

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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**Officers' Newsletter 242
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Society website – important update and request to all Branches

As you know, the current Society website will be replaced in 2026. The new site will include a simpler, more intuitive content management system (CMS), which we hope will make it easier for Branches to update and maintain their pages.

To help us make the transition as smooth as possible, we are asking each Branch to do two things:

1. Nominate a Branch website contact

This person will:

- receive updates on the project timeline (including when the current site is decommissioned);
- help ensure Branch pages are up to date before the transition; and
- coordinate arrangements for CMS training (more than one person may attend, but we need a single main contact).

Please email liaison@rcts.org.uk with the name of your Branch's website contact as soon as possible.

2. Ensure your current Branch page is fully up to date

In the runup to the transfer, please make sure your existing Branch page includes accurate meeting details and future events. These pages will be moved across to the new site, and having up to date information in place will help avoid any gap in the availability of meeting details while everyone becomes familiar with the new CMS.

If your Branch would be willing to help test the new website before launch, we'd be very grateful to hear from you.

Finally, please be reassured that no Branch content will be lost. Older material (such as historic meeting reports) will be moved into a digital archive.

John Worby Bequest – support for Branch initiatives

In Officers' Newsletter 241, the Chairman, James Milne, highlighted the availability of grant funding (including monies from the John Worby bequest) to help Branches invest in their future. This funding can support initiatives such as membership-growth activities, updated audio-visual equipment, and reimbursement of presenters' travel and accommodation costs to help attract high-quality speakers.

We now have a simple form (see [here](#)) that Branches can use to request funds. We've kept the information required to a minimum: we simply ask Branches to outline why funding is being sought, how it will be used, and the difference this investment is expected to make. If you have ideas but would find it helpful to talk them through or shape them into a specific request, please feel free to get in touch - I'm very happy to help. Completed forms should be sent to Chris Basford at branchfinance@rcts.org.uk).

Finance

Branch Officers will know that financial returns covering the first half (November 2025 - April 2026) of the 2025/26 year will shortly be due, preferably by 15th May. If there are any problems, either with this schedule or with preparation of the returns, please feel free to discuss with Chris Basford, the Assistant Treasurer (Branch Finances).

With the banks changes on accounts offered, branches may be looking at alternative bank accounts. When doing so, remember to apply as "RCTS XXX Branch", rather than RCTS. This should allow Branches to set up community accounts but not charity accounts. Community accounts allow for local bank signatories and control which Branches need (applying in the main Society name would see the bank requiring all the national Society trustees to be signatories on your accounts, not you). Community accounts usually incur a small monthly fee. Branch Treasurers having queries or experiencing problems please contact Chris Basford or Reg Wood.

Chris is branchfinance@rcts.org.uk or 020 8660 8622, and Reg is treasurer@rcts.org.uk or 0117 302 6634

AGM minutes

Many thanks to all those branches which have sent through copies of their 2025 AGM minutes to me. If your Branch has yet to do so, please could you send them as soon as practically convenient.

Risk assessments – request to check existing forms

Back in 2024 Branches were asked to complete risk assessments in relation to the venues used for meetings. We now need to ask you to review these risk assessments (the forms include a section for this) and to send the updated forms to me. Unless you are now using a new/additional venue there is no need to complete a new form – take the one you have already completed and use the final column to check whether the risks and mitigations remain satisfactory.

Branch Asset Register

A reminder that if your Branch purchases new equipment, please let me know so that this can be added to the information which we hold centrally (including for insurance purposes).

Society name badges

I hold a stock of these, and if your Branch needs any for your committee, please let me know and I will send them by post or, if convenient arrange to hand them over at a suitable meeting (e.g. the AGM).

Society leaflets

At a recent Board of Trustees meeting, we discussed what leaflets the RCTS currently produces, and what different parts of the Society mainly use them for. Does your Branch currently use any leaflets (e.g. membership leaflets) and what is most useful for you as a Branch? Information on this will help us plan which leaflets to produce in the future.

Outside visits

Chris Mathews continues to develop a programme of outside visits for the Society. Details are included in the monthly RO. Chris is also keen to liaise with Branches and promote the visits they may be organising. You can contact Chris at outdoorvisits@rcts.org.uk

Officers' conference minutes

Minutes of the 2025 Officers' Conference can be found [here](#). Thanks again to everyone who attended and contributed on the day or provided written input.

Society Insurance Certificate

Copies of the most up-to-date Society insurance policy certificate are available from myself if you need them.

Regional meetings

These will again be held in 2026 and details will be sent shortly direct to Branches.

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.