

Girlguiding units operate as individual charities - regardless of whether they are registered with the Charity Commission. This means that Leaders are effectively the unit's trustees - and it is their responsibility to manage unit funds.

Maintaining proper accounting records is a legal obligation of all those who handle charity money. At the end of each year, units need to produce an annual accounts statement, a statement of assets and liabilities and have their accounts reviewed. All paperwork connected with managing the unit's funds needs to be kept for seven years following the financial year-end.

You don't to keep the accounts yourself, you can ask another person with the right experience and knowledge to do this - such as a member of your team, a parent or affiliate member.

- Unit funds must be kept in a bank or building society account (not one with a pass book) so that you can make payments and obtain details of transactions more easily.
- All accounts must be in the name of the unit, for example - 1st Jubilee Rainbow Unit.
- Cheques and withdrawals must have two signatures from people who are not family members. It is usually more convenient to have three or more signatories, so two are always available. Some examples of who may be a signatory include the Unit Leader, a member of the Leadership Team, District Commissioner or Treasurer.
- It may be possible for your banking provider to set up online access to your accounts; allowing you to view your bank statement and also make payments online. Please ensure that when online access is set up that there is a dual authorisation facility included in order to make payments online.
- Check your bank statement. It isn't unheard of for mistakes to be made.
- Make sure that you keep records up-to-date throughout the year, you are more likely to remember exactly what is going on and it won't take long.
- Bank any money received as soon as possible, it is safer all round. If you can set up systems to have funds paid directly to the bank it will save time. Keep cash in a safe place, preferably under lock and key – unit funds will probably not be covered by your household insurance policy. Keep unit funds completely separate from your own money.
- For payments made directly to the bank, ensure that the person making payments gives sufficient information as the 'reference' so that you are able to identify what the payment is for. i.e not just 'subs' but add the name of the Rainbow/Brownie/Guide/Ranger.
- Ensure that all signatories are removed from accounts if they move out of the area, stop having a link with the unit or leave guiding.
- Keep records secure, remembering to password protect them if you store financial records electronically.
- Ensure all accounts are closed and balances dealt with in line with Guiding Manual. If it anticipated that the unit will reopen in the short term it may be easier to change the signatories to those of District personnel in the interim.
- Ensure that your accounts are examined each year by a competent person. This does not need to be someone with accountancy qualifications, just someone who is comfortable with numbers. Provide them with copies of your bank statements and the records of all receipts and payments throughout the year so that they can check them against your summary accounts.
- Don't forget to send annual accounts to your Commissioner. If you need help, ask! Commissioners and Treasurers will be happy to offer support and guidance if you need it.

**It's important that you never:**

- Borrow or lend money from unit funds
- Keep more cash in hand than you are likely to need for immediate payments
- Spend more money than you have