

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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Officers' Newsletter 216

14 October 2022

Dear All

This is quite a short newsletter as it is mainly to ensure that everyone receives the Officers' Conference Agenda and accompanying notes. It also includes the exact address for anyone planning to attend Conference. Those who are attending other activities over the Members' Weekend will already have details of the venue.

There are two other items in this Newsletter that are also important but not quite so urgent.

Officers' Conference

This will be the last Officers' Newsletter before this year's Conference to be held on Sunday 23 October 2022. The Agenda and Notes to go with the Agenda are attached as Appendix 1. Most branches have already advised that they will be represented or given their apologies. For those branches that have not already let me know, I would be very grateful if you could do so as soon as possible. I would also appreciate it if national officers would let me know whether or not they are attending if they have not already done so.

This will help to ensure that we can cater for those turning up on the day and so that no-one's apologies are missed off the record. This applies to both branch and Society Officers.

Digital equipment updates

It is coming up to the time of year for renewing the Society's Insurance Policy so this is a request to all branches to let me know exactly what digital equipment they hold as a branch. This can include laptops, digital projectors, PA systems etc. if we do not know about the equipment, it may not be covered by the insurance. Even if there has been no change to branch equipment over the last 12 months, it would still be helpful to have confirmation of what equipment you currently have. While you know what you have, I only know if you tell me and there have been some surprises even over the last twelve months about items that were not listed – either older items kept as back-up for newer things, or new items bought since the last time an update was requested.

My thanks go to those who have already told me about recent purchases, this is much appreciated.

The information contained in this newsletter is for use of RCTS Officers and Members only and should not be communicated outside of the Society

New postage stamps

I expect that most of you will already be aware about the new Royal Mail postage stamps that have a barcode attached so this is just a quick reminder. The older stamps will only be valid up until January 2023 and after that date they can only be exchanged for the new ones through the Royal Mail's Swap Out scheme which opens on 31 March 2023. So if you do not want to have to go through the process of exchanging old stamps for new, the recommendation is to use up any stamps without the barcode before the end of January 2023 and to buy only the new ones from now on.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on Sunday 23 October 2022 at Reading.

Kind regards

Irene

Appendix 1

OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

Sunday 23 October 2022 at 9.00am for 9.15am start

**Novotel Reading Centre
25b Friar Street
Reading RG1 1DP**

AGENDA

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Opening of Conference by Society Chairman | Callum MacLeod |
| 2 | Apologies for absence | Irene Rabbitts |
| 3 | President's Address | Reverend Canon Brian Arman |
| 4 | Confirmation of 2021 Minutes
(circulated with Officers Newsletter 211 – February 2022) | Callum MacLeod |
| 5 | a) Volunteers at branch and national level (see notes)
b) Induction for new branch officers (and national officers?) (see notes)
c) Financial support for less well-off branches (see notes) | Irene Rabbitts |
| 6 | Publications update – recent and coming soon | TBC |
| BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS | | |
| 7 | a) Website and email
b) Digitisation projects
c) Questions and Answers | Matthew Shaw |
| 8 | Social Media update | Callum MacLeod
(on behalf of Tim Bellenger) |
| 9 | AOB:
a) Request from Andrew Lait for photographs of 69003 in service and also for 43014 with NR slogan;
b) History section for members with some parts available to the general public (see notes) | Callum MacLeod |
| 10 | Date and venue for 2023 Members' Weekend and Officers' Conference | Callum MacLeod |
| 11 | Date and venue for 2023 Society AGM | Callum MacLeod |
| 12 | Closing remarks | Callum MacLeod |

2022 Officers' Conference – notes to go with the Agenda

Agenda Item 5 a) – Volunteers at branch and national level

The difficulty of recruiting volunteers to branch committees has been raised as an issue and discussed at this year's Regional Meetings. This has also been linked with an ageing membership, numbers at face to face meetings still not generally up to pre-pandemic levels amongst other things. Some branches are very concerned about their future due to a lack of new committee members coming forward. This is not unique to branches as there can be difficulties when seeking volunteers to fulfil national roles too. There has been no definitive answer to date so this is something that needs to be discussed further, solutions sought and, where possible, implemented.

Agenda Item 5 b) – Induction for new branch and national officers

It has been suggested both informally and at some Regional Meetings that it might be helpful to have some sort of induction for new branch officers. This would be in addition to making sure that all new officers or would-be officers are made aware of the Officers' Handbook and how to access it. There has been training for Branch Treasurers in the past as well as the Branch Treasurers Guidance Notes, and online training sessions for branch web coordinators together with online training videos. It appears that not everyone seems to be fully aware of these resources so what would help to make them more widely known and accessible? Are they comprehensive enough and are there any other training issues that you would like to see addressed?

Would national officers like to see something similar for the roles that they cover on behalf of the Society as a whole? If yes, what would help and in what format?

Agenda Item 5 c) – financial help for less well-off branches

This will be more difficult to discuss in the absence of the Society Treasurer who is unable to join us for the Officers' Conference this morning. However, the question has been raised about financial support for less well-off branches. There is covered within Treasurers' Guidance Note 4. It is not detailed as this allows each request to be considered on its merits and local circumstances. However, what has been raised now is that not all branches are eligible for financial help to send someone to the Officers' Conference whereas all branches can make a claim for reimbursement for Regional Meetings within clearly defined limits. Any financial commitment to encourage branches to attend Conference would be greater than for Regional Meetings so producing more pressure on the Society's central funds. Please discuss the pros and cons. Should the limit of uncommitted funds of more than £1500 be reviewed under the current wider financial climate?

Agenda Item 9 b)

The easiest way to explain the inclusion of this item is to copy exactly what was received.

As we lose members from illness and old age, info also gets lost. My thought is for there to be a History Section for members with some parts available to the general public. First Idea is a list with locations and dates of AGM's and Members weekends. This could be expanded to include places visited and photos with photos and names for group photo's.

Quite a lot of this information is readily available for more recent years but the rest, whilst probably on the record somewhere within the Society's Archive, would require some research. Do Officers feel that this is a worthwhile project and, if so, would they like to volunteer to either run or take part in it? This could be done by a small group with someone to coordinate efforts.