

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

Irene Rabbitts, 34 Victory Park Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AZ

Telephone: 01932 855015

e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

Officers' Newsletter 153

ANNUAL HONORARY MEMBERSHIP (AHL)

I am pleased to include some important information with this newsletter – a summary paper on proposals for a replacement for the former practice of awarding AHLs which, as you all know, had to be withdrawn once it became apparent that this had to be discontinued now that the RCTS has achieved Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status. By now you will all have had the chance to read the minutes from the Officers' Conference (OC) of 22 October 2017 – issued as Appendix 1 with Newsletter 151. The explanation and reasoning behind the ending of AHLs is included in Terence Jenner's report in the OC minutes so there is no need to repeat it here (Section 7, item 2 at the top of page 8). We are all still learning about the practical implications of becoming a CIO.

It is enough to say that the MC have been discussing in outline the possibilities for a replacement and the summary paper from Mike Robinson (Honorary Managing Editor, RO) in this Newsletter is the first on this subject to be shared with Branch Officers and, in this way, with the membership. It is hoped that a detailed paper will be available by the time of the Society AGM in Coventry on Saturday 28 April 2018.

Kind regards

Irene

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Recognition and Recompense of Semi-Permanent Volunteer Effort

Introduction

Following elimination of the AHM (Annual Honorary Membership) memberships as from Jan 2018, in January the Management Committee (MC) endorsed a paper by the RO Managing Editor outlining a revised method of recognising 'significant and continuous' voluntary effort in support of RCTS activities at both National and Branch levels.

The paper argued that to encourage and maintain voluntary commitment to key roles, ongoing voluntary effort in specifically designated formal roles over periods of not less than 12 months needs to be recognised by some form of recognition and recompense.

Whilst such acknowledgement could take the form of a specific monetary value paid in cash it considered it more sensible, as well as operationally practical, to reward individuals nominated for such consideration by providing them with full Society membership at a substantially reduced fee during their period of service. This was defined in the paper as an 'Active Volunteers Rate', or AVR.

Key Elements.

- Consideration for AVR would apply to all volunteers, both at National and Branch levels, who make a significant continuing contribution to the Society's day to day operations over the totality of the Society's financial year.
- At National level, all occupants of designated 'National Officer' roles sanctioned by the Management Committee and formally endorsed on an annual basis by the Trustees would be eligible and determination of eligibility would be the responsibility of the appropriate MC budget holder/supervisor.
- At Branch level, depending on local circumstances, occupants of up to two Branch officer roles would be eligible if proposed by the Branch Chairman, endorsed by Branch members at the Branch AGM, and approved by the MC through the Branch Liaison Officer.
- It is envisaged that a list of proposed AVR recipients would be compiled annually and presented to the Trustees for endorsement prior to the start of the annual subscription renewal cycle. Assuming Trustee approval, members thus eligible would have the reduced AVR subscription rate for the following year.
- Funding of AVR roles at National Level will be the responsibility of the MC and will be apportioned against the appropriate designated functional budgets i.e. Railway Observer, Publications, Library/Archive, Membership, Development, Finance/Overheads.
- Funding of AVR roles at Branch level will be a Branch Responsibility covered by Branch Funds.
- The most equitable form of recognition, as noted above, seems likely to be adoption of an additional AVR membership rate which is yet to be determined.

Development and Implementation.

In developing this approach to recognising significant voluntary effort, the MC is conscious of the major part played by volunteers in supporting the Society's operations. Regrettably, under the regulations governing operation of the Society's CIO status, the previous recompense involving AHM memberships was no longer deemed fit for purpose and had to be either abandoned or significantly revised. It is hoped that this new approach, which still requires some further development, will provide a basis for adequately recognising the role played by volunteers in the Society. The proposal will be presented in detail to the 2018 AGM and it is hoped that at that stage the membership will approve further development such that introduction in time for the next calendar year will be possible.

Mike Robinson

March 10th 2018