



Dear Colleagues

Rev It and all that - an explanation by Steercom

For many months, we, the Steering Committee have interacted with Rev It as we have "looked wide" to develop a solution to the concerns regarding our Movement. These concerns were voiced by the Chief Scout, the National Scout Council and many of our members. Most of you were only exposed to the whole project for the first time in a one hour presentation. That could have caused some misunderstanding and we also appreciate that there are components of the proposal which resonate positively or negatively with some members.

It is our wish and responsibility to address those issues. We are all agreed that the Values, Aims and Methods of Scouting are not to be touched. What is vitally necessary for us to provide fun and adventure to young people and adults, while removing the tiresome and unnecessary administration burdens from adults. Rev It is proposing changes to achieve this but we believe that those changes are not as radical as many seem to think.

A major change, and we believe that it is an exciting one, the proposal that all our lay supporters, as well as parents, and other adherents will be welcome to become full members of Scouts South Africa; under the same conditions as our uniformed members. We will no longer have a "them and us" situation, and we are also looking into the possibility of a loyalty based membership card.

The idea of franchises seems to some, to imply a major change, in delivering Scouting to youth members but that is not so. Arguably our most successful groups are in effect running a franchise; they accept P.O.& R and get on with running their Groups. Scouting in Schools is a form of franchise, as is the model where we used to have sponsored Church Groups that we are now further opening up to NGOs. What is different is that we are enabling all groups to have direct contact with the human resources at a national level. We will cut down on bureaucracy and increase efficiency to allow adults to provide fun and adventure, in fact good scouting, to more young people. B.P. urged us to trust young people with responsibility; the franchise concept trusts adults with the responsibility for their sons and daughters, as well as respecting Scouting's standards. The Group Scouter will sign permits for camps and the coach is there to assist in making it all happen.

Much has been made, by some, of the idea that we will not have Provincial and District Commissioners. Yes we will not have these titles but we will have volunteer positions aimed at supporting the franchised groups as opposed to levels of authority and control. The term coach, rather than a District Commissioner, that is a title that harks back to the Empire days, is in keeping with what B.P. had in mind. A coach supports, helps guides and raises standards, much as the term is used in sport nowadays, rather than being an administrator who polices other adults and is inundated with administration work. We see no change in the numerous Cub and Scout activities arranged by volunteers that take place outside the group.



be prepared.....

A change that is a result of our country's geography is addressed by following the Guide Association's example of having smaller Regions rather than large provinces.

In keeping with the idea that the Scout is most important and at the top and then going down to people like ourselves, we deal now with the new structure of Scouts South Africa. The Ideals, Standards, Values, Aims and Method, required by our membership of the World Organisation of Scout Movements, will be entrusted to an elected Board of Trustees, This Board will be comprised of prominent South Africans who have a deep understanding of the aims and objectives of our Movement. Financially, through them, the Movement will be supported by the Scout Foundation. The Chief Scout will be answerable to the Board of Trustees.

Under the guidance of the Chief Scout we have the exciting concept of an Executive that will be the powerhouse of the movement, comprised of men and women who will provide the initiative and resources for all the vital functions needed to run and serve the movement. Amongst others we will have property, marketing, funding, youth programmes, adult support and people particularly concerned with Parental Scouting, Scouting in Schools and Church and NGO sponsored Scouting. These three latter portfolios will be dealing directly with franchises via the support teams of development officers and coaches. There will be direct reciprocal contact between this entire team and the franchises. We see this as lean, very efficient and flexible with the elimination of bureaucracy.

The Administrative structure will be provided by a beefed up professional National staff with accounting processes that satisfy SARS and our Sec 18A status. We plan a nationally operated online shop, as well as better marketing of our facilities.

Finances have worried a number of people and some are even suggesting that Rev It will increase costs. Firstly, the cost direct of Rev It, will not be borne by the Movement but by donors who were convinced of the need to seek our solution through the employment of a firm of consultants. Obviously a Movement of a mere 14 000 members is not significant in South Africa and will not easily attract funding. Rev It sought to increase numbers, but while increasing numbers, to find an equitable system where all groups paid the same relatively small and affordable amount annually and no young person will be excluded from being a scout through lack of money or resources. Rev It have generated calculations that show that Scouting can be self-sustainable even if it only reaches it's previous peak membership in South Africa of 477 000 members. Of course we will still encourage local funding for Group needs and wants and also seek project and development funding in a more structured and targeted manner.

The fact that the Scout and to a lesser extent the Cub programmes have been described as "work in progress" has attracted comment. Some people have said that our programme is fine and we just need to change the adults. That is wrong! We desperately do not want to lose anybody who is at present involved in scouting; we are fortunate to have a diversity of skills and interests and Scouts SA needs all of them. What has concerned Rev It, and we concur, is that the Badge progression scheme is overwhelming for cub, scout and scouter. We see the five-tier cub programme as particularly burdensome for the Pack Scouter. As we have looked at the number of tests

and sub-clauses in the Scout scheme the well known question in Scouting, to our mind applies here, namely "What are we really trying to do". We have examined schemes around the world and we are convinced that none of them satisfies our South African requirements. We are inviting original thought to help us deal with this unresolved matter. Please remember that the method of Scouting will remain untouched. It is the programme content that must be considered and how it suits the current needs of our youth. Furthermore we will look at flexibility within the programme. When "Programmes on a Plate" are talked about, that relates to flexible programmes that are merely offered as an recommended aid.

Of course, we leave uniform to last because none of us is prepared to die for it. We had a successful young Troop Scouter heading this work stream and so we felt that, with him and active scouters guiding them, Rev It was on relatively safe ground (if that is ever possible with uniforms). One of the driving thoughts was the tremendous impact that Bear Grylls, the UK Chief Scout, has made wearing modern styled coloured shirt with only the World Scout Badge on his arm. We agree that our picture of the uniform, with a rather lame coloured scarf, and no answer to what a Scout would do with his interest and proficiency badges, has surely caused confusion. We will have no answer to the latter issue until we have resolved the Scout Scheme, but the group scarf was always retained.

The next step is that the National Scout Council will take cognizance of feedback in a workshop planned for November before the final implementation is ratified early in 2012, in keeping with P.O.& R.

If there is anything that you find unclear in the above or you feel that we have not given enough thought to any aspect of Rev It's proposal, please contact us through the National office so that we can walk this path together.

Steercom:

Garnet de la Hunt: Chair of National Scout Council, ex-Chief Scout of SA
& Chair of WSC.

Brian February: Chief Scout Commissioner

Dr. Brendon Hausberger: Provincial Commissioner Gauteng

Robert Turner: Chair of National Youth Forum

Khonzaphi Mdaka: Provincial Chair Mpumalanga

Charles Parsons: Chair National Finance Committee

Prof Brian Figagi: member of NSC

Milly Siebrits: CEO