**Module 4 – Tools for the Role (Managers)**

**The Priority Matrix**

Making decisions on what projects to tackle, and when to tackle them, will be a daily task for most people. We all have tasks to do, with goals to achieve, and each task will have its own timescale and deadline. This is why it is important to prioritise.

We tend to face both short-term enquiries that take up our time and long-term developments that are not urgent but will become so if they are put off and are left unfinished. If we are unable to manage our tasks effectively through prioritising, this could lead us to feel out of control and result in us not being on top of our workload. This is why having a clear approach to managing our tasks and our time is important.

This hand-out shows you an urgent/important matrix, which is a tool you can use to help you prioritise your tasks and manage your time more effectively.

**How to create your own chart**

1. Draw a grid of four squares with one axis labelled ‘Urgency’ and the other labelled ‘Importance’ (as shown in the diagram above).

2. Collate a list of tasks that you currently need to do.

3. Place each task in the grid to indicate its importance and its urgency.



The following examples are things that may appear in your own urgent/important matrix.

**A – Low urgency, high importance**

Organising the programme for a Group, District or County development day that will take place in six months’ time. It is highly important that a programme is created for the day, so that everyone knows what is expected of them and the event has a useful outcome. However, you have six months until the event and it will take around two hours to do. Therefore you have plenty of time to get this work done.

**B – High urgency, high importance**

Dealing with a complaint that has been made by a member against another member. Even though you will not be able to resolve the complaint straight away, you will need to acknowledge that the complaint has been received and start investigations into the complaint, whilst abiding by the complaints procedure in POR.

**C – High urgency, low importance**

You are due to have a meeting at another member’s house tomorrow night. However, the member has fallen ill and you are no longer able to hold the meeting at their house. You now need to find another venue for the meeting. It is urgent because you have little time to make other arrangements; however, it is not highly important because you could reschedule the meeting for another time.

**D – Low urgency, low importance**

These are all the little tasks you do that are not urgent and not very important. It is useful to look at each of these tasks and determine whether they actually need to be done. For example, you may intend to redesign the generic email signature used for Group, District or County communications at some point. However, the current one uses up-to-date contact details, so a redesign is not urgent. Also, it is not that important since most people are usually more concerned with the content of an email, rather than with the signature. So it is a task you will do at some point but it is not pressing.

**Time management tips**

With the help of tools such as the urgent/important matrix, managing the tasks and responsibilities of being a manager in Scouting can become a lot easier. Here are some additional tips that may help with time management:

■ value your own time and ensure that you still have time for family and friends; if you don’t, no one else will

■ remember that you may be able to do everything that is asked of you; be realistic and say no if you really don’t have time to take on another project.

■ consider setting up a separate email address that is only used for Scouting purposes; this will ensure that you only do Scouting tasks when you have set aside time to do them and that personal emails do not get overlooked

■ set aside specific times to respond to Scout related emails and telephone calls; include these times on your email signature and manage your team’s expectations, so they know when they are likely to hear back from you

■ have an effective storage and filing system, whether it be paper based, or digital; this will save you time and help you to find things easier

■ do not feel guilty about using any of the measures above; by doing these you will be able to focus on the responsibilities of your role at the appropriate times and will be much more effective