**Finance Policy**

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**Policy Owner –** Sarah Rands – Group Lead Volunteer

**Date of Policy –** February 2024

**To be Reviewed;** Every 12 months

**Version - 1**

**Policy Applicable to:** All Leaders including Trustee Board Members, Young Leaders, Volunteers, Suppliers, Contractors and members of the Public who are involved with 1st Topcliffe Scout Group.

 **In Brief**

This policy outlines how the finances of the Group are recorded, controlled and reported.

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# Version Control

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| **Version**  | **Author/ Editor**  | **Release Date**  |
| **1.0**  | Sarah Rands  |  February 2024 |
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# Who are we?

# Our Scout Group, 1st Topcliffe Scout Group, is a youth charity. Our mission is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. From this point on 1st Topcliffe Scout Group will be referred to as “we” or “the Group” or “1st Topcliffe”. We are incorporated by royal charter and are regulated as a member of The Scouts Association in the United Kingdom. We hold an annual general meeting (AGM) every year. This is where members of the trustee board are elected. Any parent, guardian or carer of a youth member can volunteer to be on the trustee board at the AGM. Every parent, guardian or carer also has the right to attend the Annual General Meeting.

# Introduction

The finances of the Group are the overall responsibility of the Group Treasurer.

# Record keeping

The Group Trustee Board will ensure that appropriate financial records are kept, including:

* All transactions (maintained on Excel spreadsheets).
* Bank Statements.
* Details of all funds received.
* Invoices and other appropriate paperwork for all payments.

The Group’s Financial year ends on 31st March.

* The Financial Statements of the Group will be scrutinised by a suitable Independent Reviewer in accordance with the Charity Commissions regulations.

# Bank Accounts

* “Group” has a current account with Lloyds Bank, Parliament Street, York.
* The bank supplies statements on a timely basis.
* At least two members of the Group Trustee Board are authorised signatories to all the accounts one of which must be the Group Treasurer.
* Any cheque payments must be signed by two authorised signatories.
* Standing Orders and Direct Debits can be created by two authorised signatories.
* Electronic Payments/Transfers can be by dual signatories.

# Income

* Where cash is received this must be banked as soon as practicable and a receipt issued.
* Subscription money is collected through GoCardless or by direct payment to the Group bank account direct from a parent/guardian bank.
* Any Group event receipts will be made by GoCardless or direct transfer from a parent/guardian bank account.
* Any Grants/Fundraising or Donations received must have a receipt issued to the donor by the Treasurer, unless money is banked by direct credit by the donor.
* Grant Applications must be made in the name of 1st Topcliffe Scout Group.
* Details of each receipt will be entered into the relevant spreadsheet.
* All paperwork relating to receipts should be filed in date received order.

# Expenditure

Where possible expenditure should be made using Direct Debit, Standing Order or by electronic payment thereby keeping postage costs to a minimum.

* The levels for authorising payments from the Group account is included in Table 1 below.
* Every non-Direct Debit or Standing Order payment out of the Group current account must have an original or printed electronic copy invoice or receipt. A supplier’s statement or final demand must not be used instead.
* All paperwork relating to payments must be checked by the relevant Treasurer prior to paying. It would be advisable to include a cheque number or method of payment on each document.
* All paperwork relating to payments must be filed in date paid order.
* All payments must be recorded when drawn up and should not be triggered by their appearance on the bank statement.
* Blank cheques must not be signed.

**Petty Cash**

* Petty Cash must not be held within the Group.

# Expenses

The Group does not expect a volunteer, uniformed leader or a supporter to be out of pocket as a result of providing purchased items or services for the genuine and direct benefit of the Group and its young people:

* In order to maintain financial control all such Expenses must be proven to and approved by the Treasurer before reimbursement. If the cost requires authorisation this must be sought before the item is purchased.

**TABLE 1 Authorisation Levels for Non-Utility/Insurance/District Capitation payments**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Amount  | Authorisation  | Supporting Document  |
| GROUP EXPENSES  |  |  |
| Up to £30  | Treasurer & GSL  | Receipts  |
| £31 to £999\*  | Treasurer & GSL or Chairperson  | Receipts or Invoice  |
| Over £1,000 \*  | Trustee Board  | Invoice  |
|   |   |   |

\*Expenditure must be approved by Authoriser before being incurred

**Camps, activities and excursions**

It is the responsibility of the Leader in charge of an event to ensure it is properly budgeted and financed and that all monies are collected prior to departure.

* Camps, Sleepovers and residential experiences should cover its costs
* Outings and expeditions should break even financially.
* District activities may be partially/fully funded by the Group after discussion with the Group Treasurer and Group Lead Volunteer.
* The Group have a Bursary which may be used to support financially challenged families – see Bursary for further details

**Bursary**

The Group sets aside an amount of funds for when any members or member’s families are experiencing financial difficulties. This figure will be agreed annually at the AGM. The aim of the fund is to help ensure that no Young People lose out on any Scouting activity because of financial challenges.

* A request for such funds should be made by a parent/guardian to the Group Lead Volunteer. This will then be considered by the Group Lead Volunteer/Group Chairperson/Group Treasurer and Group Secretary with complete anonymity and discretion. The parent/guardian will be advised of the outcome within 5 working days.
* Requests could be for:
	+ One-off uniform purchase/contribution.
	+ Allowing a Young Person to attend an activity.
	+ Allowing a reduction in subscription payments for a specific period.
	+ This fund cannot be used for international events

**Supporting Adult Volunteers**

* The Group shall encourage adults to obtain a full uniform for Leadership appointments, the group will reimburse the cost of one leader shirt and group polo shirt and provide a necker and badges. The Group occasionally places an order for named sweatshirts/hoodies which each adult must pay the cost upon order.
* The Group shall pay the Annual capitation fee for Ripon and District, North Yorkshire and UK to the Ripon and District Treasurer annually when it becomes due based upon the annual Census Return.
* The Group shall ensure that enough neckers and badges are held in stock which are provided to adult members free of charge.

**Fixed Assets**

The group shall keep a register of assets, which will be included in the accounts at an estimated current valuation.

* The Group lease the Scout Group headquarters – Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall which is insured via Unity Insurance
* The Group Trustee Board are required to agree to either the purchase or sale of any Fixed Asset in line with the Authorisation levels table.
* The Group Trustee Board must confirm they are happy with any new or revisions to any lease or hire agreements

**Reserves**

The Group holds funds set to ensure that there are sufficient resources to continue the core charitable activities of the Group if income falls short. The amount held in reserve for the Group is decided at the AGM each year.

**Gift Aid**

1st Topcliffe group will aim to claim money back from HMRC via the Gift Aid scheme and the Gift Aid Small Donations scheme. The guidelines for these schemes are given below.

We can claim Gift Aid on donations from individuals however the donor must:

* have paid the same amount or more in Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax in that tax year
* made a Gift Aid declaration that gives you permission to claim it

There are special rules for certain activities, if you are thinking of any of the following then please email the Treasurer for exact ruling as to what can and can’t be claimed for:

We can claim Gift Aid on:

* funds from sponsored challenges, eg overseas treks or marathons
* selling goods on behalf of individuals, eg through a charity shop
* charity events or to view charity property, charity auctions
* volunteer expenses donated back to your charity
* funds raised through charities involved in running schools

We can’t claim Gift Aid on:

* payments for goods & services this includes camps and activities
* donations of money from a company
* gifts that come with a condition on repayment or if we have to buy goods/services from the donor
* payments received in return for goods or services for example admission to a concert
* a ‘minimum donation’ where there is no choice about payment
* gifts made using ‘charity vouchers’ or ‘charity cheques’

Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme

This scheme allows 1st Topcliffe to claim top-up payments on small donations of £20 or less. This includes any bucket donations at events. We don’t need to know the identity of the donors or collect Gift Aid declarations.

Keeping Records

1st Topcliffe Scout Group will keep records to comply with the most current regulations from HMRC.

We will:

* Keep electronic records of claims in accordance with HMRC and Charities Commission guidelines
* Keep any paper gift aid registration forms for 4 years
* Asking parents to update gift aid details once a year to maintain data validity
* Verify data from OSM before submitting a claim