

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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Officers' Newsletter 232

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Dear All

The contents of this Officers' Newsletter are formal issues of a more serious nature. Please read it carefully, take note and ask if you are unsure.

Charitable Donations

It has been brought to my attention that some Branches and Society Officers are not entirely clear about what is or is not allowed regarding making charitable donations at Society events eg meetings and visits.

As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and a registered charity, we are only able to make donations to another charity that shares some or all of the same objects that we have in our Constitution. We cannot make donations to a charity that does not meet these criteria. In the past we have made or requested donations for other charities such as Railway Children but we can no longer do so since becoming a CIO. As an example of what we can do, if a speaker asks for a donation to their favoured charity and it does not share our objects, we cannot donate directly. However, if they request a fee for giving a presentation, then it is at their discretion what to do with their fee.

If we do not get this right, we may fall foul of the Charity Commission. If you are not sure about making a donation to another charity, please ask and we can check and advise if they meet the necessary criteria.

Laminated Signs

Reusable signage for meetings is very useful and I know that not all Branches have them. These are simple laminated A4 signs to include the RCTS logo, directional arrows and simple text such as: Meeting; Please use the Main/Side Door; Please Ring the Bell if the Door is Locked. Any version can be provided within reason. The advantage is that they can be used and reused many times over, can be fixed up temporarily using White or Blu Tack, and provide clear notice to people turning up at meetings that they are in the right place.

See Appendix 1 for some examples to give you an idea of what might be possible.

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

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with The Charity Commission. Registered number 1169995

This has been raised now as it has become clear that there is a need for a simple standard signage at meeting venues particularly where access and security might be an issue due to restrictions from the venue owners. Please contact me to discuss your requirements if you are interested.

Good Practice at Meeting Venues

“Everyone knows...” has been quoted when questions have been asked about accessing the meeting venue. Being faced with a closed or locked door and nothing to indicate that an RCTS meeting is taking place is not an encouragement for new members or visitors. A simple laminated sign (as described in the previous item) on the entrance door is enough to let people know that this is where the meeting is taking place.

We have to cater for newcomers and guests who are not regulars, may just have seen an advertisement somewhere, who may not be on a regular mailing list, or because there have been changes at the venue since they last visited. This is especially relevant if members and guests have to gain access within a building that houses several rooms/meeting spaces, and corridors, and/or has bells or locked doors to negotiate. I know there are difficulties with gaining access to meeting venues as I have encountered them myself more than once and it is vitally important to consider the new member or visitor if we would like them to become regulars.

Instructions should be clear, in advance of the meeting where possible, and there should be signage at the meeting venue. It is good practice to make sure that someone is at the entrance to greet and direct members and visitors to the meeting room. The person on the door does not have to be a committee member, and this is a good way to involve regular members in Branch activities as well as providing a welcome to all comers.

This is not intended as a criticism of any one particular Branch, just a reminder of good practice.

Meeting Reminders – Email and Text Messages - Good Practice

Please make sure that email reminders are bcc'd to all on the list and do NOT share everyone's email address with everyone else. Please take care with group text messages too. Sharing everyone's contact details is not only BAD practice but breaches the General Data Protection Regulation. Meeting reminders should be clear and not too long or complicated, to ensure that important details are not missed.

It is, of course, a great idea to send out meeting reminders so please keep up the good work, we just need to take care that it is done thoughtfully.

New Assistant Treasurer Branches

All Branch Treasurers will know by now that we have a new Assistant Treasurer Branches so please read the following message from Society Treasurer Reg Wood.

At the AGM last month, our Assistant Treasurer – Branches, (John) Eric Rattray, retired from his role so he could spend more time on his SLS commitments. We thank Eric for all his work for the national Society over many years. We look forward to continuing to liaise with him as Treasurer of Merseyside, Chester and North Wales Branch, and indeed with his SLS role going forward. Thank you so much, Eric!

The Society is fortunate that Chris Basford, of Croydon & South London Branch – member no 21984 - has volunteered to take over the reigns as Assistant Treasurer – Branches, and he has taken over the Society email address branchfinance@rcts.org.uk.

Chris's postal address is Tor Cottage, 106 Whyteleafe Hill, Whyteleafe, Surrey, CR3 0AE, and his telephone no is 0208 660 8622.

Branch Treasurers will not need reminding that Chris has taken over at a busy time with the Society's Half Year ending on 30 April, with the Branch Half Year Returns and VAT Claims to be prepared and sent over to the Assistant Treasurer – Branches. Please rest assured that returns sent to Eric or me will have been passed on to Chris for processing. From now on, please send your returns to Chris – thank you. I look forward to reporting on them to the Board of Trustees and claiming from HMRC on your behalf the VAT you have incurred locally. However, please bear with us if there has been a slight delay in paying out your Branch expense claims and VAT claims due to the transfer.

I thank Branch Treasurers and indeed all volunteer Branch officers for ALL your interest and efforts on behalf of the Society to lay on local services for members.

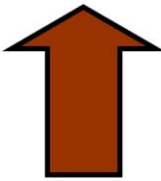
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If anything is unclear or you would like more information, please ask.

Kind regards

Irene

Appendix 1

 	 
	 
 When door is locked Please ring door bell	 PLEASE USE SIDE DOOR 
 PLEASE USE MAIN DOOR 	 PLEASE USE SIDE DOOR 