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BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

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Officers' Newsletter 165
(2 October 2018)

OFFICERS' CONFERENCE 2018

The agenda for the Officers' Conference is included as **Appendix 1** with this Newsletter. Please can all branch secretaries ensure that all delegates from their branch committee who are planning to attend receive a copy. Please remember to bring along copies of last year's Officers' Conference minutes which were sent out with Newsletter 151 in February of this year.

If anyone has an item for 'Any Other Business' could you please send details in writing to the Society Chairman - W Gordon Davies, 13 Blackthorn Close, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PY. His telephone number is 01244 520710 and his e-mail address is chairman@rcts.org.uk. Any items for possible inclusion should be e-mailed to Gordon or to me liaison@rcts.org.uk by noon on Tuesday 9 October 2018.

Appendix 2 to this Newsletter is the Branch Officers' Attendance Record which should be completed and passed to me before the Conference. Please would you indicate on the return any member who is attending Conference for the very first time. You can send your information by post, to my e-mail address, or leave a telephone message. Any apologies should also be included on the Attendance Record whether hard copy, e-mail, or telephone message. I know some people have already given acceptances and apologies and these have been noted but if you are not sure if the message has got through I would rather you did it again and duplicated than have it missed.

Any telephone/postal notifications will need to be with me by 09.00hrs on Wednesday 10 October, although I will be able to access email after that date (see above) or mobile telephone (07913 584990).

I doubt if we will succeed in representation from all branches this year although that is the ultimate aim but as many as possible would be welcome, so I look forward to receiving your notifications. As with the Regional Meetings this is to aid a two way conversation between Branches and Management Committee and for you to bring forward your ideas and concerns.

Regional Meetings – Summary and Précis

You will find as **Appendix 3** the Regional Meetings Summary for 2018. The Action Points column is as yet incomplete so once this has been updated it will be re-circulated which is likely to be after this year's Officers' Conference.

Appendix 4 is a précis of the Summary document highlighting the main points, but in an easier to read text format document. The blue writing on this document, if you read it in the 'coloured' version, are my comments and do not form part of the Summary.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to what, in my opinion, was the success of the 2018 Regional Meetings.

Armstrong Whitworth books

The last copies of the Armstrong Whitworth books from the central store have now been sold so this title is about to be withdrawn from advertising and from the website. The withdrawal has not been done yet as there are still a few copies with the branches. Any branches holding copies of the Armstrong Whitworth books should bring them to Bournemouth and pass them to David Bird who will be at the Members' Weekend and Officers' Conference. It is intended that these copies will be used to meet any final sales requests that come in via the website. Please do not forget to enter the details of any returned copies onto the branch publications return at the end of the current accounting period (31 October 2018).

RCTS Stationery

A quick reminder that any RCTS stationery requirements should be sent to Bob Ballard as soon as possible if you would like to pick up your order at the Members' Weekend.

Thank you.

Kind regards

Irene

RCTS
THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY

2018 OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

Sunday 14th October 2018 at 9.15a.m.

Marsham Court Hotel
3 Russell Cotes Road
East Cliff, Bournemouth
BH1 3AB

A G E N D A

1.	Opening of Conference by Society Chairman	**Gordon Davies**
2.	Apologies for Absence	**Irene Rabbitts**
3.	President's Address	**Brian Arman**
4.	Confirmation of Year 2017 Minutes (Previously Circulated with Newsletter 151 – February 2018)	**Gordon Davies**
5.	Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda	**Gordon Davies**
6.	Leatherhead Archive & Library	**Andy Davies**
7.	Society Finance.	**Reg Wood**
8.	The Railway Observer	**Mike Robinson**
9.	Development sub-committee	**Paul Chancellor**
10.	AHL Replacement Scheme	**Mike Robinson**
11.	Vision for the Future A session where each table has 5 minutes to come up with a Vision for the future including the 100 years celebration and present their findings.	**Irene Rabbitts**
12.	Publications	**David Bird**
13.	Discussion of Action Points from Regional Meetings	**Irene Rabbitts**
14.	Date & venue for 2019 Members' Weekend and OC	**John Day**
15.	Date & Venue for 2019 Annual General Meeting	**Gordon Davies**
16.	Any other competent business (Previously Notified)	**Gordon Davies**

A Tea & Coffee break will take place approximately half-way through the conference.

OFFICERS' CONFERENCE
BOURNEMOUTH 2018

Branch/Officer Attendance at Officers' Conference

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

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

Telephone: 01932 855015 -------------------- e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

The Branch/Officers' attendance record should be completed and passed to myself in advance or at the conference. This includes any apologies.

Please note that apologies must be tendered prior to the Officers' Conference by **09.00hrs on Wednesday 10th October** and my home number WILL NOT be actioned after that time, as I will not have access to those facilities. My mobile number is 07913 584990 and there is a voicemail facility if required. I should be able to access email so email apologies are possible although sooner rather than later in case I miss any late messages. You may leave messages with the hotel reception on 01202 446644 in the event of a late change of plan.

Please indicate any member who is attending Conference for the very first time.

BRANCH ………………………………………………………………………….

OFFICERS ATTENDING	First Time at the OC- √	APOLOGIES

	EMNESH	Great Western	London & South	Midland & North West	Northern Home Counties	MC Comments
MC Rep	**Reg Wood**	**Irene Rabbitts**	**Gordon Davies**	**Bob Green**	**Andy Davies**	
Branches Represented	East Midlands; Humberside; North East; Scottish; Sheffield; West Riding	Bristol; Cheltenham; South Wales; Thames Valley; not present West of England	Chichester, Croydon & South London; Solent; South East; Surrey; Windsor & Maidenhead; apologies - Sussex	Furness, Lakes & Lune; Lancashire & North West; Merseyside, Chester and North Wales; West Midlands	Cambridge; Hitchin; Ipswich; Milton Keynes; Northampton; Peterborough; South Essex; apologies - Watford;	
1 Matters arising from Local Minutes not covered by the Agenda	Nothing not already covered by this year's agenda	All matters arising covered under Previous Action Points	1 Continuing good health of Chichester Branch reported; publicity has paid dividends. 2 Surrey Branch has new audio equipment and is seeking a home for the old. As Chichester Branch has moved to a larger room they have accepted SRY Branch older system - collected after the meeting. 3 Query re charitable donations since we have achieved CIO status - confirmed this has been covered at the last Society AGM and recorded in the minutes.	1 90th Anniversary - no real celebration. 2 John Cashen advised of potential collaboration with RAIL magazine to improve their coverage of the North and so increase the RCTS profile with their readers.	None	
2 Previous Action Points from 2017	Nothing not already covered by this year's agenda	Action points reviewed, in particular: 1 Branch Officers Handbook - work continues on a revamp. When complete it will be issued online and so will be easier to update; 2 Web 4 - David Kelso has stepped down and David Jackman has taken over; 3 Roger Sandford has taken over as Publicity Officer.	1 Ideas for a better format for this summary document invited. 2 There was a query re the level of public liability insurance at exhibitions - Gordon Davies (WGD) will consult with John Redgate to clarify re level of cover now expected at some venues. 3 Good sales were reported on the 9Fs and the publication was now in reprint, and that books on the 'Royal Scots' and 'Patriot' classes are in preparation. 4 Gordon confirmed two loco nameplates owned by the Society are on display in a Sheffield Hotel and confirmed Society policy on displaying the collection in appropriate places and where adequate security is in place.	1 Officers Handbook – On IR's task list to revise. 2 Books - Patriots should be published later this year. 3 Archive at Leatherhead: RCTS now in possession. 12 year long project with a break clause after 6 years, to be funded in part by on-line sales. Desirous to close all other archive/storage facilities. Is Heritage Lottery funding a possibility? 4 OC - variable attendance by branches. Should be some sort of guidance to advise and/or request that all branches are represented. Similar comments for AGM. 5 FLL had difficulty getting branch news into the RO for some reason. 6 Disability access to indoor meetings - Geoff Brockett (for RO) and IR (as BL to be advised of suitability of venue.	Branch Officers Handbook is in process of updating by Irene Rabbitts; Roger Sandford is the new Publicity Officer; the new Archive and Library at Leatherhead Station is progressing.	Also under consideration is a similar handbook for MC members (ILR)
3 MC Rep presentation	1 LMS Pacifics and 9F reprint both selling well. 2 Patriot book should be available by Autumn. 3 Leatherhead Archive and Library - explanation as to why it has taken so long - complexity with so many parties involved. Issues now resolved with a 12 year lease with six Archivist now in possession of keys, shelving and fit out ordered, transfer of everything from existing locations to be completed by late Summer with the help of local volunteers. Concern about the need for the facility and the lack of info to members. 4 The Web4 project is proceeding led by David Jackman but completion unlikely before 2019. 5 186 new members were recruited during 2017 but this is less than 'natural wastage'. 6 The circumstances and reasons for the suspension of the B5 RO were explained. 7 Publicity is now handled by a new officer - Roger Sandford, and a new Branch Finance Officer - Eric Rattray, has been appointed to replace Bob Ellison. 8 The image library now has 45,000 images and the software changed to Zenfolio so it is now possible to order as you view. 9 The Cheltenham Branch arranged for a suitable commemorative plaque to be installed at Cheltenham Station to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the formation of the Society. GWR provided financial assistance with this event.	1 We now have the keys to the new Library and Archive at Leatherhead. Furniture and shelving has been ordered and a plan was circulated showing the layout. The next stage is to move the books and artefacts to Leatherhead with a target for opening in the Autumn. 2 The MC has set up a small Strategic and Procedural Review Committee to look at where the Society is going and how to move forward into the future. 3 Terence Jenner, who led the work to become a CIO, has had to step down due to ill health.	1 The practice of the National Chairman's report being published with the RO will continue. 2 All MC members and Trustees are on a steep learning curve adjusting to their new roles as part of the new CIO. 3 Terence Jenner's legal background had been invaluable in achieving CIO status but he has had to step down due to ill health. It was proposed and agreed that WGD should pass on everyone's best wishes. 4 An early access letter has been signed for Leatherhead. We have the keys and a 12 year lease has been agreed. Volunteers will be needed and all offers of help would be welcomed and passed to Andy Davies. (IR offered to circulate copy of plans to all at the meeting). 5 A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund is being considered to help fund the library/archive. 6 The Web4 project is now being managed by David Jackman and should be up and running in early 2019. Newletters should be available online as part of the project. 7 Digitising the RO will continue with the establishment of the Archive and Library at Leatherhead. 8 WGD was delighted at the appointment of IR as the first lady on the MC. 9 A Strategic and Procedural Review is now under way. 10 A new Publicity Officer has been appointed - Roger Sandford, but there is a need for a Marketing Officer as well.	1 Long delays with Web4 and a personnel change, but DJ progressing well with completion scheduled in early 2019. 2 RO B5 size - subject of much controversy. Idea not dead but costs not fully understood by MC. Would need approval by an AGM so January 2020 would be the earliest possible change. 3 Recruitment is poor with a slow but steady reduction in member numbers. 4 Communication - presumption of communciation by email which leaves DM without the means to carry out his role correctly. 5 Strategy/Procedures - MC undertaking a review. AS raised question of independence of the review. 6 Plaque installed on Cheltenham Station for 90th Anniversary.	1 APD advised that all MC/Trustees are still learning about what is required from us by the Charity Commission now that we are a CIO. It would be advisable for branches to quote our Charity Number on all communications and documents. 2 The Society now has a 12 year lease with 6 year break clause on the premises at Leatherhead. Everything (furniture etc) is on order to proceed once the lease has been signed. There will be a formal opening later this year in the Autumn. 3 David Jackman is now working on the new website himself rather than using BlueGreen. 4 Irene Rabbitts is the Society's new Branch Liaison Officer. 5 The new Strategic and Procedural Review Committee held their first meeting on 2 May 2018. 6 The following points were raised from this report: a) SL raised the matter that fire doors with automatic closers should be fitted throughout at Leatherhead and notices that door wedges should not be used; b) Bob Ballard asked if there were any members under 30 which led to a discussion about membership; c) New publicity material needs to be produced follwing the opening of Leatherhead.	By the time you read this the Archive and Library move to Leatherhead should be complete. (APD)

	EMNESH	**Great Western**	**London & South**	**Midland & North West**	**Northern Home Counties**	**MC Comments**
4 GDPR - Guidance for branches and what it means in practice, including discussion on the updated Privacy Policy	Contacting members and others whose email details are held at branch level must be completed within the Regulation's timescales. Contact of others without email addresses is recommended as part of the Summer newsletter process. The Society also holds privileged information which is only held in a separate password protected database to which only 3 officers have access.	Officers' Newsletter 158 provides guidance for RCTS branches and a revised RCTS Privacy Policy. The immediate concern is the need for members to opt-in to receive emails. Not all members on email groups have responded to the request to opt-in, meaning that the email contact with them will be lost. At Bristol members were happy to sign up to receiving emails at the branch meeting.	1 All agreed that the guidance had been very useful. IR reminded all that records must be kept of people consenting to their personal details being held, although no specific format has been prescribed. 2 WGD asked that the next Branch Officers Newsletter due to be sent out in June should ask branches whether they are now compliant with the GDPR requriements as set out in Newsletter 158. 3 WGD reassured the meeting that only three members of the Society have access to the complete personal details of members (viz WGD,Bob Green, D Goddard). 4 S Ollive reminded the meeting that the distribution of new members' details to individual branches and the sending of electronic communcations from national level is covered by teh contract that new members sign up to when joining the Society. 5 WGD reminded all that it was common courtesy, quite apart from any legal obligation, to ask a speaker's permission before passing on their contact details to another branch.	Branches advised the following: FLL - had emailed everyone they had an address for, 41 positive responses from 75; MCNW - letters sent to all with 39 positive responses, at some cost; WM - no action undertaken as branch do not hold digital information on branch members; LNW - No action undertaken; JCa raised question of where is the guidance as to what happens to members who do not agree - do they still get the RO etc? There was a general belief that this was a national rather than a branch level matter particularly in view of the information held digitally nationally.	All branches in attendance had plans in place to deal with this requirement.	The legislation applies to the Society as a whole INCLUDING the branches. This means that branches are responsible for ensuring compliance at branch level.
5 Special Membership Offer - promotion at the branches	The new Special Membership Offer was noted but there was limited opportunity for some branches to promote it due to the lack of Summer meetings. The June start date meant that promotion at exhibitions held in May (Derby) would not be possible.	Concerned about falling membership, the MC has agreed a 90th Anniversary Free Membership offer for anyone joining from June to October 2018. Branches are asked to promote the offer which will appear in the national railway press. The cost to the Society will be small and the hope is that a proportion of the new members will renew at the end of the year. There is a need to offer something for new members both young and old so that the Society can continue to the 100th Anniversary.	The offer was discussed and received positive endorsement from all present. There was a need for branches to be pro-active in publicising this offer. I Rabbitts agreed to ask D Jackman to add a pop-up window to the relevant part of the website. (*Following the meeting the Special membership Offer was publicised by DJ on the front page of the RCTS website*)	1 Concern raised as to the negative effect the change from free to full membership would have on all the new free members. 2 John Cowlishaw outlined the poor membership benefits outline on hand-out where only the first point was genuinely valid. Need to consider the actual benefits of membership ie discounts on various items.		
6 Retaining existing and new members - including a replacement for the former AHL. What can we do to achieve this?	It was agreed that the proposed AHL scheme required further thought before implementation even if it was agreed as desirable. The way the previous arrangements were withdrawn without notification of affected members was unsatisfactory. Points to consider: 1 Funding by individual branches; 2 One or two officers - probably Secretary and Treasurer; 3 Subscription for membership only ie free RO - around £5.00? 4 Timescales - must be agreed at 2019 Society AGM and a need for common branch AGM month (October) as recipient could change and details have to be provided to the Membership Officer before the renewals process commences; 5 Cumbersome - previous arrangements simple. Is there a real need if officers are correctly recompenses for expenses eg stationery, postage etc?	As far as the branches are concerned, some of the work of the Secretary and Treasurer is in support of the MC and the Society at a national level. This includes but is not restricted to: 1 forwarding membership applications and handling subscription monies; 2 completing accounts and forwarding them to the Society Treasurer in line with CIO and Charity Commission requirements; 3 ensuring minutes of committee meetings are properly prepared and retained in line with CIO guidelines; 4 arranging annual branch AGM; 5 receiving requests for comment from the MC and gathering responses for return. **Replacement for AHL** The former system for rewarding branch secretaries has been withdrawn and cannot be replaced. It is accepted by all that the withdrawal was poorly handled but that is in the past. The proposal, backed unanimously by branch delegates to the GW Regional Meeting, is that honorary membership for branch officers be withdrawn and replaced by the ability of branch secretaries and treasurers to claim expenses for their work which relates to the Society at a national level. Such expenses would be claimed from the Society Treasurer. Expenses for the work of secretaries and treasurers at branch level, and indeed any other branch officals would be claimed from the branch. It is envisaged at the moment that claims would be made for such items as: 1 postage and stationery costs; 2 mileage and other transport costs; 3 items related to the use of PC including paper, printer cartridges etc; 4 telephone and other communications charges. Guidelines would have to be established for items to be claimed, all claims would be supported by receipts and would be subject to scrutiny by the National Treasurer.	The meeting discussed how voluntary effort should be recognised within the Society. It was generally agreed that awarding free membership to just one officer (previously the Branch Secretary) was invidious and did not reflect the reality that in most, if not all, branches it was a team effort. The meeting considered that awards should not be routinely given for voluntary effort at any level in the Society as most members give voluntarily and freely of their time for the benefit of their branch and the Society. However, the principle of recognising exceptional or meritorious service was a valid one. The meeting resolved that the MC should revisit the whole issue of granting Annual Honorary Membership and what, if anything, should replace it. Making people feel welcome at meetings, and particularly new people who had come on their own, was seen as vital in encouraging them to keep attending and ultimately be persuaded of the benefits of joining the Society.	1 MCNW treasurer had advised that there was a disincentive for branches to recruit members as, if they paid 'admissions' (or premium admissions) then the branch got the money, if they became members the branch lost out. FLL agreed with this comment. 2 General issue with declining membership that did need addressing. 3 There was a 66% retention from the £15 initial offer which was agreed as successful. 4 Proposed hand-out for Crewe open day etc must have all venues to show the extent of RCTS geographic coverage. **AHL** 1 50% discounts were considered appropriate. 2 Consider that two discounted memberships were appropriate but that the branch committee/AGM would agree as to how they were allocated as various branch officials do different workloads. Default position would be Secretary and Treasurer as their workload is considered to benefit the national organisation. 3 Any process of branches claiming the discounted membership back was not considered the correct methodology.	1 A lengthy discussion was held about those members who had been granted honorary membership for the work they do within the Society, this was brought about again, as we are now following the guidelines of the Charity Commission. This was explained well to members by Andy Davies and Bob Ballard. 2 No definitive measures could be found as to what was required to retain members once they had joined. It appeared to the same discussion members had within their own branches on the same subject.	There is a need to keep any replacement system for AHL simple and to avoid any potential problems with regards to VAT liability. All suggestions will be considered subject to the above caveats. (ILR)
7 Regional Chairs and Minute Takers	The proposed system was agreed. Malcolm Hammond volunteered to be Chairman in 2019 and 2020 and Rodney Allen to be Minute Secretary for 2019 only.	There is a suggestion that the position of Regional Meeting Chairmen and Minute Takers should be held in rotation. While this might suit some Regional Groups, the existing arrangement that Bristol Branch provides the Chairman and Secretary and arranges the meeting in a central location works for this Regional Meeting.	It was agreed that people are far more likely to take on these roles if they are strictly time limite. I Rabbitts/R Ashby/G May will refine the possible options and propose a way forward ahead of the 2019 Regional Meeting for the London & South Region.	John Cowlishaw to be chair in 2019 (chair for 2018) with Alan Sattenstall volunteering to take over in 2020.	Within this group we were happy to carry on the same basis as we have used over the previous years. We thought that anyone within the room and with knowledge of how the Society worked could do the job. Both our Chairman and Minute Taker were happy to carry on for at least another two years.	Regions are free to choose to continue either with present arrangements or with the new proposal as suits each particular Regional Meeting. (ILR)

	EMNESH	Great Western	London & South	Midland & North West	Northern Home Counties	MC Comments
8 Communication and Openness	It was agreed that communication from the MC had been poor at times but was now improving. Publication of Minutes has to be within practical timescales. A brief summary was also suggested.	The proposal that minutes of any MC and sub-committee meetings should be made available to members on the membership pages of the website was welcomed. A synopsis of MC meetings could be issued followed by more detail later. The Newsletter could be used to make members aware that minutes were available on the website.	The meeting agreed that the more the better but that in certain situations redaction of minutes or other documents may be justified.	1 MC minutes to be published in members section of website when agreed. 2 General change to increased openness by MC.	It was unanimously agreed that all minutes of meetings should be available to members and displayed on the website. There were just the odd exception such as when discussing a person or personal proposal such as someone being nominated for Honorary Life Membership.	
9 Is the RO the right forum for very public discussion of possibly contentious issues, or the propagation of misleading and sometimes defamatory information?	1 All agreed that the RO was not the right forum for political issue matters within the Society. It was having a negative effect on membership and may contribute to lost renewals. The April 2018 RO and three issues in 2017 have not been in packs used to promote new membership. 2 There needs to be oversight of the content of letters before publication by a senior member of the MC who is not involved in the preparation of the RO including the right of reply by individuals named.	The meeting felt that the in-fighting that has appeared in the RO in recent months is unacceptable and should stop. This unpleasantness has caused some members to consider resigning and will deter new members from joining. It is also adversely impacting members of the MC who give of their time for the Society. The RO is an excellent publication which should have a balanced approach avoiding contentious issues.	The meeting agreed that the airing of recent contentious issues inside the RO was not appropriate, particularly as complimentary copies of the magazine were offered to potential recruits.	1 Agreed that the RO letters page was not the place for contentious discussion. 2 If a contentious letter was to be published then the same magazine was to also contain a formal response adjacent. 3 Acknowledged there was little alternative means of voicing criticism. 4 Letters had been damaging to membership.	The group here were in total agreement that the letters and comments published recently should NOT have appeared. The whole affair should have been resolved in committee or such comments properly edited. We deplore the fact that the RO was used in this manner.	Little means of voicing criticism - something for the Strategic and Procedural Review Committee to look at perhaps? (ILR)
10 A Vision for the Future. Where do you see the Society in 10 years' time which will be its Centenary? What would you like to see as we move forward from the 90th Anniversary eyar to our next major anniversary at 100 years old, and how do you see us achieveing this?	It was felt that there would be a natural progression with the changing technology and the demographic effect of an aging membership. There is a need to urgently recruit many younger members willing to assist in running branches if the existing structure is to be maintained.	It was felt that a key element of the RCTS is the friendship of members with a shared interest and as long as this is maintained the Society will flourish. As the Library and Archive at Leatherhead are developed this should become an important national facility. It was noted that the Society does not have a patron. Perhaps a suitable 'Royal' or celebrity could be engaged to take on that role and increase the presence of the Society. Although a Network Rail powercar carries the RO nameplate, there has never been an RCTS nameplate carried on a locomotive. If this could be achieved it would help to advertise the Society.	All were asked to discuss at local branch level where they see the Society in 10 years time in its Centenary Year and how this could be achieved. Ideas should be fed back to IR and will be further discussed at the OC this coming October.	1 It was agreed that the basic aim for the next 10 years was the survival and thriving of the Society. 2 Highly likely that there would be a reduction in membership numbers. 3 Agreed that the 45-55 age group may well be the age group to target (the 1980s platform enders). 4 RCTS best advantage is its national coverage. 5 Very difficult to communicate wtih under 30 year olds. 6 Afternoon meetings are no good for workers and it is workers we need to recruit. 7 A good presence on social media was imperative to recruit a younger age group and this was the measure considered to be required by the RCTS to boost its profile. However, only AS knew anything about its workings!!!	1 Could the Society get a high profile person or celebrity to help with the promotion of the Society, having recently lost members such as Sir Bill McAlpine and Dick Hardy? 2 Advertising in railway journals should continue although it is so difficult to quantify results.	
11 Joint advertising of meetings with other branches in the same area or region.	There is limited opportunity in this region in view of the distance between branch venues. However, information on suitable speakers was exchanged between other branches when appropriate.	A sample flyer advertising branch meetings local to an exhibition has been produced. This could be a useful advert for the Society at exhibitions with larger visitor numbers.	R Ashby said that Chichester Branch plan to have a presence at the Chichester Model Railway Exhibition on 20 October 2018 and asked if the Society retractable display banners were available for such an event. I Rabbitts said she would check the situation with Bob Ballard and let RA know the outcome. (*Info has been passed on as requested; David Elsdon - Society Exhibitions Officer is the contact so this has been corrected*).	Agreed that programmes should be shared between LNW and both MCNW and FLL as their areas overlapped. WM considered as not close enough except possibly with Northampton. Branch boundaries discussed as WM felt they were poor for their area. Discussed holes in branch areas without branch meetings and what the competition was - perhaps an item for next year's RM after better research? Desire to close a gap in the Stoke area.	1 Branches here agreed we do share information between us and with other railway style groups (LCGB, SLS etc) but this still has quite a limited success. 2 At this point the Chairman invited members from each branch present to give a short presentation on their branch activities and progress over the past 12 months.	
12 Any Other Business.	None	RCTS stand at GWRS Toddington There will be a stand at the GWRS Diesel Gala at Toddington on 28 July 2018 where it is planned to give out lots of free membership details between 10am and 3pm. Any help from neighbouring branches would be appreciated.	1 J Holloway informed the meeting that SE Branch had organised an outing to the IOW Steam Railway on 26 May that had attracted a total of 53 participants. 2 G May requested that an addendum to the minutes be made regafding his suggestion made over lunch that the relevant TOC be contacted re the possibility of adding a board below the main running-in boards at Leatherhead Station advertising the RCTS Library. I Rabbitts agreed to pass this on to Andy Davies for further consideration. (*Following the meeting this has been passed on to AD although there are concerns that it could be costly.)*	How is your branch doing? (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats - 'SWOT' analysis) **Strengths** **FLL** 30-35 at meetings; advertising meetings on local railway Facebook pages; flyers at stations, CABs and libraries (cost £100 for 2000) which is made up by admissions; good web page; admission donations - £2 members, £4 non-members. **MCNW** 27-30 at meetings; currently free admission to members at meeting (subject to review); Liverpool afternoon meetings going well - requested £2.00 donation for non-members. **WM** Committee functions well; meeting donations £2 members, £3 non-members; Coventry 30-35, £45 for room hire; good relationship with Severn Valley Railway - leaflets in Engine House Museum (but only WM fixtures!) **LNW** Supplying photos to the RO. **Weaknesses** **FLL** Failure to get committee members; not recruiting members (high % visitors); but note earlier comments on benefits to branch of so doing. **MCNW** Abysmal at publicity (ie none). **WM** BHM meetings 20, £25 for the room. **LNW** 15-20 at meetings, donations £2 members, £3 non members, £20 for the room. **Opportunities** **FLL** - ?? **MCNW** **WM** - Attending more exhibitions but not enough to staff. **LNW** - Closer collaboration with the Ribble Railway. **Threats** **FLL** - age profile; rural area; failure to attract young people. **MCNW** - age profile; committee membership. **WM** - problems with Coventry venue hopefully now sorted; aged committee; lack of workers at meetings. **LNW** - lack of committee members.	A question was raised about data protection on the membership form regarding skills etc. Also a question about insurance on branch equipment such as computers and projectors. This was answered by Andy Davies stating that as long as the equipment had been registered with the Society, this was then covered by the Society's overall insurance policy.	1 As there is clearly an interest in discussing at the Regional Meetings how individual branches are doing and it has been requested that this subject is included on the agenda again in future, it will be included again as a separate item on the agenda for next year's Regional Meetings. (ILR) 2 Insurance claims are subject to a policy excess of £250 (ILR)

	EMNESH	Great Western	London & South	Midland & North West	Northern Home Counties	MC Comments
13 Date, time and place of next meeting.	Date 9 May 2019 Time 11am Place Edmondson Room , NRM, York	Date Saturday 8 June 2019 Time 12 noon Place provisionally at The Royal Hotel, Bath	The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Surrey Branch reps for organising the day including refreshments. It was agreed that Woking remains a good venue for the meeting and, on behalf of Surrey Branch, P Bosomworth agreed to book the Maybury Centre for next year. Date Saturday 11 May 2019 Time 11am Place Maybury Centre, Woking	Date May 2019 Time 1200 - 1600 and mid-week 'OK' Place to be confirmed	Date 11 May 2019 Time 1100hrs Place Digswell Village Church	

Précis of Summary Document - Regional Meetings 2018

On a positive note all branches except for one were either present or gave apologies.

There was some disappointment about the lack of celebration of the Society's 90th Anniversary to date.

It seems clear that it is high time that a revised and updated version of the Branch Officers Handbook is issued. *(I have started work on this but it may take a while depending on RCTS workload. This means that it is likely to come out one section at a time.)*

Everyone welcomed Roger Sandford as the new Publicity Officer and Eric Rattray as the new Assistant Treasurer – Branches (taking over from Bob Ellison). We are still looking to appoint a Marketing Officer.

News on Web4 is eagerly awaited and it is hoped that this will be ready in early 2019.

There is keen interest in the new Archive and Library at Leatherhead now that the project is finally coming to fruition and will soon be officially open and available for all.

There are still some concerns about the implications of CIO status but it has been pointed out that the Charity Commission are happy to answer queries and work with us.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force in May this year is applicable both to the Society as a whole AND also to the branches. So it is important that branches do their best to comply with the Regulation and the guidance already issued and available on the RCTS website.

There has been a mixed reception to the 90th Anniversary Special Membership Offer available from 1 June 2018 to 31 October 2018 offering free membership to the end of 2018. Some branches have pointed out that they will lose out financially as donations for meetings are either lower or free to members. So they will have to provide facilities for more members without any accompanying additional income to cover these costs.

A difficult question as all would like to see the Society flourish and grow.

It was also felt that the timing of the information about the offer to branches could have been better as it was announced at around the time that most branches have a Summer break from indoor meetings and exhibitions. This did not allow many branches to promote the offer as they would have liked where it was possible for it to be supported.

There was discussion of supporting existing members, and encouraging members joining under the Special Offer to renew for 2019. With this goes the need to update and improve the current leaflet on what the Society has to offer - it is understood that this has been held back awaiting information about the opening of the new Archive and Library at Leatherhead.

A replacement for the former Annual Honorary Membership was discussed with the main complaint that the withdrawal of the previous arrangement was badly done. Several different replacement options were forthcoming from direct claiming by branches of what was felt to be national level expenditure, to no replacement at all except in very exceptional circumstances, with a number of options somewhere in between as well. There were comments that the previous system was simple but that ideas for a replacement to date appeared to be more cumbersome.

Where the current arrangements for Chairmen and Minute Takers for the Regional Meetings are working well for that group, this will continue. The idea about Regional Chairmen and Minute Takers being set on a time limited basis has been agreed as a possible solution where the current arrangements have had to be reviewed.

Publication of MC and sub-committee minutes on the members' pages of the website was welcomed. A synopsis was generally agreed to be sufficient with redactions of sensitive or personal information where necessary.

Everyone agreed that the RO was an excellent magazine. However, it was also agreed that it was not the place to air internal Society political issues and infighting. No-one wanted to see an end to the 'Letters to the Editor' section just that internal politics, personal comments and in-fighting should not be published unless there was a right to reply in the same edition as the complaint to try to ensure fairness, accuracy and balance.

In line with this, it was highlighted that there is very little opportunity for dissatisfied members to air their concerns. *(Something for the Strategic and Procedural Review Committee to look at perhaps?)*

A Vision for the Future. This ranged from all the good things about the Society not least the friendships and shared interests. It was generally accepted that there would be changes with updated technology and that we need more younger members to flourish into the future. An advantage with the RCTS is its national coverage. It was suggested that we might look for a high profile person, celebrity or even royalty to become a patron and/or help with promoting the Society.

Joint advertising of meetings can be a plus and is already done to some extent, although in some areas this is difficult due to geographical location. This led to discussion of the current branch boundaries, regional boundaries and the suggestion that it was time to review these. This included where meetings are currently held as there are some real gaps in provision in some areas. *(Something for the Development Committee, Branch Liaison Officer and Membership Secretary to work on?)*

There were queries on a number of other subjects including insurance for branch equipment and the level of public liability cover at exhibitions as some exhibition organisers are now requesting really high levels of cover over and above what the Society's current policy offers. There was also discussion about accessibility and Society publications.

As the request has come from a number of branches both via the Regional Meetings minutes and elsewhere, the subject of how the branches are doing will be back on the Agenda for next year's Regional Meetings.

Regional Meetings are all about the branches, getting together to discuss what is going on locally and in your regions, what is going on nationally, and to provide an all important link to feed back between branches and MC for the good of all.

Please note - this is only a short version of discussions at the 2018 Regional Meetings so does not contain all the details of the conversations or minutes which are available separately and in the full Summary document.

ILR updated 23-8-2018