How to establish a Support Group

What is a Support Group?
The Support Group is a vital body of non uniformed volunteers within the District or local area who wish to support Guiding.

Why is a Support Group important?
The Support Group is an important part of Guiding because it supports the Leaders in the District. They manage the District finances and initiate fundraising for Hall and Leader training expenses. They coordinate the maintenance of the Guide Hall and work to publicise the District and leadership vacancies.

Who can join the Support Group?
The Support Group is made up of parents, family and interested community members. Men are welcomed and encouraged to join the Support Group. The District Manager attends Support Group Meetings.

What positions need to be filled?
There are four office bearer positions on the Support Group: a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

The Chairperson’s responsibilities are to run the monthly meeting, ensure that all decisions requiring action are assigned to the appropriate person, work closely with the District Manager and may be a signatory on the bank account. The Vice Chairperson must stand in when the Chairperson is absent.
The Secretary reminds everyone of the date of the next meeting, prepares agendas for the meeting, takes minutes at the meeting then distributes them to all members, collates incoming correspondence and outgoing correspondence.

The Treasurer will bank all money received and issues receipts, and keeps an accurate record of all money sent and received as the Support Group books will need to be audited annually. This person may also be a signatory on the bank account.

Support Group members can choose other positions that they feel their District needs. This could include a fundraising or biscuit co-ordinator, a Hall maintenance person, newsletter editor or a clothing pool coordinator. They may even consider having sub committees; these could include a Maintenance Committee and/or a Fundraising Committee.

**When to call for nominations for the Support Group?**

Approximately four weeks before your Annual General Meeting (AGM) put up a poster in the Hall with the roles or distribute copies. These can be found on the website and also in ‘How to Manage a Guide District’.

Call for nominations three weeks before your AGM. A nomination form can be found on the website.

If it is not the time for your AGM you can also hold a parent meeting and request nominations for the vacant positions on the Support Group. These people can be voted in as members at the next Support Group meeting.

The District Manager may also like to have general conversations with parents about what role they could play in supporting the Leaders. The District Leader may also identify a parent who knows most of the other parents and who is willing to talk to them about joining the Support Group.
If you find a parent who wants to be involved though is unable to commit to monthly meetings, try to find something that will suit them. Remembe that circumstances often change and people are more likely to volunteer when they have an understanding of what Guiding is all about.

**How often and where should the Support Group meet?**

Ideally the Support Group should meet once a month or at least once a term. It’s recommended to hold a Support Group meeting shortly after the AGM as Members are keen and ready to get moving on ideas. Send an email or give out a printed invitation to anyone who is interested and include the date, time and place for the meeting. Send a copy of the agenda. It would also be a good idea to send a reminder email prior to the meeting.

If you are having trouble getting people to your Support Group meeting consider the location. It can be anywhere, not necessarily the Hall you meet in. If you have a parent with small children who would like to help on the Support Group but is unable to due to having young children, you could suggest having meetings in their home.

**Don’t forget!**

To thank the Support Group members, there is a five year long service badge for Support Group members and thank you badges. These tokens, with an email or card always let members know how much you value their efforts.