

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

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Officers' Newsletter 179

corrected update 6 October 2019

2019 Officers' Conference

This is to be held on Sunday 20 October 2019 at the Holiday Inn Leicester, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester LE1 5LX starting promptly at 09.15. The hotel does not have its own car park, however, there is a large NCP car park located next to the hotel – see accompanying map for the hotel location. The hotel is indicated by the arrow and the red spot is Leicester railway station.

You will find the Conference Agenda with accompanying notes attached to this newsletter as **Appendix 1**. Please will branch secretaries or other designated branch officers receiving this newsletter make sure that all delegates from their branch committees who are planning to attend receive a copy. Minutes from last year's Conference were sent out with Newsletter 169 in December 2018 so please make sure you either bring them with you or ensure that you are fully aware of the content if attending. A copy of Newsletter 169 can be forwarded as an email attachment on request if necessary.

Please send any items for 'Any Other Business' to the Society Chairman – W Gordon Davies, 13 Blackthorn Close, Broughton, Cheshire 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 by noon on Wednesday 16 October 2019.

Appendix 2 to this Newsletter is the Branch Officers' Attendance/Apologies Record which should be completed and passed to me before the Conference. Please would you indicate on the attendance return any member who is attending Conference for the very first time. You can send your information by post, by e-mail liaison@rcts.org.uk, or leave a telephone message – contact details at the top of the Newsletter. Any apologies should also be included on the Attendance Record whether hard copy, e-mail, or telephone message.

Any telephone/postal notifications will need to be with me by 09.00hrs on Wednesday 16 October 2019, although I should be able to access email after that date (see above) or mobile telephone 07913 584990.

Appendix 3 is a map showing the location of the Holiday Inn Leicester, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester LE1 5LX which is the location for the Officers' Conference.

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

Regional Meetings – Summary and Précis

This will be sent out shortly after this newsletter as I am currently experimenting with the format to try and make it more easily readable/printable. I am hoping to include the Actions Points column at the same time rather than send out a revised Summary at a later date as happened last year.

Safeguarding Policy

With greater awareness these days of safeguarding issues with regards to children, young people and vulnerable adults, it is becoming increasingly important for organisations such as ours to have a Safeguarding Policy so that people know what to do if they are faced with a situation where someone may be at risk. The Society's Management Committee and Trustees have now agreed a Safeguarding Policy which is attached to this Newsletter as **Appendix 4**. Please read it, take note and make sure that all members, including all your branch members, read it and understand it – it is the responsibility of all of us. The policy is quite short and, I hope, clear and straight forward. If you have any queries about it, please ask.

Officers Handbook

At long last there is some good news of what has now become the Officers Handbook rather than the former Branch Officers Handbook. You will see a number of changes when you read it as it has been widened to include more information on National Officer as well as Branch Officer roles and a number of other additional items that should be useful to all Society Officers. As well as the previous information, it has been fully updated to include more information on Society national events (AGM, Members' Weekend and Officers' Conference), Regional Meetings, Guidance Notes for Branches, Policies, commonly used abbreviations, as well as a number of other Society documents so that they are more easily accessible in one place.

As requested there is a page showing Revision Data ie the dates of any updates or revisions and what has been updated. It was not possible in the end to include this right at the beginning of the Handbook but it is shown as Revision Data – currently Section 15 in the Contents listing which is at the front of the book.

The pdf is being sent to the webmaster for uploading onto the website this week so, barring any technical problems, you will be able to access it as soon as it has been uploaded. The Handbook will only be available in electronic format on the website as it is now more extensive than before making hard copy and postage uneconomic. The advantage of an electronic format is that it is easier to make the updates and you can still print off any individual pages if you need to do so.

There is a competition with a prize for the first person to correctly identify a typing error – there is almost certainly going to be one that was missed! If you find one, please email me with the precise details so that it can be corrected and the prize can be awarded.

I hope you find the above information and the appendices useful. Please ask if you have any queries about any of the content and I will do my best to answer.

Kind regards

Irene

Appendix 1



OFFICERS' CONFERENCE
Sunday 20 October 2019 at 9.15am

Holiday Inn Leicester
St Nicholas Circle, Leicester LE1 5LX
AGENDA

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | Opening of Conference by Society Chairman | Gordon Davies |
| 2 | Apologies for absence | Irene Rabbitts |
| 3 | President's Address | to be read out by Reg Wood |
| 4 | Confirmation of 2018 Minutes
(previously circulated with Officers Newsletter 169 –
December 2018) | Gordon Davies |
| 5 | Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda | Gordon Davies |
| 6 | Leatherhead Archive and Library
(a short presentation on current progress) | Andy Davies |
| 7 | Society Finance | Reg Wood |
| 8 | New Website | David Jackman |
| 9 | Development Committee | to be read out by Irene Rabbitts |
| 10 | The Railway Observer | Mike Robinson |
| 11 | Publications Committee | David Bird |
| 12 | Delegate discussion in groups re:
a) branch committee meetings and branch committees
– see Note 12a)
b) Society News – see Note 12b) | Irene Rabbitts |
| 13 | Discussion of Action Points from Regional Meetings | Irene Rabbitts |
| 14 | Date and venue for the RCTS 2020 Members'
Weekend | Roger Newman |
| 15 | Date and venue for the RCTS 2020 Annual General
Meeting | Gordon Davies |
| 16 | Any other competent business (previously notified) | Gordon Davies |

Notes to go with the agenda

12a)

i) **Branch committee meetings**

The current Rules of the Society state that branch committees should hold at least 4 committee meetings each year, one of which can be the branch AGM (Annual General Meeting). This can present practical problems for some branches where committee members may be widely dispersed or some committee members work shifts that are difficult to coordinate with the availability of other committee members. The Society Rules do not prescribe the form that the meetings should take and one suggestion is a form of 'virtual' meeting that may be conducted by email or similar. Delegates may have additional ideas. The important criterion to remember is that there is a proper record of discussions and a proper record of decisions made.

Please discuss the options and any short guidelines that might be useful in practice to ensure that we can all match the requirements of the Rules.

ii) **Branch Committees and Rule 3 b)**

This restricts the size of branch committees to a maximum of 7 which must include Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. There are some branches that have larger committees that work well. Do delegates feel that this restriction needs to be lifted bearing in mind that getting committee members, rather than restricting their numbers, is a more common difficulty?

If it is agreed that the restriction should be lifted, should Rule 3 b) be re-written eg as follows:

"Each branch should be administered by a committee comprising a minimum of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer elected annually from amongst its members."

If it is agreed that Rule 3 b) should remain unchanged, what would you do about branches where the committee comprises more than 7?

12b)

Society News

Some members have suggested, informally, that they would like more Society news. While they are aware of "Talking Points", "Observers Diary", short branch reports on meetings/other activities in The Railway Observer (RO), as well as information appearing on the Society's website, some have expressed the opinion that they would like to see more Society news and information particularly in the RO as this is the one document that goes out regularly to all members each month including those who do not access the website. There might be several ways to do this that would need to be approved by the Management Committee working with the Managing Editor. If you would like something like this, then clear suggestions as to what you would like to see are required, as well as a commitment to provide the material for publication. If you are happy with the way things are, please confirm this.

There is a caveat - delegates should bear in mind that to make anything like this work, members and branches will need to be clear about exactly what they want, make a good case that it should go ahead and, more importantly, will need to contribute any additional information and meet the editorial deadlines. The RO editorial team have plenty to do already and it would be unfair and unreasonable to expect them to produce any additional material themselves or have to chase up on items that have not been submitted on time.

Appendix 2



OFFICERS' CONFERENCE LEICESTER 2019

Branch/Officer Attendance at Officers' Conference

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

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Telephone: 01932 855015

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The Branch/Officers' attendance record should be completed and passed to the Branch Liaison Secretary in advance or at the conference including apologies for those unable to attend.

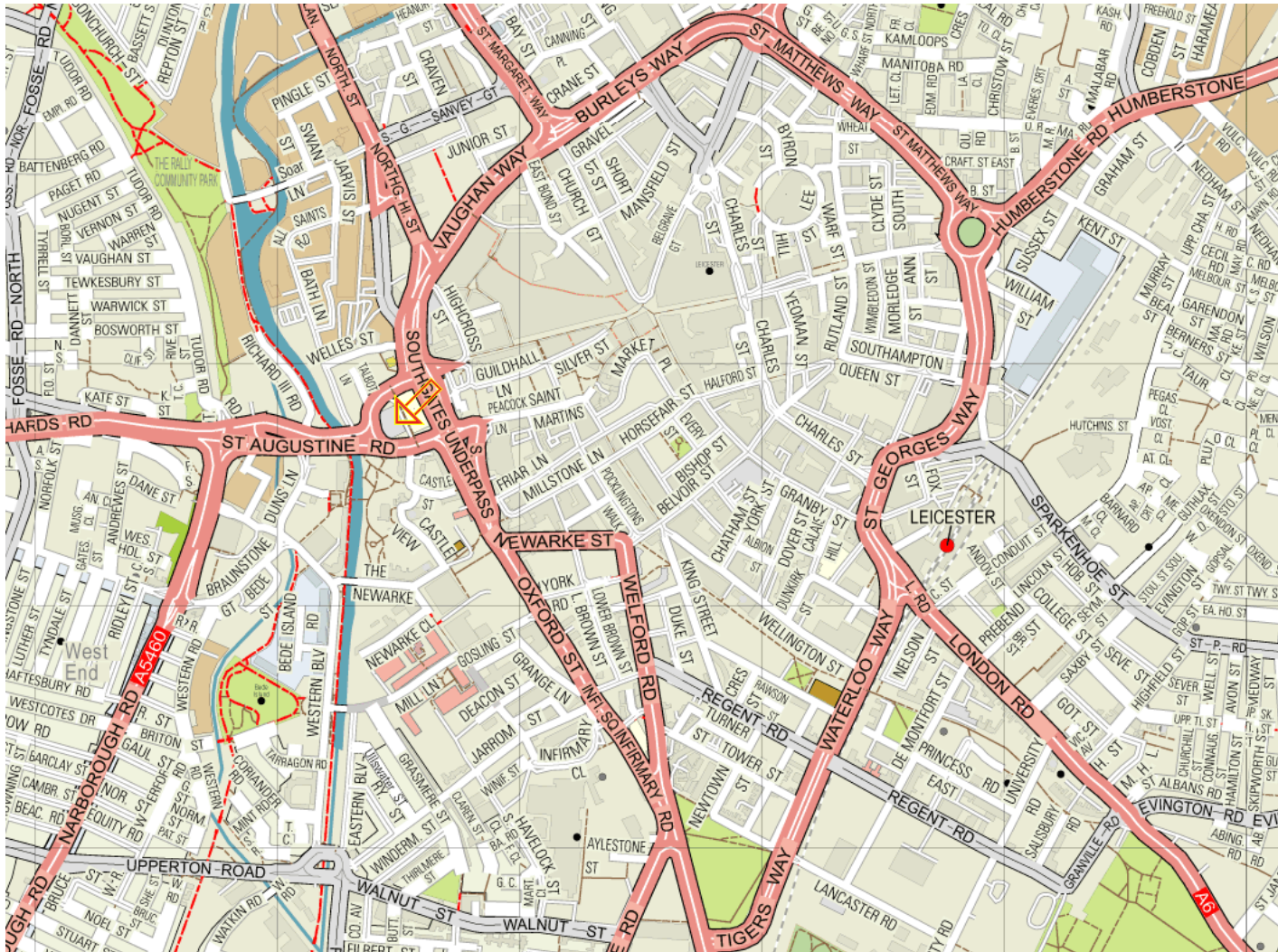
Please note that apologies must be tendered prior to the Officers' Conference by **NOON on Wednesday 16 October** as I will not have access to my home number after that time and access to e-mails may be intermittent. You may leave messages with the hotel reception on 0871 942 9048 in the event of a late change of plan – please note that this is an 0871 number so that there will be an additional charge as well as any normal access charges for calling this number.

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

BRANCH.....

OFFICERS ATTENDING	First Time at the OC- ✓	APOLOGIES

Holiday Inn Leicester, 129 St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE1 5LX



Appendix 4

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Purpose

All organisations including charities, who may have contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are recommended to have some sort of safeguarding policy. It is important that an organisation such as the RCTS - a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) adopts a suitable policy with the level of safeguarding determined by and proportionate to the risk inherent in the activities taking place. In the case of the RCTS and its activities, whether at branch or national level, risks are likely to be low with little more than a need to have a knowledge of the Safeguarding Policy, and what to do and who to contact in the event of any safeguarding concerns.

The RCTS does not provide services for children and young people although some venues where meetings are held, for example, may well be shared with other users and there may, therefore, be children and/or young adults present in areas also used by RCTS members. Children and young people are not barred from RCTS meetings but should have a parent, guardian or other designated responsible adult taking care of them at meetings or other RCTS activities where they may be included. Sometimes there are vulnerable adults present at RCTS meetings or taking part in other Society activities, and vulnerability could involve physical, mental or learning difficulties. As some of our members and guests may fall into one or more of these categories, we do have a duty to do our best to ensure that they do not come to harm while they take part in our activities.

Venues used by the RCTS are likely to have their own Safeguarding Policy and branches, or whoever is organising a Society event at national level, should ask for a copy of this policy as a guide to what they should do if there are any concerns about or allegations of abuse even if it concerns others using the venue at the same time. For regular branch meetings for example, the venue may ask you to sign up to their Safeguarding Policy even though it is likely that most of it will not apply to RCTS activities – we do not employ staff and would not be expected to carry out DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks for example. However, it is important to know who to approach should there be any concerns.

The main purpose of the safeguarding policy for the RCTS is to recognise any potential concerns and what to do about them. There is a lot of information widely available and some of this has been used to form the Safeguarding Policy for the RCTS – please see the reference section at the end of this document for more details.

The purpose of the policy is not only to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, but also Society members and guests. The policy will be reviewed periodically.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement was agreed by the Trustees/Management Committee(MC) of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society (RCTS):

The RCTS is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults and to ensuring their well-being.

We believe that everyone whether child or adult should know that they are valued and should be able to safely enjoy any activities that we provide including membership of the RCTS.

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of children and adults.

We recognise that Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.

We recognise that Adult Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.

Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.

Safeguarding is a whole organisation responsibility and the RCTS as a CIO takes its responsibilities in this respect very seriously.

We are committed to:

Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the people, whether children or adults, that we have contact with know that they are valued and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.

Reporting any concerns about abuse of children or vulnerable adults.

What are we protecting people from?

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults at risk.

What is abuse? Adults in need of protection

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Discrimination should also be considered abuse in this context. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

What is abuse and neglect? Children

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. The abuse may take any one of a number of forms that could include physical, emotional, sexual or neglect.

What to do if there are any safeguarding concerns

At branch level, any concerns should be raised with a member of the branch committee who will decide what action to take. This may involve contacting either children's or adults services within the local Social Services. If the concern is with someone who is not part of RCTS activities but is present at the same venue, then it should be reported to the person who deals with these issues for the venue. If you do not know who this is, you should ask without delay. They can then follow their own policies and procedures as appropriate.

At national level, any concerns should be raised with a Trustee/MC member who will take this to the Trustees/MC for a decision on what action to take.

It may be appropriate to contact the police by dialling 999 if there are immediate concerns for a person's safety whether child or adult.

Any safeguarding concerns raised, decisions made and action taken should be recorded. At branch level, a record should be forwarded promptly and securely to the Society Chairman for consideration as to whether the incident has been dealt with correctly and to take any such further action as may be required in consultation with the Trustees/MC. The final decision for any incident either at branch or national level will rest with the Trustees/MC. Any breach of safeguarding by a member of the Society may result in immediate withdrawal of membership as well as being reported to either the police and/or social services as appropriate. Any such records should be kept confidential bearing in mind privacy legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for example.

Main References

NCVO - National Council for Voluntary Organisations Guidance

NCVO – Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations

Woking URC Safeguarding Policy

Charity Commission – guidance on Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

Charity Commission – policy paper on Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities

NSPCC – example of a safeguarding policy statement

Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board – Safeguarding adults policy and procedure template with associated guidance

There is a lot of information widely available relating to safeguarding and the above is a selection from the material directly used in the writing of this policy.