

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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Officers' Newsletter 240
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2026 AVRs – Branch nominations

It is that time of year when we ask all branches to send through their nominations for AVRs. Please could all branches send the names of their two nominees to liaison@rcts.org.uk **no later than 30th September**. Thanks to those of you who have already sent them through.

Officers' Conference – a message from the RCTS Chairman

It was recently announced that the Society was re-emphasising the availability of grant monies to assist Branches to invest in our future by undertaking investments that can generate membership growth, purchase updated audio-visual equipment and reimburse presenters' travel and accommodation costs to ensure there is no barrier to higher quality speakers. All are viable rationales for increasing the quality and attraction of our 'product' and growing the Society. This is in addition to the c. £66,000 held in Branch cash funds and a further £17,000 on deposit with the centre. In contrast, only a handful of branches have cash funds on their own account of less than £1,000.

At this year's Officers' Conference, we invite Branches (chairmen and deputies) to share your ideas for how we can make the best use of existing branch funds, and the provision of grants from central RCTS monies. How can we support the future development of Branches, and the hardworking committees who run them? What might be done to attract new members through an enhanced public profile? It might be achieved through hiring better quality speakers; taking out paid-for advertising in local newspapers and media to create a wider perception of our activities; or partnering with local heritage railways to help with their activities at the same time as ensuring the Society is publicised. You will also have your own ideas, and we are keen to share these and support each other.

Therefore, we ask that each Branch considers the following questions in advance of the Officers' Conference, and comes ready to share initial ideas for each:

- Identify two things which you would like to do to develop the work of your Branch - e.g. secure high-quality speakers, publicise meetings via new channels, or improve the experience in any other way?
- What would be the cost of these two things? Do you have Branch level funds? Or would part/full support from central RCTS funds make a difference?
- What difference would the proposed investment make? How will you know?
- How can the Society support you in taking these plans forward? How can Branches share lessons learned (what works, etc) with other Branches and society officers?

Branch AGM minutes

Could I please ask that any outstanding Branch AGM minutes from 2025 are sent to liaison@rcts.org.uk as soon as possible. If you're unsure whether you've already submitted them, I will be happy to confirm for you!

New members welcome discount

The Society is currently offering new members a welcome discount. First year's membership is £10 (online RO) £29 (printed RO, UK). New members are enrolled to the end of 2026. Details of the offer (which is now live) and joining instructions can be found at rcts.org.uk/join. It would be great if this offer could be promoted at Branch meetings. Information on renewals of existing memberships will be shared in due course.

Ipswich branch

Following the closure of the Society's Ipswich Branch earlier this year, there are a number of items of equipment available for use by other Branches:

- Kodak Carousel Slide Projector with three rotary magazines
- Hanimex Slide Projector
- 1 x 6 foot Screen
- 3 x Sales Stand table cloths
- 1 x 3 shelf collapsible book stand
- 1 x metal trolley - well used and barely practical
- 2 x Upright banners ... both damaged with the banners detached from the holding strip

Please contact liaison@rcts.org.uk to express an interest in acquiring any of these items. Please note that in each case, the items will need to be collected from Ipswich

Publicising meetings

With the start of the autumn season of talks, it is great to see the varied and interesting programmes on Branch web pages. A reminder that you if you need any guidance on promoting your meetings via the RCTS website or the Railway Observer, I can help point you in the direction of the best person to contact.

Outdoor visits programme

Chris Mathews – Outdoor Visits Coordinator, is keen to hear from branches about outside visits that they have planned or are considering arranging. Advance information on dates (or approximate dates) would be much appreciated. Chris would also value any help that Branches can offer with contacts in the rail industry or heritage railways that might be used to facilitate visits. You can reach Chris via outdoorvisits@rcts.org.uk

And finally ...

A reminder that the Officers' Handbook – available on the RCTS website ([members' area](#)) provides a comprehensive source of guidance on the running of Branches and training for committee roles.