



Guidance for Area Groups

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Amendments:

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Guidance 4 iii updated

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Introduction:

These points are intended as guidance to Members preparing to set up, or who are organising Area Groups. They are not mandatory or exhaustive. They have been discussed and accepted by existing Area Group Representatives as examples of good practice.

Guidance:

1. The Society encourages members to form Area Groups, to enhance their enjoyment of their membership, by adopting the following;
 - i. Area Groups will be self-administered, and financially independent.
 - ii. Subject to the Society's Constitution and Rules.
 - iii. Members of the Society are not obliged to join an Area Group, however a Member may join more than one Area Group if he/she so wishes.
2. These Guidelines have been developed by Area Group Leaders (AGL) as advice for best practice:
 - i. Clause 9.1 of the Constitution ("Amendment to Rules") shall not apply to this Guidance; they are not regarded as Society Rules.
 - ii. When changes are made, from time to time, to this Guidance, the updated version will be circulated to all AGL's at least 14 days prior to general circulation.
3. In general Area Groups should not prevent the attendance of non-members. It is for the individual Area Group to decide how this is managed.
4. It is for each Area Group to decide how it will manage itself, whether by an individual leader, or by several officers, or by a committee elected by the members of the Group, though it follows that these individuals shall be fully paid up members of the Society.

All such persons are referred to below as "Organisers of the Group". It is advised that Area Groups adopt their own Constitution in whatever form they decide, provided it contains nothing that conflicts, or is inconsistent with the Society's Constitution and Rules. It is advised that:

- i. Groups appoint an individual to act as the main contact for the group, details of which should be sent to the Society Secretary.
 - ii. Group Organisers shall maintain a register of the members and others attending activities organised by the Group.
 - iii. Group Organisers shall keep members of the Group and Society Committee informed of events and activities. The Group Leader shall ensure financial records kept and submit a statement of account to Group members annually, with a copy to the Society Treasurer.
 - iv. It is advised that the Group should, if required, register with their local office of H M Revenue and Customs in respect of Corporation Tax, and be responsible for the discharge from its assets of any liability in this respect.
5. In order for the Society Public Liability Insurance to be valid, any activity described as a "G Scale Society" event, the following will apply:
 - i. When organised at domestic premises; the owner/occupier shall be a fully paid up member of the G Scale Society.
 - ii. When organised at any other venue, such as a Church Hall/Community Centre, the organiser shall be a fully paid up member of the G Scale Society.
6. Data Protection: It is advised that the following wording is included on any membership information that is distributed within an Area Group;

"As a member of the G Scale Society I hereby accept that the information given in my application will be used, all or in part, for collating, managing, internally distributing the Society Membership List, and the

distribution of Society publications, (e.g. Journals) etc. The full information held will not be given to any other body, or person, other than those that are empowered by regulation, statute, or by order of a court”

If you do not wish your details to be part of the membership list, for distribution to local Area Groups, please inform the Membership Secretary.

7. If an Area Group holds assets, whether financial or physical (such as a layout), or if an Area Group incurs liabilities, such as hiring a meeting room, then such assets and/or liabilities should be the collectively responsibility of the Area Group, and not any individual.
8. Group Organisers should keep Group members, and the Society as a whole, informed of Group activities;
 - i. It would be sufficient for events to be listed in the members-only part of the Society website, so that they subsequently appear in the diary of the Society’s Journal.
 - ii. If for some reason such notification is not possible, then any communication can be sent, in the first instance to the Society Secretary, (preferably by e-mail).
9. If a Group seeks to wind itself up, the following provisions are deemed prudent:
 - i. Call a meeting of the Area Groups fully paid up GSS members at the time, giving 14 days’ notice, to take a formal decision to wind-up, and to decide what is to be done with any Group assets.
 - ii. If such assets are financial, the Group shall have discretion over what is to be done.
 - iii. If the assets are physical, then they should be handled at the discretion of the members present at the meeting described in (8i) above: For instance they may be:
 - a) Donated to a like-minded organisation. In this case it would be advisable to record this in the minutes of the meeting, including an estimated value and the full contact details of the person/organisation receiving the donation.
 - b) If sold – then the proceeds will be dealt with as in (8ii) above.
10. If a Group ceases to exist, such as upon the resignation of the Organisers, with no replacement being appointed, and no meeting has been held, the following should apply:
 - i. Financial assets or proceeds of assets (dealt with in the same manner as 8iii) will be retained by the Society Treasurer in a ‘ring fenced’ account, for a period not exceeding 5 years.
 - ii. If subsequently within these 5 years a new Group emerges in the same general geographical area, the ‘ring fenced’ proceeds will be passed to this new Group.
 - iii. If no new Group is formed after the 5 year period has expired then the proceeds shall be used by the Society Committee, where possible, to promote recruitment of new members in any location.

The Society Officers and Committee are available to assist any Group in the case of points 8 and 9 should the Group so decide.

Issued by the National Committee of the G Scale Society
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