

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

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

Telephone: 01932 855015

e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

Officers' Newsletter 190

Keeping in Touch During Lock-down

Thank you to all who have let me know what you are doing to keep in touch with your branch members, and to all other officers who have helped with information and advice about the subject. Branches and officers are coming up with some good ideas - from branch newsletters and emails to virtual online meetings and a few other things in between.

Branch Newsletters, Emails and the *Railway Observer* (RO)

Newsletters have included hard copy letters through the post occasionally in spite of the additional costs and the logistics during lock down, to ensure contact with **ALL** branch members including those who have not shared their email address or who do not currently have one. Perhaps now is a very good time to encourage more use of email and electronic communication. I know branches have been very quick to share the information about the RO only being available in electronic form until the printers are able to produce the paper copies for us again, and this has encouraged more people to access the RO online which is good news. The RO team are still working hard to produce the magazine for everyone and all members can access the digital RO online regardless of what sort of membership they have.

Trustee Meetings

Although virtual meetings are not the same as face to face, yet using the available technology means that the essential business of the Society can continue in spite of current restrictions so another virtual Trustee meeting is scheduled for Saturday 13 June 2020.

Other Ideas including Social Media

Some branches have produced quizzes circulated to members by email with answers forthcoming at a set later date, others have set up photographic quizzes with questions about when and where the photographs were taken. This has led to contact from branch members who have not attended meetings for a long time which has to be a good thing. Social media eg Facebook etc, has also led to additional contacts by those branches that use it. If you would like advice on how to set this up, please ask. There are probably other ideas out there that branches have used so please let me know what you have tried and what has worked for you so that we can share your good ideas with other branches.

Virtual Meetings

Two branches have already used the Zoom platform to hold meetings with further meetings in planning, and another branch has used it for a branch committee meeting. There may be others who are experimenting with it that I am not yet aware of. The Society now has a Zoom subscription so that all branches can benefit from it if they would like to set up a meeting without having to make do with the free version which limits sessions to a maximum of 40 minutes and also limits the number of participants. You can share images and PowerPoint presentations on this platform but if you are not sure if what you have works, do a trial run first.

I have attached, as Appendix 1, a very gently edited version on some of the basics very kindly produced by Croydon & South London Branch which was possibly the first branch to give the idea a try. This is based on their personal experience and includes a number of links including a Dummies Guide to Zoom amongst others which I found really informative and easy to read. I have also been sent separately another pdf booklet on Running Engaging Online Events which I am happy to share on request as I do not want to overload this newsletter with too many lengthy appendices. Appendix 2 is another brief guide on Zoom meetings but please disregard the section on break-out rooms as the Society subscription will not cover this facility. There is plenty of information out there.

If you would like some help to set up a virtual meeting in this way, please read the attached appendices and contact the webmaster David Jackman who can help with setting up the technology for you using the Society's Zoom subscription. As Jeremy Harrison says in the basic guide – ***"if you do not take the first step, you will never get anywhere"***. Jeremy is also prepared to help by sharing his own experience of using the technology so please ask if you are interested. If there is a lot of interest, it may be possible to set up a short virtual training session.

Virtual meetings may not be what everyone would prefer and there are other technologies out there apart from Zoom for both amateurs, business and professionals eg Microsoft Teams, Google Meet etc. Some are better than others with the best being very expensive. And it is still important to be sensible about online security of course. But even after the current restrictions have ended, this is an idea that could enable those who cannot physically attend meetings to participate more in both branch and Society activities if we think about doing virtual meetings occasionally in addition to the regular face to face meetings that we offer. It may also be useful for branches where the membership is widely dispersed or where public transport is limited and the more we practice, the better we will become at using the technology.

Finally

I hope you find this newsletter and attached information useful and recommend that you give it a try.

In the meantime, keep well and keep safe.

Kind regards

Irene

Zoom for RCTS Meetings – an Introduction

This is a short introduction for those thinking about using Zoom for running virtual (online) branch meetings over the internet. It is just a starting point – much more could be written but:

- 1 Not much more than a month ago the idea came up 'Can we do this for my own branch - Croydon & South London?' so although we are not experts we got on and did it to run the Society's first such branch meeting;
- 2 There is a lot that others have created – plenty of 'how to' and 'advice' material on the internet from Zoom and others, both in written and video tutorial format;
- 3 However much is written, it is no substitute for experience.

It is pretty straightforward but you may not get it completely right the first time and neither will your audience, so progress slowly. Start by attending someone else's meeting, then have a meeting with yourself (if you have two devices eg laptop and smart phone), your other half or best friend; and progress to the branch committee perhaps, a few invited members, and repeat the experiment. When you feel comfortable you can set up your branch's first proper experimental meeting. Label it as experimental sticking to something like Members' Slides, publicised just to your members. Expect to learn a lot. Then you can say 'we will have another' and if that goes well, you may decide to progress to inviting an external speaker or perhaps an internal one first if you prefer. ***But if you do not take the first step you will never get anywhere.***

Zoom – what is it?

At a basic level, Zoom is an online (ie over the internet) video-conferencing platform, where meetings can be held with participants able to hear and see each other and, by screen-sharing, to show pictures/images, with tools to manage this. At a higher level there will be more possibilities that may not be wanted.

Zoom provides various levels of service. The basic free plan provides meetings for up to 100 participants with sessions limited to 40 minutes if there are more than two participants, but you can hold multiple meetings in quick succession eg 40 minute first half virtual meeting, 15 minute break, 40 minute second half virtual meeting. This is ample to get started with. A 'pro plan' costs a fee each month which removes the 40 minute limit and adds a few other features. There is a Society account now so it is worth contacting the webmaster David Jackman about hosting the meeting using the Society account. There are more expensive plans with many more features than we are likely to need and there are a number of other virtual meeting platforms as well eg Microsoft Teams, Google etc.

Where to begin?

Start by visiting the Zoom website <https://zoom.us> and take a look. If you explore beyond all the hype, there is a lot of 'how to' information. There is also (under Support – right at the bottom) a 'Test Zoom (meeting)' facility.

Apart from the Zoom Help Centre at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us> (explore!), the following may be useful guides:

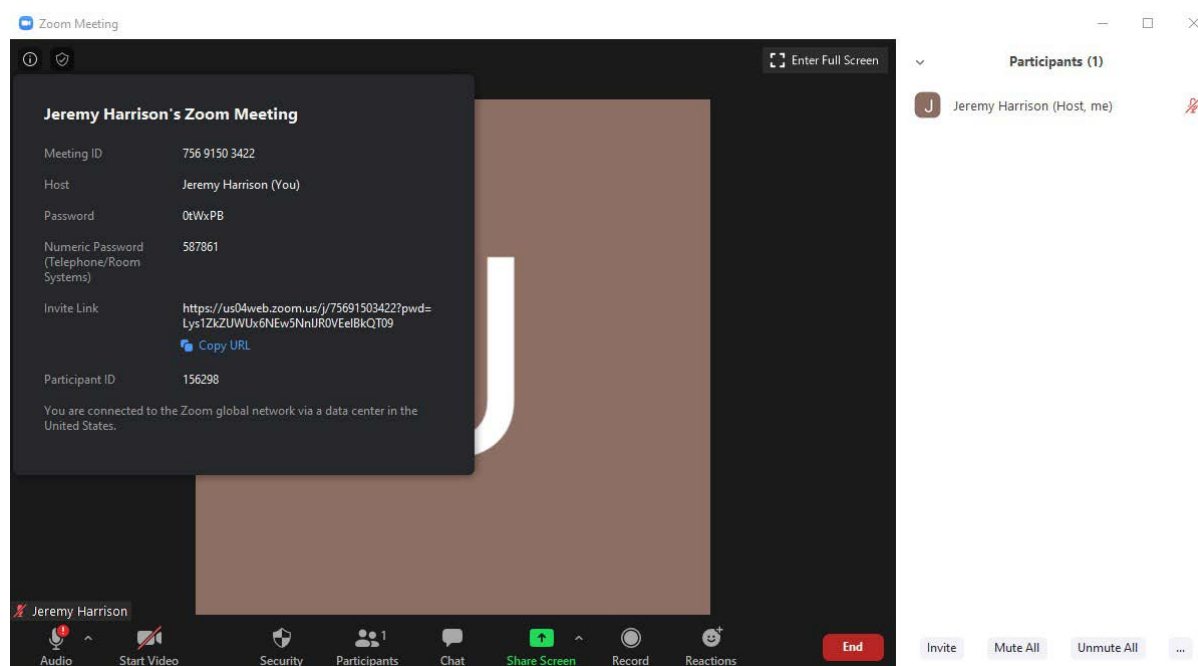
<https://www.lions105ce.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Dummies-Guide-to-Zoom.pdf>

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/zoom-101-a-starter-guide-for-beginners-plus-advanced-tips-and-tricks-for-pros/>

There are a number of other guides available as well as many 'how to' video clips on YouTube, both from Zoom <https://zoom.us/resources> and others on how to attend a meeting eg https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=how+to+join+a+zoom+meeting. Once you have watched a selection, then move onto 'how to host' information for example at https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=host+zoom+meeting

When you are ready to try hosting (running) a meeting go back to the Zoom website and click the 'Sign Up, it's Free' button (top right of page) to sign up for an account. You will have to enter your date of birth, but then it is straightforward. When it asks for your work email, use whichever you use for Society business. If you are going to use the Society's account, contact the webmaster for help.

After signing up and signing in, you are in a position to host your first meeting. Click on 'Host Meeting' – note the difference between 'Host' and 'Schedule', and it will go into the launch process into your meeting, ready for you to invite some other participants. If you click in the 'i in a circle' icon (top left), the meeting details that you can send will pop up, or clicking on 'participants' (at the bottom) will pop up a participants list with an invite button. See screen shot below.



Then try things out. For further meetings, you can 'Schedule a Meeting' for the future while you specify date and time, and send out invitations in advance.

What do you need?

See <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-requirements-for-WindowsmacOS-and-Linux> but in summary a broadband internet connection plus one item from the following list that has speaker(s), camera/webcam and microphone:

- Laptop
- Chromebook
- Tablet (iPad etc)
- Smartphone
- Desktop PC – that is reasonably up to date

Most modern laptops and chrome books will have speaker(s), camera/webcam and microphone built in as do tablets and smartphones, but desktops may well require them as add-ons. The essentials for a participant is a screen and speaker to see and hear, enough for most of our meetings, but without a microphone you will not be able to contribute. To speak and be seen both camera and microphone are required.

Zoom provide a 'test meeting' facility, at <https://zoom.us/test>, which will prompt you to download and install their app (which I advise you to do, if you do not already have it), which will then permit you to have a 'one person' meeting with yourself, check that things work, and see what it looks like if you have not already done so. Zoom will run on most operating systems – pretty well anything you are likely to have that is reasonably current. There is a client app to run on your device that you will be prompted to download and install on going to join your first meeting.

Some Zoom Terminology

While largely fairly straightforward, a few terms perhaps need to be clarified:

Audio	Sound from your microphone, sent to the meeting participants;
Video	Visual from your camera, sent to the meeting participants;
Host Person	The organiser who starts and runs the meeting and who has control;
Host a Meeting	Start a meeting to which (other) participants can be invited;
Join a Meeting	Enter a meeting that someone else is hosting and has started;
Schedule a Meeting	Arrange a meeting for the future for which invites can be sent, to be started at the appropriate time.
Share Screen	To send your screen output to the meeting so that you can share your images for example.

Some Hints and Tips

- 1 For showing (by screen sharing), Zoom handles images perfectly well; but struggles with video, and can spoil the effect of 'fancy' transitions eg from one image to another so try to avoid these.
- 2 For image shows, the presenter should have his show ready to run on starting sharing. The use of full screen is to be encouraged both for the audience and the presenter.
- 3 For presentation software, the presenter can use whatever s/he is comfortable with. Ideally one that produces a 'full screen' slide-show which is what is then shared. It appears that there may be some 'wrinkles' with at least some Apple software, in that the shared image does not advance as it should but there is probably a solution somewhere. Note - it is the displayed image which is shared so other participants do not need the same software.
- 4 Having trial or rehearsal meetings with presenters is very useful to ensure that they have at least some experience of how it works with their system and yours.
- 5 As host, you can 'mute all' or 'mute' individual participants – use this facility! For a speaker, mute all and then unmute only the speaker. Remind participants that they can 'stop video' and mute themselves. If they do not do this they will still be visible and audible by (potentially) all which is not always desirable.
- 6 Have everybody unmuted for a bit at the beginning and end, and in the interval, for a bit of chat. You can include questions and answers at the end as well if there is time. You might also like to think about having 'social only' meetings concentrating just on the chatting aspect.
- 7 Think about how to circulate invitations and meeting details eg sending them to those on the branch email list, advertising on the website, and asking people to make contact for details.
- 8 Remind people that if they want refreshment (tea, coffee, or something stronger), they have to provide their own!
- 9 You may want to encourage participants to use their real names in full (ie first name and surname) within Zoom if you think fit, so that you all know who is present.
- 10 Zoom has been adding 'security' features – use those that you think useful.
- 11 Zoom provides two 'views' of participants. You may prefer using the 'Gallery' view, which shows everybody equally. The alternative is 'Speaker' view, which displays whoever Zoom thinks is speaking. To select, there is a button at top right. There is an option in 'Video options' - reached by clicking the little up-arrow by the 'Start/Stop Video' icon bottom right, to increase the gallery view from 25 to 49 participants at a time.
- 12 Something that is a bit confusing, at least at first: what a screen sharer sees is what other participants they are sharing with see.
- 13 Share and feed your experience and advice back, for the benefit of others.

Finally...

Good luck and get on with it!

Written by Jeremy Harrison
RCTS CSL Branch Web Co-ordinator (etc)
croydon.web@rcts.org.uk
2020-05-26

How to get a Zoom account

Go to <https://zoom.us/signup>

It is free to sign up to Zoom

- You can start using it straight away.
- However, the free model has certain limitations, including a meeting time of only 40 minutes (you can log back in again after this time is up and get another 40 minutes)

Zoom: Join Meeting Without an Account

- Click the link in your invite
- or Type in the **Meeting ID**, provided from zoom meeting host/organizer

Type-in your Name under **Screen Name**

- when joining a Zoom meeting you will be asked if you want to join with Computer Audio
- Select Computer Audio
- use the laptop speakers and microphone or USB headset (or mobile phone earphone set)
- Or you can click on Phone Call
- Select the UK for local dial in numbers
- follow the voice instructions to enter Meeting ID and Participant ID

Zoom: Join Audio by Telephone

(If you don't have or don't want to use a computer or tablet)

You can dial in to a Zoom meeting using a desk phone or mobile the host will provide details.

Zoom: Schedule a Meeting

- Click **Schedule button**
- Define your meeting options & click **Edit** next to Dial in change from default USA
- Select United Kingdom in pop up & click **Done** to return to scheduler

There have been reports of meetings being hacked over the last few weeks so it is advisable to use the secure password system

Zoom: Managing Participants

- As participants join the meeting, you will hear a bell to indicate they are active.
- You will also be able to see all participants via video. To see a complete list of participants, click Manage Participants.

- For more options, select Manage Participants located in your in-meeting zoom menu bar

- Mute/Unmute All:** mute/unmute all participants in meeting -you will be given the option (checkbox) to allow or not allow participants to unmute

- Lock Screen sharing:** by selecting lock screen sharing, other participants will not be able to share screen.

- Mute on Entry:** participants will automatically mute as they enter the meeting

- Play Enter/Exit Chime:** plays a sound as participants join and leave the meeting

- Lock meeting:** you can lock your meeting so that no other participants may join

Zoom: Managing Participants

Other options are also available by hovering over a specific participant.

- Stop/Ask to Start Video:** stop or request to start participant's video stream

- Make Host:** you can grant another participant permission to be the host of the meeting -the host of the meeting can also Reclaim Host after making another participant the host of the meeting

- Remove:** you can kick/boot participant(s) from the meeting

- Rename:** rename the attendee name selection

Zoom: Sharing Screen

- Click share on the meeting tool bar and a pop up will show the content you can share

- Select item you want to share and click share

- The following [video](#) runs you through sharing options

Zoom: Meeting & Host Controls

- The following [video](#) runs you through the Host controls

Zoom: Breakout Rooms

Breakout Rooms allow you to split your Zoom meeting in to separate sessions (eg for committee meetings).

Only premium users only can setup breakout rooms but anyone can join

The meeting host can choose to split the participants of the meeting into these separate sessions automatically or manually and can switch between sessions at any time.

Up to 50 breakout rooms can be created

Max 200 participants in a breakout room (requires Large Meeting 200 add-on)

Breakout room participants have full audio, video and screen share capabilities*

Here is a video tutorial for usage of breakout rooms in Zoom

https://www.youtube.com/embed/j_O7rDILNCM?rel=0&autoplay=1

Here is also a step by step guide on how to do this found using this link

- <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313>