

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

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

Telephone: 01932 855015

e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

Officers' Newsletter 195

7 October 2020

Covid-19 – Face to Face Meetings – an Update

With government restrictions and guidance constantly under review and changing periodically, it is time to revise previous guidance on holding face to face meetings. Sometimes announcements are made through the news media before they are uploaded onto the government website so there will always be a time lag between announcing proposals for changes to the requirements, publication of government updates and, therefore, distribution of updated guidance for the RCTS. There are some important things to note right now:

- A Risk Assessment **MUST** be done before any physical meeting. The meeting cannot go ahead if the risk is too great. Sample branch meeting and individual risk assessments were included with Newsletter 193 and can be sent again on request.
- You **MUST** take contact details of everyone attending a branch activity for the NHS Test and Trace programme. These contact details must be kept for 21 days before deletion.
- No-one should mix in a group of greater than 6 unless they all live together or are in the same support bubble. This includes avoiding social interaction with anyone outside the group you are with, even if you see other people you know. This means limiting socialising at any branch fixture.
- Additional restrictions will apply where there is a local lockdown so please check whether or not this applies within your area.
- There are differences to restrictions for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland so please check the government website if you are unsure what additional or different restrictions will apply.
- Face coverings are mandatory in many situations unless an individual is exempt from wearing one. Details of when the wearing of face coverings is mandatory, and what are government accepted exemptions, are on the government website in the section on face coverings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Venues following [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#) will be able to continue to host more people in total – but no one should mix in a group of greater than 6, and the individual groups of 6 cannot mix with each other. This means that you will need to check with your venue what numbers they will allow for meetings and any other branch activities, and socialising will be very restricted.

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

Outside Visits – Current Restrictions

The Government has confirmed that the maximum size for a group of people meeting up is 6. However, the ruling that this should include members from a maximum of only two households unless they are in the same support bubble has also been re-applied. In practical terms this means that branch outdoor activities can no longer go ahead as any such activity is almost certainly going to be in breach of the latest restrictions.

Penalties

While I am not very keen to include the following information, it is important to note that there are substantial fines for anyone breaching the regulations on Covid-19 safety and security. This includes meetings and other activities – inside and outdoors, and the wearing of face coverings. Please be aware of our responsibilities and remain careful.

Society Information

Proposed change to Rule 3d – minor amendment

You will have already noted the proposed changes to the Society Rules to be voted on at the (virtual) Society AGM next month. The proposed Rule 3d refers to branch committee and branch AGM meetings and the reason for a late amendment has arisen because of the situation with regards to Covid-19 and the current restrictions on physical meetings. It has been decided that the proposed change to Rule 3d should be amended slightly to remove the requirement for face to face meetings where it is not possible to hold them. So the revised proposed wording is as follows:

A branch committee shall meet at least three times in each year (one of which must be an AGM) and minutes shall be recorded of its deliberations at all meetings. These meetings may be conducted through the medium of electronic communication, provided only that all members of the committee are able to participate in using this methodology. The branch AGM must be a face to face meeting unless it is not possible to hold a physical meeting due to government regulations.

Branch Bulletins and Newsletters

There are some excellent branch bulletins and newsletters out there and *RO* Managing Editor Mike Robinson is keen to see them as they may include material suitable for publication in the *RO*. So please include observer@rcts.org.uk on your circulation list. Some extracts have already been used.

And finally...

Ending on a more optimistic note with all the doom and gloom about - we continue to actively share our interest in railways via the **RO**, the website, branch communications and activities, and the facility at Leatherhead; and we can continue to plan for the future when restrictions will again be eased and some sort of 'normality' returns. In the meantime keep well and keep safe.

Kind regards

Irene