

Group Officers Guide

This document is aimed at helping Group Officers with the administration of a group, particularly Group Leadership and the role of the secretary. There is some information about funding, but this is available in full from the Group Leaders folder in DocStore (see later) in two documents entitled 'Finance Rules' and 'Group Officers Guide'.

The Responsibilities of Group Leadership

The Vikings is a registered charity, and also because of the size of the organisation and the nature of our hobby, has certain legal obligations. As a Group Leader you are agreeing to take on the following responsibilities:

1. You will be the Chair of the local branch of a charity, so will be expected to fulfil all the legal obligations this entails. This is largely ensuring that the accounts are properly maintained, and the group property is documented and maintained, as this is ultimately the property of the Society.
2. You have a duty of care to your members. We have to maintain an audit trail to prove that members are fully paid up, i.e. covered by our insurance, and that they are properly trained to take part in our activities i.e. they have passed the appropriate tests. If you allow members to participate in activities for which they are not qualified, or without insurance cover, you are in breach of Society rules. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure the group subscriptions are paid to the society before 31st December each year so that your members remain covered by our insurance and keep track of their test passes so you know what activities they are qualified to participate in without direct supervision.
3. You have Health and Safety responsibilities – you must ensure First Aid provision is in place, that your group's activities are planned and carried out with safety as a prime consideration including completing risk assessments when required, and that all incidents are fully reported by the correct mechanism.
4. You have a duty to the Society to ensure your members follow our rules, and support our events whenever possible.
5. You have a duty to your members to act as their representative at the Jarls' meeting and to act as the information channel between your group and the Society.
6. You are responsible for ensuring your group abides by the Society rules. As such you need to be aware of the rules to be found in:

- The Constitution
- Membership and General Rules
- The Vikings Disciplinary Procedure
- Finance Rules
- Health and Safety
- Combat Rules
- Village Rules

All these are available in the Group Leaders folder on DocStore.

The Responsibilities of a Group Secretary

The responsibilities of a Group Secretary are less well defined, many groups do not fill this post and the duties are split between the Group Leader and the Treasurer. The following duties need to be covered; however the group chooses to manage it

1. The group documentation needs to be kept up to date – this includes the Group Constitution which should always be in line with that of the Society. An up-to-date version of the group constitution should be kept by the Society Secretary.
2. The names, addresses and other contact details of your members need to be maintained locally and on the Society database. The Society Membership Officer needs to be informed immediately of any changes.
3. Accurate minutes should be kept of the group AGM and any other group meeting. These are kept locally, but may be asked for by the Society in the event of any disciplinary event.

Responsibilities of a Group Treasurer

The responsibilities of a Group Treasurer are fully defined in the documents described above, but in summary

1. Maintain the group bank account. Every group must have a bank account, unless they have special permission from the Society Treasurer to operate without one. For security every cheque must need two people to sign it. There must be three, ideally four signatories for the bank account, who must belong to different households.
2. The financial records of the group must be fully maintained with a written record of every transaction made and supporting evidence kept (e.g. receipts, bank statements) for at least 7 years.
3. Every group must provide an annual set of accounts to the Society Treasurer. The accounts should run from 1st February to 31st January. They must be in by the end of February at the latest.
4. The accounts must to be accompanied by a copy of the bank statement that covers the 31st January.
5. The accounts will include a starting balance for the year and an ending balance. The accounts should be based on what has actually gone into and out of the bank.
6. 10% of fees from events – minors, mediums and school visits – are paid to the Society. This should be paid within two months of the event.
7. The group should have a list of all the equipment that the group owns and where it is.

Appointment of Group Officers

Each Group must have a number of appointed Officers (Thegns) who are responsible for various duties. Although the mechanism by which they are appointed and dismissed may be decided by each individual group, and should be laid out within the group constitution, the responsibility for ensuring that each Officer fulfils his/her duties lies with the Group Leader. One person, including the Group Leader, may hold more than one of these posts. Group Officers may be nominated to receive the award of Silver

Thegn, by their Group Leader, once they have fulfilled the necessary criteria. The duties of Group Officers are to ensure the smooth running of their group according to both the Society rules and the rules of their group. The Group officers should keep their Jarl/Sturaesman fully informed, particularly of matters important to the Society as a whole, so that he/she may report these concerns to the Jarls' Meetings.

Authenticity Thegn

Every group must have an Authenticity Thegn who will be responsible for the authenticity and standard of dress and other equipment within the group. The Authenticity Thegn must liaise closely with the Society Authenticity Officer and is responsible for ensuring that new information is passed on to members of the group and acted on as quickly as possible.

Combat Training Thegn

Any group which has 5 or more combatants must have a Combat Training Thegn who will be responsible for the training and standard of combat within the group. This Thegn must attempt to pass the Recognised Training Thegn's (RTT(c)) test as soon as is possible after taking office.

Village Training Thegn

Any group which has 5 or more non-combatants must have a Training Officer who will be responsible for the teaching and standard of non-combatant activities within the group. This Thegn must attempt to pass the Recognised Village Training Thegn's test as soon as is possible after taking office. This officer is also responsible for liaising with the Society LHE Officer at major events, and the organiser of medium and minor events, as to the amount of group LHE equipment that will be present at events.

First Aid Thegn

Each group must have a First Aid Thegn who must hold a valid, recognised, First Aid qualification. He/she is responsible for maintaining a First Aid kit to the standards laid down by the Society Health and Safety Thegn (See separate document) and for keeping written records of all injuries requiring treatment sustained at Society events or during training sessions. If no member of the group holds a valid certificate, one member should be appointed to be responsible for maintaining a First Aid box and the appropriate records, but should not attempt First Aid unless absolutely necessary.

Dependent on the size and range of interests of a group, the Jarl/Sturaesman may choose to appoint other Thegns to fulfil posts as necessary. The above positions are, however, obligatory, depending on the nature of the group, and if they are not adequately filled, the Konungr may deem it necessary to reduce the ranking of the group.

Memberships

1. Membership fees are £20 adults, for Provincial or Leđang members, £17.50 for Herred members and 50p for all juniors
2. Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December. Late membership fine of £2.50 (25p Juniors) incurred for anyone renewing after 31st January
3. New memberships taken out from 1st September in any year run through to 31st December in the following year
4. Day memberships available from the Konungr. Keep the receipt and this can then be knocked off full membership if taken out in the same calendar year. This must be taken out before any non-member is allowed to attend any event, including training sessions, otherwise the visitor will not be covered by insurance and the Society will not be responsible for any incident they cause or are involved in.

Claiming Expenses

Money is available from the Society for the following:-

1. Transport to Major events. If you need to hire a van, find out the cost first. All applications for subsidy should be with the Society Treasurer 3 weeks before the event. Any excess can be used for minibus hire but again, ask first or you'll get nothing.
2. Petrol allowance – se Society Treasurer at every major event
3. Props Grants - if we have money left over at the end of the season, we do make props grants to groups wishing to acquire/improve LHE. Submit detailed grant proposals to the Konungr by 20th December each year.

For further information, consult the 'Claiming expenses' document in the Group Leaders folder on DocStore.

DocStore

There is an increasing amount of help to run your group, and all the forms you will need, available on DocStore (<http://docs.thevikings.org.uk>). Apply to the Society Secretary for an account.

Mailing Lists

The group should have a minimum of one representative on Vmail (cad@er-online.co.uk) and jarlsmeeting (Peter.James@Citizen-europe.com). Vmail is the official means of communicating urgent information and is open to all members, jarlsmeeting is a discussion group and the representative on this should be the Group Leader.

Promotions

Thrall → Fri-hals

This promotion is largely done at group level however the candidate must have passed either Basic Combat, Basic Spear, Basic Villager Basic Village Skills, Basic History or Basic Acting. They must also have kit of a suitable minimum standard to take part in a show, as judged by the Group Authenticity Officer - this kit check does **not** count towards the Drengr kit check. Once those criteria are met, the Group Leader may promote an individual as soon as they have shown adequate commitment to Society/group. Remember to inform the Society Membership Officer when you do so.

Fri-hals → Drengr

The member must accumulate 9 points which will include the point he/she got for passing the Basic test which qualified them for the previous promotion.

Compulsory points

1. Attendance - the member must accumulate a total of 20 attendance points (Majors = 3, mediums = 2, minors=1) Attendance's must be registered with Society Secretary, if they are not in the register, they did not happen.
2. Kit Check - candidate must have 2 sets of kit authenticated by a Society (not group) Authenticity Officer

Candidates also accumulate 7 points from:-

1. Combat/craft/acting tests - see the relevant testing officers at Major shows/training weekends.
2. Group leaders may award 1 point to any member who has performed a group officership over a suitable length of time (1-2 years)
3. Group Leaders may also test Basic History - you are free to invent your own test but please show it to the Society Authenticity Officer who will ensure that it is of comparable standard to others in use.

Remember - Drengr point records are kept independently by the Society membership Officer - if you have not informed him/her when a candidate has earned a point, then it will not be awarded.

Once the 7 points + kit checks have been completed, the Society Membership Officer will fill in a proposal form and sign it off. He/she will then hand it to you to fill in show attendance, your impression of the candidate and for you to sign the proposal. This should then be sent to the Konungr, the Society Secretary will check the show record and the Konungr will then consider the candidate for the rank of Drengr.

Drengr →Silver Thegn

If you have a Group Officer who has put in an above average performance for at least 2 years, then you may nominate them for the rank of Silver Thegn. Proposals should be handed to the Konungr along with a brief explanation as to why, it will then be considered by the High Council.

Group Promotions

New → Leđang

To do this, you must simply register all the basic details of the Group with the Konungr and have 10 full members (including Juniors). If the High Council are happy with the behaviour and commitment of the new group to date, Leđang status will be granted.

Leđang → Herred

In order to qualify as a Herred, the Lethang must:

- a. Have a minimum of 10 full members for at least one full season.
- b. Have a minimum of an 80 point attendance record at major musters (1 member attending and taking part in the show gains 1 point; maximum of 1 point / member earned per show, irrespective of the number of days the event continues for
- c. Have appointed members to fill the posts of Secretary, Treasurer, First Aid Officer, Authenticity Officer and Training Officer(s). The First Aid Officer must have produced evidence of a valid First Aid certificate and the Training Officers should be working towards tests appropriate to their position.
- d. Have written, and registered with the Konungr, a group constitution outlining the aims and attributes of the group and the mechanisms by which the Group Leader and Officers are appointed and dismissed.
- e. The Konungr will check with Society Officers that all administrative aspects of the group have been run satisfactorily for an acceptable period of time e.g. annual accounts have been received in the required time period, the membership officer has been informed of all personnel changes.
- f. Possession of First Aid and Fire Safety equipment (if required).
- g. Contract and organise a Society event such as a minor show, training event or banquet. The Group Leader should contact the Konungr, nominating this as the event to be assessed. The Konungr will then nominate two HC members or Elders to attend, or other senior officers at the Konungr's discretion if none of the former available. The assessing officers will also collect reports from other Society Officers that correct administrative procedures were followed prior to the show i.e. show registration, risk assessment, communication etc. The Leđang is welcome to invite other members of the Society to the event, but must be responsible for organising the major elements and coordinating with other groups and Society Officers. The Leđang is not to be penalized if a guest makes an error but may be assessed on how they handle the problem.
- h. Pass the appropriate Herred Test.

Once a group has filled these basic criteria, the award will be made at the discretion of the Konungrand the High Council. At the same time, the Sturaesman, provided he/she is of the rank of

Dreng, may also be promoted to the rank of Jarl, however this award may be deferred to a later date at the discretion of the Konungr.

The Herred Test.

A group may request to do either a Combat test, LHE assessment, Archery assessment, Archery display or Acting test. The test will be run at a major event by the appropriate Society Training Officer and may be done in either show hours or after hours at the officer's discretion. At least 10 full members must participate in the test – if held in show hours, all participants must hold the appropriate basic safety qualification.

Combat test – this is an extension of the Formation Combat Test, with the groups Hersir leading the group through a command sequence dictated by the Training Officer. If the group passes the test, anyone who does not hold the Formation Combat test will be awarded this. An unsafe move by any member means the group will immediately fail the test.

LHE Assessment – this will normally be done during a major event, in which case all participants should hold the Village Skills test or be appropriately supervised. The group will form a unit within the larger display which will be assessed over the weekend for their ability to run an interesting and informative display for the public. If the group passes the test, anyone who does not hold the Basic Villager test will be awarded this. An unsafe move by any member means the group will immediately fail the test.

Archery Display – this is a Formation Archery Test, with a nominated Officer leading the group through a command sequence dictated by the Society Training Officer. If the group passes the test, anyone who does not hold the Basic Archery test will be awarded a part pass but will still have to fulfil individual accuracy and safety elements. An unsafe move by any member means the group will immediately fail the test.

Acting Assessment – the group must prepare and run through a series of acting scenarios dictated by the Society Acting Officer. This may involve a combat, LHE or archery element, if enough appropriately qualified people are in the group, in which case the group will be expected to provide an appropriate commentary. If the group passes the test, anyone who does not hold the Basic Acting/PA test(as appropriate) will be awarded this.