. Firstly, make sure you have a purpose for the meeting and that you understand what your outcomes should be. No one wants to have a meeting for the sake of it. Crew business meetings may be held to organise activities, to attend to administration matters or to improve the operation of the Crew.

Having done this, the next step is to decide what you want on the Agenda in order to achieve this purpose. Once the topics that will need to be considered have been decided, have the Crew Secretary type it up for you, and photocopy enough copies for everyone.

## Leading a Rover Crew

It is a good idea to start the meetings on time. If you wait for the late arrivals, you are rewarding those who are not organised enough to be there on time. When the business meeting opens, remember to welcome any new members or people who haven't attended before, particularly invited guests. If there is anything that they won't understand, explain it before proceeding with the meeting.

General chat and catching up with each other can often get in the way of running an effective meeting. Rather than trying to prevent it, allow time for people to catch up.

This may be in the way of some "fellowship time" at the beginning of the meeting or over supper. Some Crews have a section on the agenda called 'Gossip' or something similar, so that people can share things such as who's moved into a new house or who's going out with whom, without interrupting the meeting.

Keeping the meeting focused is one of the most important tasks the meeting Chairman has. This involves facilitating discussion (rather than directing and influencing it) so that business is dealt with quickly and efficiently. Preventing the meeting from dragging on for a long time is important as people get restless and less productive as time goes on.

### Meeting Agendas

It is important to give the agenda to everyone who is at the meeting. Agendas are useful to give people some idea of where the meeting is going so they can bring up their point at the right time and not get the meeting off track with irrelevancies. Remember also, the topics of discussion must be relevant to the purpose of the meeting.

### Components of the Agenda

Business meetings are often run in a standard sort of format mostly for the sake of ease and efficiency – there is no need to "re-invent the wheel" for every meeting. The agenda should include items such as attendance and apologies, acceptance of the minutes from the previous meeting and any business arising from that meeting, correspondence received and sent, reports from the Crew committee (including the finance report), any sub committees or representatives, and general business. General business includes all business that does not fit in any other specific section of the agenda. For most Crews, this will include all discussions. It is good to have a section on the Rover Scout Award Scheme which includes any progress reports, a section for activities to check on the progress and success of the Programme and so on. The exact structure of the agenda can be modified to suit the Crew's needs.

### Keeping Minutes

Minutes should be an accurate and reasonably informative record of the discussions and decisions of the meeting. This satisfies your record requirements and is the best way of tracking the progress of various issues. If the same matters arise meeting after meeting, then it is a good indicator that the matter needs some definite attention. Taking good quality minutes is a skill that comes with practice. A good measure of the quality of the minutes is that a person who did not attend the meeting should be able to read the minutes and have a full appreciation of what was discussed and decided at the meeting.

If your Crew Secretary needs assistance, consider asking the Group Council Secretary for some pointers. All of the skills mentioned in this section are developed further in Rover Sectional Training. If you require assistance in the meantime, your GSL or Rover Commissioner are a great source of advice.





# RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ROVERS FROM WITHIN THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

**Resources are available from a number of areas. Texts and other reference materials can be gained from libraries. Some written materials can be downloaded from the Internet. Often all the Crew may need to do is get pointed in the right direction and it will find a book that has information which may be useful in answering any questions.**

## Human Resources

Often the most difficult resources to come across will be others with the necessary experience and skills that will help the RCC carry out not only the Programme but also the management of the Crew. These people are sometimes not easy to find. The trick is to look in the right place for them. The Scout Association of Malta works very hard to provide a support network and assistance for members that can be utilised by your Crew at any time. This is one reason why it is useful to maintain links with your District Commissioner – they will often know how to find the people you are looking for. All of them will have an interest in seeing your Crew prosper which makes them very willing to assist.

## Crew Resources

In addition to human resources, there will be a number of things or a list of equipment that the Crew will find it useful to have.



### Copies of:

- **Rovering to Success**
- **The Rover Award Scheme (*myJourney*)**
- **The Crew and its Programme**



### Administrative information:

- **The Scout Association of Malta Policy and Rules - available from the web (scoutkeeper)**
- **Diary/Logbook**
- **Logs from previous *my* Induction Training and *myJourney* documents**
- **Crew Programme site**
  - i. Crew Contact List
  - ii. Activity equipment such as canoes, abseiling gear, camping gear.

## Obtaining Resources

When seeking resources, be creative. Try to borrow or hire any expensive items the Crew might need. Some equipment will need to be purchased. Wherever possible, try to get a good deal for the Crew. If equipment has to be purchased, the maintenance of it should be an important consideration, so someone should be appointed as Quartermaster (QM) to make sure the Crew's investment does not get wasted.

## RECRUITING

**Recruiting is a critical issue for Rover Crews - the longevity of the Crew depends on it.**

**For example, if the sixth-youngest member is 21, unless the Crew recruits new members it has a use-by date five years in the future.**

**There are several areas the Crew can direct its recruiting efforts towards.**

**Venture Scout Units may not be familiar with Rovering, so it can be good to assign someone to make sure regular contact is maintained and older Venture Scouts are shown the ropes. This person would usually become their Mentor.**

**Non-Scouting friends or acquaintances of current Crew members may wish to join Rovers. They will know at least one member quite well, and this person will be able to guide them in their first weeks in the Crew, before they get to know other people well. These people will have to be taught everything, from the Promise and Law to what happens during various ceremonies they may take part in. However, the Crew will most likely have a Crew member who is able to look after them. If friends and acquaintances express interest in the Crew, get the Crew member concerned to invite them to an appropriate activity. Keep in mind – most people will be more interested to come to a fun activity than a business meeting – first impressions count!**

**“Off the street” candidates are people who have never been in Scouting before. They are a similar target audience to non-Scouting friends, but they may not know anybody. In this case the RCC may have to delegate a Crew member with similar interests to look after them for the first few weeks or months, or do this themselves.**

**Rovers transferring from another Crew may or may not be known to you or other Crew members, depending on where the other Crew is and why they are transferring. If this is the case, consider carefully why that is and whether or not your Crew will be able to address their needs.**

## RECRUITING VENTURE SCOUTS

Venture Scouts are not just people in the next youngest Section of Scouting; they are all potential Rovers, and should be treated as such. Of the four types of recruit, this is the group that should be given the highest priority in the Crew's recruitment strategy because they are likely to be motivated people who are already committed to Scouting and are likely to become part of the backbone of the Crew. They will have Scouting experience, and basic Scouting skills.

Getting them to join the Crew is less easy, and it takes a lot of work to build a successful relationship with the Venture Scouts. The Crew may need a multi-layered strategy to convince them to join.

The Crew could regularly invite the Venture Scout Unit for a combined activity. Make sure that this is planned well in advance, and the RCC should stress to their own members that it is very important that they turn up. This will ensure that the Crew appears to be strong and healthy, with an active Programme. Make it a fun and challenging activity, such as go-karting or a canoeing activity. The Crew should aim to have a combined activity such as this at least every five or six months, and preferably more frequently.

Remember that activities with the Unit need to be ongoing; the Crew cannot put in lots of effort in the first three months of the year and rest on their laurels for the other nine months.

It is also useful to keep in mind that transport may be a problem for many of them – offering to help them solve this problem is a good icebreaker and a great way for the Crew to provide service to the Venture Scout Unit. Consider paying out of Crew funds for the Unit to attend.

Crew members should go out of their way to speak to the older Venture Scouts at any occasion they meet. The key is to not only show the Venture Scouts all that Rovers has to offer them, but to enable them to get to know all the Crew members as people. That way, when they begin to link with the Crew, they will know the members and will hopefully not be intimidated by a large group of new people.

Keep track of which Venture Scouts are nearing their 18th birthday. This enables the RCC to step up their efforts (without overdoing it) with the 17 year olds. Check out the requirements for the Link badge. These have been established to help facilitate the linking process. Adapt it to fulfil the Crew's specific needs and it will serve well as a progression tool – and don't be afraid to start this early and invite the Venture Scouts along to all the great activities over a few months, rather than getting them along to the boring ones in the last few weeks of their linking period in order to squeeze in enough activities to meet the linking requirements. Distractions can get in the way of their linking with the Crew, so if the Crew can get them hooked on Rovers before 18, this problem is avoided.

### ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERS INTO THE CREW

The Crew's first contact with a new member may go a long way towards their decision to join or otherwise. Remember that most people's opinion of an individual or group is formed by their first contact. If the potential member's first impression is that the Crew is poorly run with unfriendly members, then there is little likelihood they will join.

If the RCC can provide them with a copy of the Programme right away, they will know how busy and organised the Crew is and it also gives them an opportunity to get a feel for the type of activities the Crew likes to undertake.

Once are past that hurdle, most Crews have a number of steps to becoming a full Rover. While people can't be expected to do too much before their investiture, the RCC will at least want to make sure that they know the person before accepting them into the Crew.



Before the Crew accepts a person for investiture/induction, it may be appropriate for the new person to:

- **talk to the RCC and/or Rover Mentor about joining the Crew;**
- **attend a few activities with the Crew;**
- **be willing to contribute to the running of the Crew;**
- **show a willingness to accept the Scout Law and Promise from an adult perspective.**

Such guidelines allow consistency between members and enable the Crew to get to know potential members before they join. Keep in mind that the only condition of membership to the Scout Movement is a commitment to, and acceptance of, the Scout Promise and Law.

Crews need to make it a priority to be welcoming to new members and not place too many hurdles in their path to becoming a Rover. There should be no barriers to membership in the Rover Section and membership requirements of Crews should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that *my*Induction training programs are not onerous and provide for quick completion without losing the intent of the program or membership requirements.



## PUBLIC PROMOTION

**This can be a huge topic so the more training Crew members can get about public relations, promotions and all the skills that go along with these topics, the better. It can also be a valuable way to get support, recognition and members for the Crew. There are some key issues Crews should focus on.**

**How Rovers appear in the public eye is of great importance. When in uniform, Rovers are readily identifiable as members of the Scout Movement. Typically though, many Rover events make the wearing of uniform impractical, so Crews may want to consider other ways of letting people know they are Rovers.**

**Either way, a group of people all wearing the same thing are easily distinguished from a casual group of friends, and are more likely to be approached by members of the public wanting to know more.**

**When the Crew is identifiable though, members must also remember their duty to maintain the good image of Scouting, so be sure to act accordingly.**

**Crews that are particularly organised may choose to improve their profile by developing regular media releases about significant upcoming events. If there is a noteworthy event on the Programme, such as running an activity for the public, a local service project, or especially when members of the Crew have made special achievements, it may be appropriate to issue a media release to the local newspapers and radio stations.**

### Web Sites

One public relations tool used by Rovers are web sites – Facebook, Twitter or any other social media – used commonly to publicise events, achievements and activities. Many Crews will have someone who has access to the Internet and the ability to produce a web site, even just a basic one. Most Crew web sites are simply promotional tools to let people know when and where the Crew meets and who the members are, but a web site can be as useful as the Crew wants to make it.

When constructing a Crew's web site, ensure that it puts across the right message. Telling the world about which pub the crew went to last week might seem funny, but it doesn't portray a good image for Rovers. It is important that the content of the web site is relevant and appropriate. Some Crews in Malta may have specific policies on web sites, which ensure that there is consistency in the information being delivered. There may also be privacy rules that the Crew may need to adhere to. **Please make sure you read the online policy of the Scout Association of Malta.**

When the crew have got their site up and running, they'll need to tell people about it. The best way to do this is to register it with a 'search engine', a vast index of web sites that lets users find sites related to the subjects they're looking for. Another place to register is with other Scout web sites which maintain links to individual Group and Crew web sites.

When establishing the site keep in mind it needs to be easy to update on a regular basis.

If the Crew is unable to do this, people will not re-visit the site and therefore it loses its potential as a public relations tool. For example, it's no use having the Crew's Programme on the web if it features activities and events that occurred a year ago. Update regularly and keep visitors happy. If the Crew doesn't believe they can achieve this, rethink the plan.

# CHALLENGES

**There will be a number of challenges the Crew will encounter along the way. These might be issues that affect the Crew as a whole, or individuals within the Crew.**

**Those issues affecting just one member invariably affect others, given the closeness that can often develop within the Crew. In dealing with these, the RCC should keep in mind that they may not have encountered many of the challenges themselves, and they should seek help and advice wherever possible. The Rover Mentor is usually a good source of assistance in these cases. Similarly, there may be issues that require professional help and the RCC should never hesitate to seek the assistance of qualified professionals in dealing with serious matters facing the Crew.**

## CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL CREWS

The major challenge facing small Crews is to maintain a good Programme to attract more members. Whilst many small Crews like the upside to having a small Crew – less disagreements, easier communication and so on - without recruiting new members, the Crew will eventually close.

Low membership also has an impact on the day-to-day running of the Crew. Less members means less people to share the workload of undertaking administrative tasks, organising activities, providing transport, fundraising and so on. There is less opportunity to be in a management position in charge of a large group of people. Less people also means less new ideas and contacts to find new activities and projects to undertake. And fewer members means a smaller support network.

However, there are some advantages – getting a consensus decision is usually easier, communicating messages is easier and less time consuming and members will all get to do exactly what they want all of the time. The trouble is that members are not getting the opportunities available to large Crews.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY LARGE CREWS

Whilst it is generally agreed that larger Crews are able to draw on more resources to help run their Crew, there are different issues to be considered. The downside is usually outweighed by the upside.

### Communications

Keeping control of the business meeting can be a hard task. There is a vicious circle here: an active Crew gains members, and as the Crew becomes larger it becomes more active. This may mean that there is more business to deal with at the business meeting, but also that there are more people around to be disruptive.

The central problem is that there may be too many differing opinions and ideas for anyone but a really good Chairman to control without resorting to detailed rules of debate. One solution to this is to have the Executive run the Crew, with the Executive discussing issues and presenting the Crew with just two or three detailed options to choose from at the business meeting. They are also able to deal with incidental business that does not really concern all the Crew members. This is, after all, why an Executive committee is elected – to take care of the day-to-day running of the Crew.

Another idea is to establish sub-committees to take care of specific projects – such as running a large event, getting the buggy up and running and so on. While this can lead to more paperwork, it also allows people to concentrate on the areas of interest to them, which means that the business meeting can be shorter and more focused, and there is less opportunity for people to interrupt.



Another communication issue is that messages are more difficult to distribute to all members in a short time frame. Technology is an obvious boon here with email, SMS and mobile phones making everyone more accessible, but if one of the Crew does not have access to these facilities, there is a need to ensure steps are taken to include them in the communication process. It is also more difficult to fit the Crew Programme into everyone's schedule simultaneously. This is overcome by advanced planning and sticking to the plan decided upon, including having final details of events available in plenty of time so that last minute arrangements don't end up in a frenzy of phone calls to keep everyone informed. It's the rule of 6 Ps – Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

## Facilities

More people require more room – for meetings, for camping, for parking, for storage of equipment and so on. They also bring with them the ability to make changes to these restrictions, so if you find yourself with a large Crew, there is the chance to expand your HQ, or fundraise to purchase new equipment and so on. Planning for the future is an important consideration here, because as time goes by the Crew may not have a continuing need for such large facilities or stores of equipment, but members may still be carrying a burden of debt which needs to be paid. The continuing success of the Crew is an important consideration in this situation.

## Cliques

Another problem faced by large Crews is cliques. Cliques are groups of people within the Crew who stick together more than they associate with other members. This is not necessarily a problem, but it can become one if a clique starts to miss activities because they are doing something else as a group. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to combat this. If they are off doing their own activities, obviously they are not getting enough out of the 'official' Crew Programme - consider altering it to meet their needs more effectively, and make sure that they are told about all activities in plenty of time so that they can't say they didn't know about them. Also, the RCC should talk to them to find out what it is that is making them want to dissociate from the rest of the Crew – it may be due to an oversight, a personal conflict or some other matter than can be addressed in due course.

Encouraging a spirit of Crew loyalty is a great way to keep everyone enthusiastically involved and is often spurred on by a little healthy rivalry with other Crews.

## Sharing Group Resources

The Crew must be careful not to let the Group Leader think of it as his/her own personal work party, to be contacted only when Group events are on, although doing service activities with other Sections of the Group can be a great way to get to know the Venturer Scouts.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY DISTRICT CREWS

Many of the problems faced by District Crews are the reverse of those faced by Group Crews. Firstly, unless they are lucky they may not have a Venturer Scout Unit based in the same hall. They will therefore have to put in extra effort to go and speak to the Venturer Scout Units in the District.

The lack of Group loyalty found in District Crews may also prove of concern because if the Crew goes through a rough patch, there may be less incentive for members to persevere and work through it. That is not to say that Crew loyalty cannot be developed within the District Crew.

The retention of Group identity within these Crews may encourage the formation of cliques, and it may be useful for the District Crew to adopt a Crew scarf and identity.

This will be a good starting point for developing the loyalty that will be crucial to the Crew's success.

### CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIVIDUAL CREW MEMBERS

#### Managing Conflict

Sooner or later, there will be a conflict between two or more members of the Crew.

This will very likely be because of a personality clash or perhaps even a relationship break up. Whatever the cause of the problem, the RCC will need to maintain good relations with each member of the Crew. It is important that the RCC stays out of the dispute and tries to act as a mediator.



Crew Coordinator is not part of the dispute. There are a number of strategies the Crew/RCC can take to resolve the problem or conflict:

- **working through the problem with both parties to their mutual satisfaction**
- **finding a compromise solution that both parties can live with**
- **use of the RCC's authority to impose a solution on the Crew.**
- **Of these, the preferred strategy is to work the problem through. It may mean getting outside assistance and advice to help mediate, but it is worth the hassle if the RCC really wants to keep the parties concerned as members of their Crew.**

#### Relationships Between Crew Members

Rovers, being young adults, have the freedom to pursue relationships with whomever they choose. Often relationships may develop within Roving circles given that members are spending time with people who share similar interests and aims.

There is no problem with these relationships developing, and there is no point having clauses in the Crew Constitution prohibiting relationships between Crew members; it is impossible to legislate against human nature. On a positive note, if two Crew members are happily engaged in a relationship, that can be a force for stability within the Crew.

The problems begin when relationships end. Often one or both of the parties may choose to leave the Crew, or just take some time off. It is important that the leadership of the Crew keep the best interests of all of the Crew members in mind during this period.

#### Resolution of Conflict Situations

Nobody likes to be in a conflict situation, but they do occur. Communication and feedback are important during this process. If there are

complaints about an individual's behaviour or attitude, it may be prudent for the Rover Mentor or RCC to step in. If the complaint is about either of these two people, it is their responsibility to accept this and use the feedback to help them improve their own attitude or skills. Often getting a third party to mediate and collect anonymous feedback is the best way to get a truly honest answer. A good Leader will take the feedback on board and make changes to overcome any issues presented to them that they feel they can improve on.

#### Disruptive Influences

Every Crew has one - the person who won't shut up, doesn't seem to understand the concept of "a time and a place" and their inappropriate behaviour can drive many in the Crew to despair. Honesty is a useful strategy. Help them to develop more appropriate behaviour, rather than just berating them all the time. Be constructive.

Setting clear guidelines for some people is a good starting point; a consistent approach can be taken if everyone is aware of these. Be careful not to do all of this behind someone's back. Be up front and honest and everyone will benefit.

If nothing else, they will make life interesting and keep members on their toes!



## Alcohol

In general, most Rovers use alcohol sensibly. However, there is a minority of Rovers who over-indulge. RCCs are probably aware of any members in their Crew who do overindulge on a regular basis.

It is recognised that Rovers who are 18 years and over are legally permitted to drink alcohol and to use it in a responsible manner.

The organisers of all Rover activities should promote the responsible use of alcohol where alcohol is either available or provided.

The use of alcohol is defined to be a problem when it adversely affects others, or affects the safety of the Rover in question. When a Rover's use of alcohol becomes a problem, his/her Crew should take action to remedy the situation.

In the absence of the Rover's own Crew, any other Rovers present should take action.

The consumption of alcohol should always be discouraged where other Sections are involved in Rover activities.

Rovers should be discouraged from excessively discussing or boasting about their consumption of alcohol at inappropriate times, such as in the presence of younger members of the Scout Association. This also refers to drinking songs.

Rovers should use their best judgement when drinking, especially when in uniform.

## Alcohol Policy

Looking out for one another is a key ingredient to Rovering. If a member is hosting a party or event where alcohol is to be consumed, then they have a duty of care to the people attending and need to provide water, soft drinks and food.

## Drugs

Drug abuse is a complex issue and if the RCC suspects a member of their Crew, or in fact any of their friends is using or is addicted to drugs – be they legal or illegal - they need to act upon this knowledge very carefully. Being judgemental or denigrating the person is likely to lose their trust. With that goes the opportunity to help them. If nothing is done and the problem is ignored, they will be left "in harm's way". In either case, the individual must be of prime consideration, but not at the expense of the feelings of the rest of the

Rover Crew. The best course of action is to seek some professional help in what to do next. It is important that the GSL is informed immediately.

Having said that, illegal drug use is illegal in any terms and disregarding this goes against the Scout Promise and Law. The possession or use of any illegal substance at Rover or Scout events is strictly forbidden and is cause for disciplinary action. It must be dealt with swiftly and correctly and any actions should be considered in direct consultation with the local Scouting managers (Group Leaders, District Commissioners or the Chief Commissioner).

## Suicide

A large proportion of young people consider suicide at some stage.

It is not possible to predict exactly who might be at risk of suicide, but there are some indicators to watch out for:

- **talking about committing suicide**
- **previous suicide attempts**
- **long periods of unemployment**
- **relationship difficulties with partner**
- **relationship difficulties with parents**
- **pressure to perform, e.g. exam pressures**
- **saying goodbye and giving possessions away withdrawal.**

If the RCC has concerns about one of their Crew members, they need to seek outside assistance; this is not something they can tackle on their own. Speak to the Crew's Rover Mentor or to a trusted friend, and if necessary seek professional help.

Remember that if the person does commit suicide, it is not your fault and you and your Crew should seek counselling as soon as possible.

### Death of a Crew Member

In the unlikely and obviously tragic event of a Crew member dying, whatever the cause, there are a couple of things to remember. Firstly, whether they admit it or not this event is going to affect each and every member of the Crew in different ways, depending on how close they were to the person. This may mean that some or all members of the Crew will require counselling, which is often difficult to convince some people to undertake. The RCC should consider reaching an agreement with the Crew that all members will do this - sometimes those who least admit that they need it are the ones most in need of counselling. This is especially important in the case of a sudden or unexpected death, and/or where other Crew members witnessed the accident that led to the death.

Another thing to consider is that the Crew may wish to have a more private memorial service apart from the funeral. If the person was a particularly dedicated Crew member, think about having a Scouts' Own or memorial service just for the Crew and other Rovers the person may have been close to. This may be held at the Group or District campsite, at the place where the person was invested, or at a place known to be special to them. Also note that in some formations it has been the tradition to take a deceased Rover's epaulettes and place the left one either on or in the coffin (if appropriate) and present the right one to the next of kin. In either case, the wishes of the Rover's family must be considered and any such action should only be done with their approval.

### Disciplinary Action

At one time or another, the RCC may arrive at a point where a member of their Crew has acted in such a manner that the Crew believes it appropriate to institute some sort of disciplinary action. If discussion of the matter has not already reached a satisfactory solution, it may be appropriate to take more formal action against the member - be that suspending their privileges, asking for a written apology or restitution if it is needed, or asking the member to leave the Crew. Each of these actions is a serious matter to deal with and seeking some advice from outside the Crew (i.e. GSL or District Commissioner) would be helpful before deciding on the action to be taken.

In making any decision it must be borne in mind that Rovering is a development-focused organization, and if the individual is pushed away from Rovering members no longer have the opportunity to contribute to their development.

## LIFE AFTER ROVERS – BOOTING AND BEYOND

Having been involved in the Rover Section for a period of time, and often having been quite intensely involved, many Rovers look for something new to do with their time and new ways to direct their energies on reaching their boot age of 26 years.

Some will take on leadership roles within Scouting, while others may like to take on a less intensive role, such as being a part of a Scouting Fellowship. In both cases, the training they have received will stand them in good stead for the challenges they choose.

There are also Rovers who decide they would like to take a break from Scouting.

Often other Crew members become disappointed when someone who has been so involved in the Crew decides to break ties with Scouting for a while. What needs to be considered is that Rovers have had the opportunity to be youth members for up to 20 years – a significant commitment in any terms. They are also often in the position of establishing their homes, families and careers. This takes considerable time and effort and can leave little time for other things.

What we need to keep in mind is that we should be satisfied that these Rovers have become better people by participating in the Scout Programme. This is, after all, the ultimate aim of Scouting. By creating better citizens, we create a better community.

It is important for the RCC to keep the Crew focused on the fact that Scouting has achieved its objective for this person and members should not become disappointed, but instead quite proud of the fact that they are living up to the Scout Law and Promise in contributing to the wider community.

Opportunities exist for booted Rovers to participate in any capacity within Scouting and they are highly sought after. Members finalising the *my* Departure are to keep in touch with Rovers and Scouting. They can be a great source of advice, support and fun.



ROVER SCOUTS

# Leading *a* Rover Crew 3



THE *Scout* ASSOCIATION  
OF MALTA