



Middle Kingdom New Groups Handbook

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A Guide for Applicant/Incipient Groups

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This handbook would not be possible without the work of those who have gone before; especially Master Charles Oakley. O.L., O.P. who created the New Groups Policy 2004

A thank you should also be directed at Baron Thorvald Redhair, O.P. and Herald Extraordinaire who provided direction and focus.

Table of Contents

Section 1 - Defining Applicant/Incipient

Section 2 - Reasons to Form or Not Form a New Group

Section 3 - Incipient Application

Section 4 - Group Administration/Sponsorship

Duties

Events/Demos

Finances

Section 5 - Bordering Groups

Group relations

- Inter-group
- External
- Kingdom

Section 6 - Boundaries/Zip codes

Section 7 - Requirements to Advance

Barony

Local Group: Shire, Canton, Riding, Stronghold

Time Frame

Section 8 - Full Status Application

Full Status Form

Binder

Section 9 - What Happens Next

Appendixes

- Appendix A – Incipient Application/Sponsorship Form
- Appendix B – Application for Full Status
- Appendix C – Petition for Advancement
- Appendix D - Middle Kingdom New Groups Policy

Section 1 Defining Incipient

A goal for this handbook is to solidify the definition and understanding of what an incipient group is so that we are using a clarified definition throughout the kingdom. While each new group is going to have its own individual history and personality the process of creating a new group and moving to full status should be a similar experience for each group with clearly defined steps and procedures. In order to better create that sense of standardization we should begin with a definition.

According to the Middle Kingdom New Groups Policy, (2004) in accordance with Corpora and Kingdom Law...

“An incipient group has received agreement from its administrating branch (sponsoring group) and whose officers have been designated as deputies of the officers of that administrating branch. A group must receive its “Incipient” designation from the Kingdom Seneschal.

The initial meeting of people interested in forming a new group and any meetings or discussion that follow do not make that group officially “Incipient” until the group has filed the *Incipient Application/Sponsorship Form* and the *Support Petition* and has received confirmation of acceptance from either the Kingdom Seneschal or the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups. A copy of the *Incipient Application/Sponsorship Form* can be found in Appendix A in the back of the handbook. The *Support Petition* can be found in Appendix B. The forms should be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal, the Proposed Group’s Regional Seneschal and the Minister of New Groups. The Proposed Group’s seneschal and possibly one other acting officer should keep a copy of the forms with them. Having extra copies on hand before the group reaches full status can save many problems later if paperwork is lost.

Before filing paperwork with the Kingdom Seneschal, the Regional Seneschal and the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups, prospective members should discuss the reality of forming a new group in their location.

The link to the MK New Groups Policy: <http://www.midrealm.org/seneschallorum/MiddleKingdomNewGroupsPolicy-20040505.pdf>

Section 2 Reasons to Form/or Not Form a New Group

A canton, a shire or other local group is not a household, even though there are members within these groups who may belong to the same household the two are not the same. Nor, should they be. The people who are in discussion of forming a new group need to determine if they are truly looking for a new group, or are they looking at a household.

Households serve many purposes; they can be interest based, based on geography, or formed off of a popular and charismatic household leader. Households play an active and important role in the SCA, but are unofficial and are not recognized as an official SCA branch. If you and a close group of friends just want to play together; register at camping events together, and or share common interests than chances are you are better off forming a household. Less work, less organization, far less red tape and/or procedures and yet will still serve your goals.

Internal arguments within a local group or barony are not a good reason to form a new local group. Per the Middle Kingdom New Group's Policy,

"Politics, interpersonal issues, or other conflict-based reasons will not be acceptable as a reason to begin the establishment process, and any group's request based on those reasons will be denied."

While the reasons for forming a new group may be numerous and many of these reasons could very well fall under "a right and proper thing" not all do. A good reason to form a new group may be that you and other interested members live in unclaimed territory and you have to drive an hour or more to get to the closest SCA activities. Another reason may be living in a highly congested urban area in which getting across the city during rush hour may prevent you and other interested members from being able to make it to SCA activities during a work night. The city of Chicago currently has two Cantons on opposite sides of the city's geographic boundaries.

Make sure that the reasons that your applicant group have for forming are viable and realistic. The Deputy Seneschal for New Groups and the Kingdom Seneschal will be concerned with whether or not the group can demonstrate a variety of interests and has the energy and population to hold events, demos, and can fulfill the obligations of the required offices and has enough sustaining members to be effective and continue to grow.

Section 3 Incipient Application

Once prospective members have decided that forming a new group in a particular location would be a benefit to their region and that there is just cause for a new group they should then begin the application process. There are pieces that need to be in place even before the application for Incipient Status can be filled out.

Available Land - Interested members should host meetings beforehand to review and determine the potential location of your group. Geographically, local groups are divided into areas based on zip codes and city and county lines. It is not possible to have a group that exists across state lines due to the financial policies of the SCA. Members of the new group need to check to see if there is any land that they wish to hold is already claimed by another group. Per Policy, no group is required to give up land to a new group so be careful about claiming land that is already being held by another group. At this point a general idea of what land you would like to claim is acceptable, as the group progresses towards full status this information will need to be specific.

Group Name and Device – A group can't go Full Status without a registered name. The name will need to be sent to the College of Heralds with a signed petition from all concerned members. Register a name as soon as possible so that there is time to work through any changes that may occur between when the name is first registered and the application for Full Status. Make sure that the Dragon Herald and the appropriate Regional Herald are aware that you are making a submission for a name. They have the potential to help solve problems before they occur.

From www.midrealm.org Escutcheon Herald web page:

*Official SCA branches (Shires, Cantons, Baronies, Principalities, etc.) do NOT pay for their group name or device submission but still must enclose the appropriate paperwork (note: branches use a different name form than individuals do -- although the device and badge forms are the same). However, they must pay for other submissions (i.e. - order names, badges, etc.). Petitions **MUST** be included with **all** paperwork (i.e. - name, device, etc) from the group's membership.*

More information on submissions may be found at: <http://www.midrealm.org/heraldry/escutcheon.php>

Choose Officers – Local groups are required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer, a Pursuivant and at least one of the following: Minister of Arts and Sciences, or a Marshal, if the other officer is a marshal than they must have a warrant. A Chronicler, Web Minister, and a Chatelaine could also be important to a new group as their positions can greatly assist with the growth of the potential new group.

The Seneschal and the Exchequer must reside in different mailing addresses. They cannot live together. Having a married couple as Seneschal and Exchequer is not acceptable. This is so there is a checks and balance system in place; it prevents one family or couple from having access to a group's funds without being held accountable for the money spent.

The officers will serve as deputies of their Administering Branch's (Sponsoring Group's) officers. They must be willing to work with the officers of the Administrative Branch, report to them in a timely fashion and keep the Administrative Branch officers informed in the group's activities. Incipient officers are not required by kingdom law to report...however, an Incipient Group will not be allowed to advance to Full Status unless their officers are reporting on time and to the correct people. Start doing so immediately and make sure that the seneschal has at least one hard copy of all reports. Incipient Group's officers are required to report to: the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups, the Regional Seneschal, the Administering Branch's officers, and Baronial Officers if applicable. Of course Applicant/Incipient Officers will send reports to their own seneschal as well. Basically, follow the typical reporting chain of command, and add the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups.

Obtain an Administering Branch – Incipient Groups must have an Administering Branch, sometimes known as a sponsoring group. As an Incipient Group you cannot hold your own events or hold money in an account. Those activities need to be overseen by an Administering Branch. Usually the Administering Branch is the nearest neighbor to the new group, per the Middle Kingdom New Groups Policy.

If the group seeking establishment falls within the boundaries of an established and full status group, it will be that group's responsibility to serve as the administering branch. In the case where the established group is also a part of a Barony, the Baron, Baroness and Baronial Seneschal must also be consulted.

The Seneschals for both the Applicant Group and the Administering Branch need to fill out the Incipient Application/Administrative Branch Form and send a copy to the Kingdom Seneschal and a copy to the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups. Once accepted the Applicant Group becomes an Incipient Group. Incipient Groups may be listed in the Pale and on the Kingdom web site as "unofficial" Incipient Groups. Having contact information available for the

seneschal for your group is essential to doing business within the Kingdom as well as a providing a way for interested newcomers to get in touch with your group locally.

Section 4 Group Administration/Sponsorship

Once a group has agreed to be your Administering Branch and the application for Inciency has been accepted by the Kingdom Seneschal the “official” work in moving towards full status can begin. At this point, the Incipient Group should have officers in place and those officers should be reporting. This is the time to start working on functioning as an active group. You may not be full status at this time, but that doesn’t mean you cannot start acting that way. While you may not hold an event on your own without the knowledge of your Administering Branch, hosting or co-hosting an event with the knowledge and assistance of your sponsoring group is a good way to demonstrate your future success as a full status group. Working together with your Administering Branch, and possibly other local groups is a good way to build relationships within an area.

Duties of an Administering Branch

Once an Administering Branch’s seneschal fills out and signs the Middle Kingdom Incipient Application/Sponsorship Form then they have taken a vested interest in the ongoing success of the Incipient Group. They have agreed to hold money for the Incipient Group, to serve as a Sponsoring Group for events that meet with their approval and to give advice and support in the best way that they see fit. As mentioned previously the officers of the Incipient Group are deputies to the officers of the Administering Branch.

In accordance with Corpora VII.K.2 and Middle Kingdom Law XIV-203, all officers of an incipient group will be deputies of the officers of the administering branch. Administering branch officers will be required to teach, assist and oversee all activities of incipient group officers.

Officers of the administering branch shall ensure that the incipient group files all reports in a complete and timely manner.

Officers in the administrating branch will ensure that all officers in the incipient group have current and updated copies of all relevant governing documents as are required to properly administer a group.

Officers of applicant/incipient branch must be members of the SCA and hold valid waiver cards. (Proposed change – to read ...”must be members of the SCA” only as holding valid waiver cards may not be an article that can be enforced)

The officers are there to answer questions, accept reports and send them on to

Kingdom and demonstrate Kingdom expectations of officers in order to assist with training, provide resources such as teachers, marshals, and equipment as well as to assist the new group in gaining acceptance at a regional level. Members of the Administering Branch may choose to volunteer at events held by the Incipient Group, co-host fighter practices, or Arts and Sciences nights.

Or they may choose to serve more as a data-base, helping to provide information to the Incipient Group as needed. Discussing this at the beginning of the Incipient/Administering Branch relationship could prove beneficial to both groups.

Duties of an Incipient Group

It is important that an Incipient Group works and plays well with others from the very beginning. A good way to accomplish this is to help other groups when and where your group's abilities and interests lie. This doesn't necessarily fall under an Incipient Group's official duties, but creating symbiotic relationships across local groups is a good way to gain support for future activities. It's also a great way to explore new pursuits.

The "official" duties of an Incipient Group are to file officer reports on time to the appropriate people and to hold regularly scheduled meetings and activities. You will need at least five paid members, although more is almost essential. If an Incipient Group is playing the "officer carousel" over and over, with people switching from one office to the other there is a good chance they will not be given "Full Status".

When applying for "Full Status" an Incipient Group will need to provide the Full Status Application Packet and documents (binder). This will be discussed in a later section.

Events and Demos

According to Corpora, Incipient Branches may not sponsor Society events. This is due to insurance reasons, as an unofficial group, without Full Status, an Incipient Branch will not be covered by the Society insurance policy. In order to host an SCA event an Incipient Branch must have the approval from their Administering Branch.

If you are holding an event with the approval of your Administering Branch the Administering Branch's seneschal also needs to be present throughout the event.

Remember, the Administering Branch must hold all monies for the Incipient Group. Only a branch with a warranted Marshall can sponsor a fighting event and waivers and event reports must be signed in the appropriate manner and sent to the regional Marshall. Administering Branches sponsoring events must make sure that the Incipient Group follows Kingdom and Society laws and procedures throughout the event.

An Incipient Branch may hold a demo without checking with their Administering Branch, however, if the members of the Incipient Group are in-experienced it may be a good idea to inform them or ask for their assistance. They are there to help and that support is invaluable for an Incipient Group whose members may not have the practice of holding demos.

Finances

This cannot be stressed enough as the mishandling of finances is a sure way to stop a group from reaching Full Status before it even starts. An Incipient Group MAY NOT hold its own funds. Those monies must be held by the Administering Branch in their account under the Incipient Group's name. A group may not open a bank account in their name until they have reached full status. An Incipient Group must still have an exchequer who cannot be in the same household or related to the seneschal.

Monies held by an Administrating Branch include money collected from holding demos or at events. In the case of an event the Administering Branch's exchequer must work along side the exchequer for the Incipient Group. When the event is concluded the money collected and all checks written for receipts must be given to and come from the Administering Branch.

Section 5 Bordering Groups

It is crucial that an Incipient Group gets along well with their neighbors. Not doing so has the potential to prevent a group from achieving full status. It is important to keep other local groups in the loop with what your Incipient Group is doing. Invite them to your meetings, go to their meetings. If the people in a neighboring group feel like they are being kept in the dark, then they are free to imagine the worst. Explain your reasoning for starting a new group and how you think it may benefit them, as well as how you are hoping they can help you.

Maybe they have a fighter practice your fighters can go to, while you have a period cooking night that their cooks can attend. The ways in which groups can benefit from each others strengths are endless. Neighboring groups can be an excellent resource for an applicant group, and with a little effort on your part, most will be more than willing to be just that.

Find ways to help them with their events and ask for help with yours, making sure that your neighbors feel appreciated for what they do. Rely on your strengths to do so. Maybe your Incipient Group has an amazing set of dish washers, archers or people who excel in garb construction. Volunteer to help your local groups in a way that works for your group. Incipient Group _____ may well become known throughout the region as being the “Go To” people for dishwashing. That will then become a whole region willing to write letters of support for that group when it is time to fill out the application for full status. Finding ways to contribute to your neighbors will only benefit your group in the long run.

Inter-group Relations

If a group having difficulty getting along with its neighbors can put a stop to their Full Status application, so too can a group that has trouble getting along with itself. Try to solve all internal conflicts quickly and with consideration for each other. Everyone one in the group has the same goal, and there could be many different ways to achieve that goal...all correct. If there is internal conflict you will not advance. Listen to each other, respect each other, different opinions included, and treat each other with the chivalrous behavior that has come to be expected in the SCA.

Kingdom

There are plenty of things that an Incipient Group can do to bring itself to the notice of the Crown of the Middle Kingdom in a positive way. One way might be to look for projects that your group could work on that can assist the kingdom as a whole. Make award badges, scribal cases, garb for Their Highness or Majesties, gift baskets, trim, etc. that your group can present to the kingdom. Make cookies; offer to host a Royal lunch or tea, whatever you chose to do, again try to play to the strengths of the group. This will show that your have the wherewithal to be a positive force in your kingdom.

Section 6 Boundaries and Zip Codes

Zip codes are important. You are going to need to know which zip codes you claim, which zip codes are going to be gifted to you from another group if any and the zip codes of paid members within in your boundaries. Start with a very clear idea of these items at the beginning.

Under no circumstances shall a full status group be required to give up lands already owned by them to a group seeking establishment.

A neighboring group or a barony doesn't have to give up land if they do not want to. If the neighboring group refuses the Incipient Group must either find other available land or their application for Full Status will be denied. It is important to determine this well into the beginning of group formation, even before applying for Incipient Status.

If a group seeking establishment seeks establishment in an area that is "unclaimed land" the group may ask approach any full status group whose territory abuts the desired territory to serve as the administering branch.

If your group is starting out in unclaimed land, any neighboring group may be your Administering Branch, however it is still good policy to let all neighboring groups know of your intentions. What land is claimed and what land is unclaimed is determined by the Kingdom Seneschal and he or she should be consulted as land claims are being discussed.

Section 7 Requirements to Advance

While the requirements for advancement to Full Status are similar in many respects there are some differences based on the type of group that is being formed.

This handbook is focused on establishing local groups such as baronies, shires, ridings, colleges, etc. rather than on principalities and kingdoms. The process for beginning principalities and kingdoms may start out parallel to beginning a local branch but due to the size and nature of such groups becomes more complex and will not be dealt with in here.

A note about minimum requirements... just because your group may have achieved the minimum requirements doesn't mean that your group will automatically be granted full status. A lot is taken into account, much of which has been discussed in this handbook: how well is the group playing together with each other and with other local groups, are the group's activities diverse, is there a need for a new group in the proposed area, is the group membership growing or static, are there enough officers and deputies from different addresses and are they doing their jobs well and on time. All of the above items are taken into consideration when a group applies to advance.

Baronial Requirements

Per Corpora a Barony must receive approval from the Crown and members must petition the Crown, the Kingdom Seneschal and the Board of Directors in order to become a recognized Full Status group. The minimum requirements are as follows:

- At least 30 sustaining and 10 additional members of associate or higher level
- Officers acceptable to the Crown
- A name and device registered with the College of Arms
- A petition (poll) for advancement made up of a consensus of the group's members. Please note...a poll is NOT a vote. It is a way to let the Crown, the Kingdom Seneschal and the Board of Directors know the general
- Arrangements to select and appoint a Baron and/or Baroness in accordance with kingdom law and custom
- A record of varied Society activities (like a smaller group, the proposed Barony should have been acting like a Barony (events, meetings, practices, etc.)
- Proposed zip codes that are acceptable to the Kingdom Seneschal
- The Crown must recognize the new branch in court

Shire Requirements

A shire is an independent branch of the SCA not associated with a barony or province, a shire reports to their region, (principality if applicable), then their kingdom. As with a barony, approval comes from the Crown, the Kingdom Seneschal and the Board of Directors. Keeping in mind the note about minimum requirement, the minimum requirements for a shire are:

- At least 5 subscribing members
- At least 3 officers including a Seneschal, an Exchequer and a Pursuivant and at least one of the following: Minister of Arts and Sciences, and or a Marshal
- A name registered with the College of Arms and the Kingdom Seneschal
- Consensus among members (petition or poll) in the area favoring advancement
- Zip codes approved by the Kingdom Seneschal
- The Crown must recognize the new branch in Court

Canton Requirements

Because a canton is part of a barony there are fewer officer requirements than those for a shire. The canton has to meet the minimum requirements above with the exception of the following:

- Cantons are required to have a Seneschal and an Exchequer and at least one of the following: Pursuivant, Minister of Arts and Sciences, and/or a Marshal

Ridings, Colleges and Strongholds

The above branches are reserved for schools and military bases, or in other locations in which membership fluctuates based on reasons beyond the control of the members. The boundaries stem from their modern institutions rather than physical boundaries, however if they are within a zip code of another branch they must report to that branch. New groups fitting this description must still meet the above requirements, however they may go dormant if membership falls below 5 sustaining members rather than be disbanded.

Time Frame

There is no required time frame to go from Incipient to Full Status. The Kingdom Seneschal, the Crown and the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups will be looking at continued stability. If there are periods of time in which the group doesn't seem to be advancing towards full status there is the potential that the Incipient Group will be viewed to see if the potential for reaching Full Status still exists. On the average it can take two to six years to go from Incipient to Full Status; however each group is different and will be looked at individually.

Section 8 Full Status Application

Application Form

When the Incipient Group and their Administering Branch feels like they are ready to apply for Full Status, the Seneschals of both groups need to fill out the Full Status Application Form (Appendix B). This should be turned in with a binder that contains supporting documents. These items need to be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal and to the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups. It is also very important for the Seneschals of the Incipient Group and the Administering Branch to keep a copy as back up. It is easier to copy or send in a back up copy rather than trying to re-create all of the supporting documents that have been collected if it is lost in the mail.

As a side note, while an Incipient Group will not receive extra consideration for an organized, easy to read binder, it could potentially save time in the long run. The application should be the first page in the binder that will be given to the Kingdom Seneschal and the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups. If the binder is mailed sending it certified in order to get a signed receipt may also be helpful.

Binder

There are certain items that must be in the binder along with the application for Full Status. There are also items that should be in the binder and documents that would be nice to have. Supporting documents are easier to collect from the beginning if they are copied and stored in a safe place rather than trying to produce them when your group is putting the binder together.

Items Required in the binder:

- Full Status Application Form
- Copy of approval of name (and device for a barony) from the College of Arms
- Contact information for all officers
- Listing of all names and addresses for sustaining members, associate members and family members (Keep in mind a family membership only counts as 1 member)
- Petition from members for advancement (Appendix C)
- Listing of zip codes claimed by the Incipient Group
- Letter of support from the Seneschal of the Administering Branch
- Letter of support from the Baron and Baroness if Incipient Canton

Additional Supporting Documents:

- Letters of support from neighboring groups, officers, members, peers etc.
- Listing of activity days and times
- Flyers from events held
- Class schedules or listings from events
- Copies of officer reports (One example of each should be fine)
- Agendas and minutes from business meetings
- Thank you letters from any donated projects, or demos

Section 9 What Happens Next

Once the binder is sent in, it needs to be approved by the Kingdom Seneschal, the Crown and the Board of Directors which means your group may need to wait until Curia can convene. If the application is sent back, there should be suggestions as to what changes need to be made before re-submitting. In some cases the Incipient Group will be dissolved. This could be due to a disagreement over zip codes claimed by another group, an inability to work well with neighboring groups or not enough sustaining members to effectively keep a group running.

If the application is accepted then the Crown needs to name the new group as Full Status during court. The herald or another representative of the Crown may contact you to discuss the ceremony. Depending on the desires of the Crown it could be similar to a peerage ceremony or be as simple as asking the seneschal to step forward in Court.

Once it is recognized in court, your group is officially a Full Status branch recognized as such by the Society, with all the rights and responsibilities required of a local branch. All officers need to contact their regional and/or kingdom officers in order to receive warrants where applicable. Some may require a change of officer form even if the officer remains the same person who served during the branch's Incipient status. Other than that, keep doing what you've been doing to continue to grow and strengthen your group. What you've accomplished should be celebrated as it adds to the dynamic that is your region and the Middle Kingdom. Congratulations!



Copies should be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal, the Regional Seneschal and the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups

Middle Kingdom Incipient Application/Sponsorship Form

Part 1 - This portion is to be filled out by the acting seneschal of the proposed Incipient Group.

1. Proposed Group Name: _____

2. Has name been registered with the MK College of Heraldry

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

3. Has a device been registered with the MK College of Heraldry

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

4. Acting Seneschal Contact Information

a. SCA Name: _____

b. Modern Name: _____

c. Address: *Street, City, State, Zip*

d. Phone Number: _____

e. Email Contact: _____

5. Where is the Incipient Group located? Include counties and zip codes along with the state.

6. List any bordering full status groups.

7. What is the primary reason for beginning a new group in that location?

I, the Seneschal of the Applicant Group, do accept the sponsoring group as our Administrative Branch. I shall take on the office of Deputy to the Sponsoring Group Seneschal.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Part 2 – This portion is to be filled out by the seneschal of the Sponsoring Group.

1. Sponsoring Group Name: _____

2. Sponsoring Seneschal Contact Information:

a. SCA Name: _____

b. Modern Name: _____

c. Address: *Street, City, State, Zip*

d. Phone Number: _____

e. Email Contact: _____

3. Does Sponsoring Group border the Incipient Group?

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

4. If “No” please explain the reason you are choosing to serve as a sponsoring group?

5. In what way would a new group in that location serve your region?

I, the seneschal of the Sponsoring Group, do agree to support the Applicant Group. I shall take on their acting Seneschal as my Deputy and assist with the formation of the new group to the best of my ability.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Copies should be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal and the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups

Middle Kingdom Full Status Advancement Application

Part 1 – This is to be filled out by the Incipient Group’s Seneschal

1. Name of group seeking advancement:

2. Has the group’s name been approved by the College of Heralds:

3. Has the group’s device been approved by the College of Heralds:

4. Seneschal Contact Information

SCA Name: _____

Modern Name: _____

Address: *Street, City, State, Zip*

Phone Number: _____

Email Contact: _____

5. Explain why you believe that the group should achieve full status at this time. This may also be written on a separate sheet of paper or you may use the space below.

Reminder that there are additional required items that should be present in the group’s binder including a list of requested zip codes, list of officers contact information, etc.

Part 2 – This portion is to be filled out by the seneschal of the Sponsoring Group.

6. Administering Branch Name: _____

7. Administering Branch Seneschal Contact Information:

SCA Name: _____

Modern Name: _____

Address: *Street, City, State, Zip*

Phone Number: _____

Email Contact: _____

8. Does the Administering Branch border the Incipient Group?

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

9. Is the Administering Branch surrendering land to the Incipient Branch? If so what zip codes.

10. Why do you believe that the Incipient Group is ready to achieve advancement to Full Status at this time? You may use the space provided or this may also be written on a separate sheet of paper.



Copies should be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal, the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal for New Groups.
Duplicate page as needed.

Middle Kingdom Petition for Advancement

Incipient Group Name:

<u>Modern Name</u>	<u>Society Name</u>	<u>Membership #</u>	<u>Zipcode</u>	<u>Signature</u>
1				
2				
3				
4				
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15				



Middle Kingdom New Groups Policy

March 23, 2004

Master Charles Oakley, O.L., O.P.

In accordance with Corpora and Kingdom Law that require the Kingdom Seneschal to set forth policies and procedures regarding the establishment and advancement of groups.

1. New Groups Designations Groups seeking establishment will be identified for administrative purposes by one of two designators:

1.1. Applicant Group: An applicant group is any group of people who express interest in beginning the process of becoming a full status group in the Middle Kingdom.

1.2. Incipient Group: An incipient group is an applicant group that has received agreement from its administering branch and whose officers have been designated as deputies of the officers of that administering branch. A group may be designated Incipient by the Kingdom Seneschal or their designated deputy.

2. Reasons for Forming a Group It is recognized that a broad variety of reasons may exist for the establishment of a group. Politics, interpersonal issues, or other conflict-based reasons will not be acceptable as a reason to begin the establishment process, and any group's request based on those reasons will be denied.

3. Group Administration In accordance with Corpora, any group seeking establishment in the Middle Kingdom is required to have an 'administering branch'. The determination of which full status branch will serve in this capacity will be made in the following manner:

3.1. Determining the Administering Branch

3.1.1. If the group seeking establishment falls within the boundaries of an established and full status group, it will be that group's responsibility to serve as the administering branch. In the case where the established group is also a part of a Barony, the Baron, Baroness and Baronial Seneschal must also be consulted.

3.1.1.1. Under no circumstances shall full status group be required to give up lands already owned by them to a group seeking establishment.

3.1.1.2. If a full status group is not willing to become the administering branch for a group seeking establishment the establishment process will be terminated.

3.1.2. If the group seeking establishment seeks establishment in an area that is 'unclaimed lands', the group may approach any full status group whose territory abuts the desired territory

to serve as the administering branch.

3.1.3. Claimed and unclaimed territories will be determined by consultation with the Kingdom Cartographer and/or Kingdom Seneschal.

3.1.4. Any variance from these policies must be approved in writing by the Kingdom Seneschal.

3.2. Duties of Officers

3.2.1. Administrative Duties

3.2.1.1. In accordance with Corpora VII.K.2 and Middle Kingdom Law XIV-203, all officers of an incipient group will be deputies of the officers of the administering branch. Administering branch officers will be required to teach, assist, and oversee all activities of incipient group officers. Officers of incipient groups will not be warranted until such time as the group is advanced to full status.

3.2.1.2. Officers of the administering branch shall ensure that the incipient group files all reports in a complete and timely manner. Unless specifically required, all reports are submitted to the administering Seneschal, applicable Regional Seneschal, and the Kingdom Deputy for New Groups. If the incipient group is a part of a Barony, the Baron and Baroness should also receive copies of reports. Administering Seneschals will be required to include a commentary to the Kingdom Seneschal with each required report regarding the status and development of groups they are sponsoring and to send a copy the Deputy for New Groups.

3.2.1.3. Deputy Officers in the incipient branch will assume all actions and responsibilities that might be expected of a fully warranted officer, except that they will not be under warrant and will not have any authority to represent the SCA in any official capacity.

3.2.1.4. Officers of the administering group will be required, from time to time, to advise the Kingdom Seneschal or their designated deputy/deputies on the progress of the incipient group.

3.2.1.5. Officers in the administering branch will ensure that all officers in the incipient group have current and updated copies of all relevant governing documents as are required to properly administer a group.

3.2.1.6. Officers of applicant/incipient branch must be members of the SCA and hold valid waiver cards.

3.3. Right to Self Identity

3.3.1. Because it is recognized that all groups develop with their own character and nature, officers in the administering branch are encouraged and required to allow the applicant group to develop in any manner or direction the incipient group sees fit provided it does not violate modern, corporate or kingdom law or policy.

3.3.2. Incipient Groups must be aware that their desire to form a new group puts certain burdens on the administering branch and the Kingdom. It is their responsibility to work cooperatively and understandingly with the officers and people in the administering branch and Kingdom and to find a reasonable solution to differences of opinion. Although an incipient group may have great latitude in its developmental process, that should not impose any undue burden on those assisting them in their endeavors.

3.3.3. Any complaints of restraint in this area will be referred to the Special Deputy for New Groups for resolution. The New Groups Deputy's decision may be appealed to the Kingdom Seneschal.

4. Advancement/Dissolution

4.1. There is not minimum time limit for a group to be recommended for advancement and advanced. However, prior to being recommended for advancement certain things beyond the requirements set forth in Corpora and Kingdom Law, the Seneschal's Offices shall determined and established in practice:

4.1.1. The incipient group shall have a name and device accepted by the College of Heralds.

4.1.2. The incipient group shall have demonstrated an ability to bring up new officers and successfully change over officers within the group. Simply 'shuffling' a static core of officers is not acceptable.

4.1.3. The incipient group shall have demonstrated an ability to hold Demonstrations and Events.

4.1.4. The incipient group shall have demonstrated an ability to file reports on time and shall have completed at least one complete reporting cycle including the filing of a 'Domesday' report.

4.1.5. Incipient Groups, prior to applying for full status, should also have demonstrated:

4.1.5.1. an ability to 'play well within the group'. This means that the group should not have extraordinary internal difficulties, and that what difficulties do arise from time to time are resolved in a constructive and civil manner.

4.1.5.2. an ability to 'play well with its neighbors'. This means cooperative action and interaction with neighboring groups and others within and without its region.

4.1.5.3. a stable and, preferably, growing membership

4.1.5.4. the ability to self-manage

4.1.5.5. an understanding of what it means to be a 'full status group' within the Midrealm.

4.1.6. An application packet, which details the requirements for advancement to full status, is available from the Minister of New Groups and can be found in the New Groups Handbook at www.midrealm.org.

4.1.7. Groups who have existed in an incipient or lesser status for more than three years will be reviewed to determine whether their desire to become a full status group is still viable.

4.1.8. Incipient Groups who are unable to demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively with their administering branch or their neighboring full status groups or who fail, by repeatedly failing to meet one or more of the advancement criteria, to show progress towards advancement may be disestablished by the Kingdom Seneschal.

5. Publication of Group Contact Information

5.1. Applicant and Incipient groups will have their Seneschal's contact information published on a special page of the midrealm.org web site, with a disclaimer stating that this publication is for information purposes only and does not constitute warranting of the group's officers. In addition, incipient groups may be listed in The Pale with an appropriate designator.

Supporting Citations from the Governing Documents of the Society and the Kingdom of the Middle:

Corpora III.C. Branches

Other local branches: Below baronial/provincial level, branch establishment proceeds according to kingdom law and custom, subject to the Society Seneschal's review and the requirements set forth below. These branches may adopt designations as provided for by the laws and customs of their kingdoms and as established in this document. Minimum requirements include:

At least 5 subscribing members.

At least 3 officers, including a Seneschal, an Exchequer, and one of the following: a Herald, a Marshal, or a Minister of Arts and Sciences. Local branches are encouraged to fill all the latter positions.

A name registered with the College of Arms.

Consensus among members in the area favoring establishment of the proposed branch.

A special type of local branch is available for use at schools or military bases, or in other situations where membership is likely to fluctuate for reasons beyond the members' control. The "territory" of such branches is defined in terms of affiliation with the institution where they are based, not in terms of physical boundaries. Institutional branches may report directly to a kingdom, but if their institution is located within the borders of a branch of any other class, they report through that branch. They differ from other local branches in that they go dormant if membership falls below five (5), rather than being disbanded.

Corpora III.D. Establishment and Advancement

1. The Society and Kingdom Seneschals will work together as necessary to process petitions for branch establishment or advancement. Society members who wish to form a branch, advance an existing branch in status, or advance a group of branches in status must first determine whether the area they have in mind is eligible for such treatment. This process shall involve consultation with the Kingdom (and Principality, if any) Seneschal, and with the Seneschals of any nearby branches.

2. The Society permits very broad participation by people who are not members as defined in the By-Laws. However no part of the Society can be required to solicit or heed their views regarding branch status, or any other situation where the opinion of the populace is to be consulted. Law, custom, or actual practice may allow consultation with nonmembers, but it cannot be required.

3. If necessary, the members shall reach a consensus as to a proposed name (and device, where required) and register it with the College of Arms before any petition for recognition can be granted

4. The members of the proposed branch shall prepare a petition for the proposed action, stating the proportion of their numbers favoring the move, and demonstrating that the

requirements are met. The petition shall be submitted as specified by kingdom law and custom. The Kingdom Seneschal shall review the petition to determine whether the proposed branch elevation conforms to Corpora and kingdom law and custom, consulting royalty and other kingdom or principality officers as appropriate for the level of branch under consideration. If the Kingdom Seneschal decides to recommend that the petition should be granted, the action to be taken depends on the level of branch, as follows:

5. Institutional branches and local branches other than baronies and provinces: The Kingdom Seneschal shall advise the Crown if the petition is acceptable. After the Crown acknowledges the creation of the branch, the Kingdom Seneschal shall inform the Society Seneschal of the name, location and date of elevation and the Society Seneschal shall then notify the Board.

6. Appeals: If a petition to change branch status is denied at any stage, the petition will be returned to the originator(s) together with the accumulated recommendations, comments, and reasons for denial. Any denial may be appealed to the next level.

Further,

Corpora VII.K. Warranting / Rosters

2. Local Branch officers may be officers in their own right, or be deputies of officers of an administering branch. Until a branch is proclaimed by the Crown, its officers must be deputies of their counterparts in the administering branch.

Further,

Corpora III.C. Branch Designations lists all designations recognized by Society as legitimate branch designations. It should be noted that Corpora nowhere recognizes any group that is not a ‘full status’ group (i.e., ‘proclaimed by the Crown’).

Middle Kingdom Law goes on to reiterate or expand on Corpora in the following ways:

III-201 The Kingdom Seneschal shall be responsible for all procedures involved with authorizing new groups and changing the status of existing groups and shall keep a list of the dates on which all groups have been authorized or have had their status changed.

ARTICLE XIV - Recognition and Advancement of Subsidiary Groups

XIV-100 All groups desiring recognition or advancement within the Middle Kingdom shall petition both the Kingdom Seneschal and the Crown.

XIV-101 The Kingdom Seneschal shall keep the Crown apprised of the progress of all such petitions.

XIV-200 Groups other than Cantons (and their equivalents) are required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer, a Pursuivant, and at least one of the following: Minister of Arts and Sciences, or Marshal.

Cantons are required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer and at least one of the following:

Pursuivant, Minister of Arts and Sciences or a Marshal.

XIV-201 If any training of fighters is to be undertaken, the group must have an appropriate Marshal.

XIV-202 If monies are held by the group, an Exchequer is required. A group may not hold monies in the name of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. until it has been officially recognized by the Middle Kingdom Seneschal as an incipient or full-status group.

XIV-203 Upon obtaining full status, a group shall recommend and request warrants for their officers.

XIV-400 Existing groups shall not be permitted a division or advancement which will foster a schism or fractionalization of a political nature in the resident population.

XIV-500 Prospective new baronies must reach and maintain a level of at least 30 sustaining and 10 additional associate or higher memberships.

XIV-600 Prospective new principalities must reach and maintain a level of at least 125 sustaining and 50 additional associate or higher memberships.

XIV-700 No geographic area, other than a group officially recognized by the Kingdom Seneschal, may have officers, a champion, or defined borders. Groups listed on the Middle Kingdom Collegium Seneschallorum are officially recognized by the Kingdom Seneschal.