



# Running a Patrol Leaders' Council

How much say do you have in the running of your Troop? If you are a Patrol Leader then the answer should be lots! Deciding what your Troop does and how it does it are the responsibility of the PL's, and you should do this through the Patrol Leaders' Council. The PLC is made up of the Troop PL's as well as one of the senior Scouters. On some occasions the Assistant Patrol Leaders and other Scouters may be invited to attend, but this should only be done occasionally and only if there is a need for them to be there. At no stage will an APL or additional Scouter have a vote at a PLC meeting.

## Scouters and Patrol Leaders

The Scouters are responsible for ensuring that the Scout Troop operates in a safe way and that all the things that are supposed to happen do happen. But the Scouters should not be the ones who decide what activities the Troop will do. Nor are they the ones who should do all the work in making sure that the planned activities happen. These are jobs for the Patrol Leaders' Council. Sometimes the Scouters will have to carry out some tasks that the PL's lack the experience for, but ideally they will show the PL's how to do something, rather than doing it for them. The Scouters job is to help, encourage and advise the PLC so that they can achieve as much as they would like to.

## Areas of Responsibility

So what are the things that your PLC should be looking after? Here are a few of the main tasks involved:

### 1. Set out the Troop programme.

It is a good idea to plan a number of months ahead at a time. Ideas should initially come from the Patrols, but it is the responsibility of the PLC to combine these ideas into a programme of activities.

### 2. Run the Troop programme.

Sometimes the Scouters will be involved in running the programme, but



the PL's should take charge of this as much as possible. Deciding who will need to do what to make the programme a reality should be done at PLC meetings.

### 3. Review the Troop programme.

Again, general reviews are carried out by the Patrols, but it is the job of the PLC to critically examine how each activity went and to consider what changes could be made the next time.

### 4. Award badges.

The PLC should approve the awarding of badges to the Scouts. This does not mean that the PL's should be the ones who assess all the badgework (although they can do so), but they should be the ones who 'sign-off' on any assessment carried out and then award the badge to the Scout.



SCOUTS



#### 5. Administer the Troop regulations or Code of Conduct.

Each PLC should develop a Code of Conduct. Once developed, this code should be used in dealing with all matters of discipline in the Troop.

#### 6. Monitor Troop progress.

Each PL should have knowledge about the progress of each Scout in their Patrol and this should be shared with the others at the PLC meetings.

#### 7. Train Patrol Leaders.

The PLC provides a great way to carry out Patrol Leader training. It is a time and space that can be dedicated to the Patrol Leaders.

### Structure of the PLC

The PLC should meet on a regular basis. The most usual approach is to have one formal meeting a month, and these meetings need a structure which allows them to deal with most of the areas of responsibility mentioned above. The following is a suggestion for how such a meeting might work:

#### 1. Patrol reports.

Each PL should explain to the others how his or her Patrol is working as a group, and how each Scout in the Patrol is getting on. If there are discipline problems then the PLC should discuss what should be done in each case.

#### 2. Scouters report.

The Scouter should pass on information to the PL's that he or she may have from Group or County meetings. The Scouter can also talk about things that may have been discussed at Scouter meetings.

#### 3. Programme planning.

A review should be carried out on the programme since the last PLC meeting. This should be followed by a planning session for the programme that is going to happen until the next PLC meeting.

#### 4. Badges.

A review of badgework should be carried out and if badges need to be awarded this should be done.

Informal meetings can take place between these meetings.

For example, at the end of an activity the programme for that activity can be reviewed. Sometimes you will also need to have meetings that deal with one thing only. For example a whole meeting in August might be dedicated to planning the outline of the programme for the year ahead.

Because you will make important decisions at a PLC meeting you should record the decisions you make. One of the PL's should take on the job of PLC Secretary. A simple factual record of each meeting should be kept (called minutes). Don't be tempted to write an essay!

