

A quick guide to the role of the group treasurer

As treasurer, you have day-to-day responsibility for looking after your group's money. However the group executive committee as a whole is responsible for deciding how funds will be raised and spent. Your role is to keep accounts and report to the committee.

Basic rules for dealing with money

Each scout group may deal with its money in a slightly different way depending on circumstances. But there are basic rules for dealing with money which apply to everyone.

- Be methodical. Keep a clear record every time you receive or pay out money. Do not rely on memory to write it up later. *Clear records will help you to keep track of money and ensure that, for example, you have collected all the subs or have not paid a bill twice*
- Make sure that you have paperwork for any money which you take in or pay out. This applies to cheques and bank transfers as well as cash
- Keep paperwork in number or date order. This is best done by using treasury tags or a ring-binder. It will make it much easier to look through your records
- When you receive or pay out cash, always record the full amount. For example, if you take in cash from a fundraising event and then use some of it to buy tea and coffee, you should record both the total takings and the cost of the supplies
- Keep the group's cash separate from your own
- Do not hold on to large amounts of cash; bank it as soon as possible
- Check regularly that the cash in your 'tin' equals the balance in your cash book
- It is sensible to have at least three signatories to your bank or building society account. Make sure that two people are required to sign a cheque, a withdrawal form, or complete a BACS authorisation
- Sign a cheque only when you have written it out with the name of the payee and the amount
- Never sign a blank cheque or ask another signatory to sign a blank cheque for you to write later
- Check bank statements carefully
- Give regular income, expenditure and balance reports to your group executive committee

Receiving money

- When you receive a cheque or someone makes a bank transfer into your group's account, keep the paperwork (e.g. a covering letter with a grant). Write on it the date on which you received the cheque or bank transfer
- Whenever you take in cash, write a receipt. The easiest way is to use a small duplicate book with numbered pages. Record the total, the date, the name of the person handing over the cash and where the cash came from (e.g. subs). Hand over the top copy as the receipt and keep your copy in the book

Spending money

- Make sure that you have invoices or till receipts for all purchases. For travel costs, get bus tickets or taxi receipts. This rule applies to both cash and cheque payments
- When you pay out cash, write out a petty cash voucher. Ask the person receiving the cash to sign for it. Staple the till receipt to the voucher. Give the voucher a number and file in number order
- When you pay by cheque, make a note on the cheque stub of the value of the cheque and who it is made out to. Write the number of the cheque on the invoice and file the invoice in the order of the cheque numbers
- If you intend to make a payment by BACS (a bank transfer) or set up a Direct Debit, draw up a simple form to record the amount, date, and who you are paying. Get a second signature to authorise the payment before you go ahead

Transfers between bank accounts

If your group has more than one charity bank account, keep a clear record of transfers between them. When you draw on a deposit account, it is best to transfer the money into your current account before spending it. If you draw cash from a deposit account and spend it at once, it is very easy to forget about it as you will not have a cheque stub to remind you.

Writing up the accounts book

The accounts book is where you record receipts (money in) and payments (money out). For simple records, the 'accounts book' may be a page in a notebook which you rule up. For more detailed records, it may be a spreadsheet on your computer, or you can buy an analysis book with several columns.

There is no single "right" way to write up your book, but here are some basic tips which you may find useful.

- Keep a separate book for (a) your cash and (b) your bank or building society account
- The simplest way is to have a column each for receipts and payments, and a third column to show how much you have left (the balance). This will help to ensure that you do not spend more money than you have available
- If your group has regular receipts and payments, you may find it useful to break them down under headings such as grants or telephone. This will enable you to easily find how much you have taken in or spent on a particular area. There are no standard headings - use ones which are useful to your group, such as items which are spelled out in the conditions of a grant

If you need several columns of headings, it may be best to record receipts on one page and payments on another, with a separate record of the balance.

End-of-month check

Cash account

- If you have a lot of entries each month in your cash account, it is best to rule off the page at the end of the month. Add up each column. Check that the balance in your book is the same as the cash in the 'tin'. Carry over the balance to the new month
- If you have very few entries simply check your balance against the cash in your 'tin'
- If you cannot get your cash account to tally with the cash in the tin, do not carry over the error to next month. Write "error in cash" and enter a payment in the book so that it tallies with the actual cash. If the tin is short, don't put in your own cash to make it balance

Cheque account

- Use the monthly bank statement to check that you have written everything correctly in your account book and that the bank has not made any mistakes with your money
- Tick off each entry in your book which appears on the bank statement
- You may have written a cheque which does not yet appear on the statement because it hasn't been presented to the payee's account yet. You will need to subtract this from the balance on the statement
- You may have made a last-minute deposit which is not on the statement. You will need to adjust the statement balance by adding this amount
- The balance in your book should now agree with the adjusted statement balance. Remember that it is your book (not the unadjusted bank statement) which tells you how much money is available to spend. This is why it is important to write every single receipt or payment in your book
- Rule off the page and add up each column. Carry over the balance to the next month
- File the bank statements and keep them in date order. They are an important part of your records and will be needed by whoever examines your accounts at the end of the year
- If you use Internet banking, you can look at your bank statements online and check your balance and recent transactions at any time. If your bank does not send you printed statements, make sure that you print out a bank statement at the end of each month

Committee meetings

You should be in a position at each meeting to say how much money the group has available. For small groups, this may be enough. However, to give the committee a more useful picture, it is best to report:

- the cash balance
- the bank or building society balance
- total receipts and payments so far this year
- expected receipts and payments over the next month or quarter

