

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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Officers' Newsletter 209

5 October 2021

Dear All

As there were two Officers Newsletters at the end of August 2021 with only a few days between, I have kept this one back to give you a break. However, it is appropriate to circulate it now as this relates to the Officers Conference on Sunday 24 October 2021 - the attendance record requires a response, and part of agenda would benefit from some advanced thought.

2021 Officers Conference

This is to be held on Sunday 24 October 2021 at the Holiday Inn Taunton, TA1 2UA - a quiet spot close to Junction 25 of the M5. Parking at the hotel is free for participants so please let us know in advance if you plan to attend for the Conference only and are coming by car so that the hotel can be advised accordingly.

As you know we were unable to hold either the Members' Weekend or Officers' Conference (OC) last year because of the pandemic so the minutes of the previous OC are from 2019. These were circulated with Newsletter 184 in December 2019. Please let me know if you would like to receive a copy as I know there have been a number of changes to Society Officers since then so not everyone who is currently an officer will have received it. It can be sent out via email on request.

The agenda for Conference is attached as **Appendix 1** to this newsletter. Apart from the necessary formalities, you will see that it is a little different from previously as it does not include reports from the various Governance Groups but rather the opportunity for everyone to discuss matters that are important to everyone who is an active member of the Society, particularly Branch and National Officers.

OC Attendance record

We ask Society Officers in advance whether or not they will be attending Conference and this year is no different. It helps in a number of ways - not least in having an idea of numbers in advance so that we can cater properly for everyone who will be there. It is also an easy way to give your apologies if you are unable to attend. The form to complete for branch officer attendance or apologies is attached to this newsletter as **Appendix 2**. I will also attach a word version of the form to the covering email with this Newsletter to make it easier to complete it electronically and email it back for convenience. For all national Society Officers who are not also Branch Officers or who will

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be attending in their national capacity, I would be very grateful if you too would let me know whether or not you will be attending Conference. Please would you also indicate on the attendance return any member who is attending Conference for the very first time. You can send information by post, by email 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, email or telephone message.

Any telephone or postal notifications will need to be with me by 09.00 on Wednesday 20 October 2021, although I should be able to access email after that date – dependent on WiFi at the hotel. My mobile telephone number for a late notification is 07913 584990.

Appendix 3 is a map showing the location of the hotel in Taunton.

Kind regards

Irene

Appendix 1



OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

Sunday 24 October 2019 at 9.00am for 9.15am start

**Holiday Inn Taunton
TA1 2UA**

AGENDA

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Opening of Conference by Society Chairman | Callum MacLeod |
| 2 | Apologies for absence | Irene Rabbitts |
| 3 | President's Address | Reverend Canon Brian Arman |
| 4 | Confirmation of 2019 Minutes
(previously circulated with Officers Newsletter 184 – December 2019) | Callum MacLeod |
| 5 | a) A brief discussion of activities over the past 18 months
b) Meetings going forward – physical, virtual, hybrid. Branch meetings, National meetings (see notes)
c) What would you like to see by way of Society publications in the future; how could this be done and what might you be prepared to contribute to help achieve this? (see notes) | Callum MacLeod |
| BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS | | |
| 5 | d) Conclusions about the way forward. | Callum MacLeod |
| 6 | Upgrades to the website and demonstration on producing group emails using Mailjet | Matthew Shaw |
| 7 | Date and venue for 2022 Members' Weekend and Officers' Conference | Callum MacLeod |
| 8 | Date and venue for 2022 Society AGM | Callum MacLeod |
| 9 | Closing remarks | Callum MacLeod |

Notes to go with Agenda item 5 – points for discussion:

5 a) Brief Discussion of Activities over the past 18 months

This is a chance for branch officers to outline what has or has not worked for their branch during the pandemic, what difficulties have arisen, successes achieved. What opportunities have been taken to continue branch activities during that time and how have branches kept in touch with their members? Although some branches have not been very active during lockdown, a lot of effort has been put in all over the Society and this is appreciated. Now we can share our experiences.

5 b) Meetings Going Forward

A lot has been achieved with regards to progress with virtual meetings over the past 18 months so it is important to look at the best ways to go forward whilst still allowing flexibility to do what works best for each branch, Governance Group or other area of Society activities.

Now that restrictions due to the pandemic have eased, we are already considering how we go forward with the 'new normal'. Using Zoom for virtual meetings has worked well with some meetings attracting 100+ participants and many, if not most, others in the 50-70 range. Holding virtual meetings also attracted new members who would not otherwise have joined the Society so we gained from that and would like to keep that advantage. The downside is that only a relatively small minority of members attended overall - mainly those who are comfortable using computers, tablets or smartphones. This raises a number of questions:

- 1 Are physical meeting attendance numbers returning to pre-Covid levels;
- 2 Should we have National Meetings to complement and supplement the branches;
- 2a) If yes, what is their purpose and what should the focus be;
- 2b) If yes, what input and support should there be from the branches to help produce a successful programme;
- 3 Should Branch Meetings be physical, virtual (ie Zoom), a mix of both, or a combination (ie some form of hybrid) – please note that there will be constraints that might limit the possibilities here;
- 4 Should Branches consider combining running a hybrid physical meeting with the speaker at one meeting location and another venue accessing the meeting remotely – effectively sharing a meeting between two venues (might be useful for a branch with dispersed membership?);
- 5 Other suggestions.

Each branch is different so will have different experience, their own unique circumstances, and a different approach to meetings going forward hence raising the questions now. Please bring your experience and ideas to the discussion, they are important.

5 c) Society Publications

The Society's publications officer has asked that the subject of what officers would like to see by way of future publications be raised for discussion. Please think about this beforehand, and think about how ideas might be turned into successful books. There is quite a way to go from an idea to a final published book so this needs to be considered too.

Appendix 2



OFFICERS' CONFERENCE TAUNTON 2021

Branch/National Officer Attendance at Officers' Conference

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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 20 October 2021** as I will not have access to my home number after that time, it will be too late to attend to postal responses, and access to e-mails may be intermittent. You may leave messages with the hotel reception on 03333 209354 in the event of a late change of plan.

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

BRANCH.....

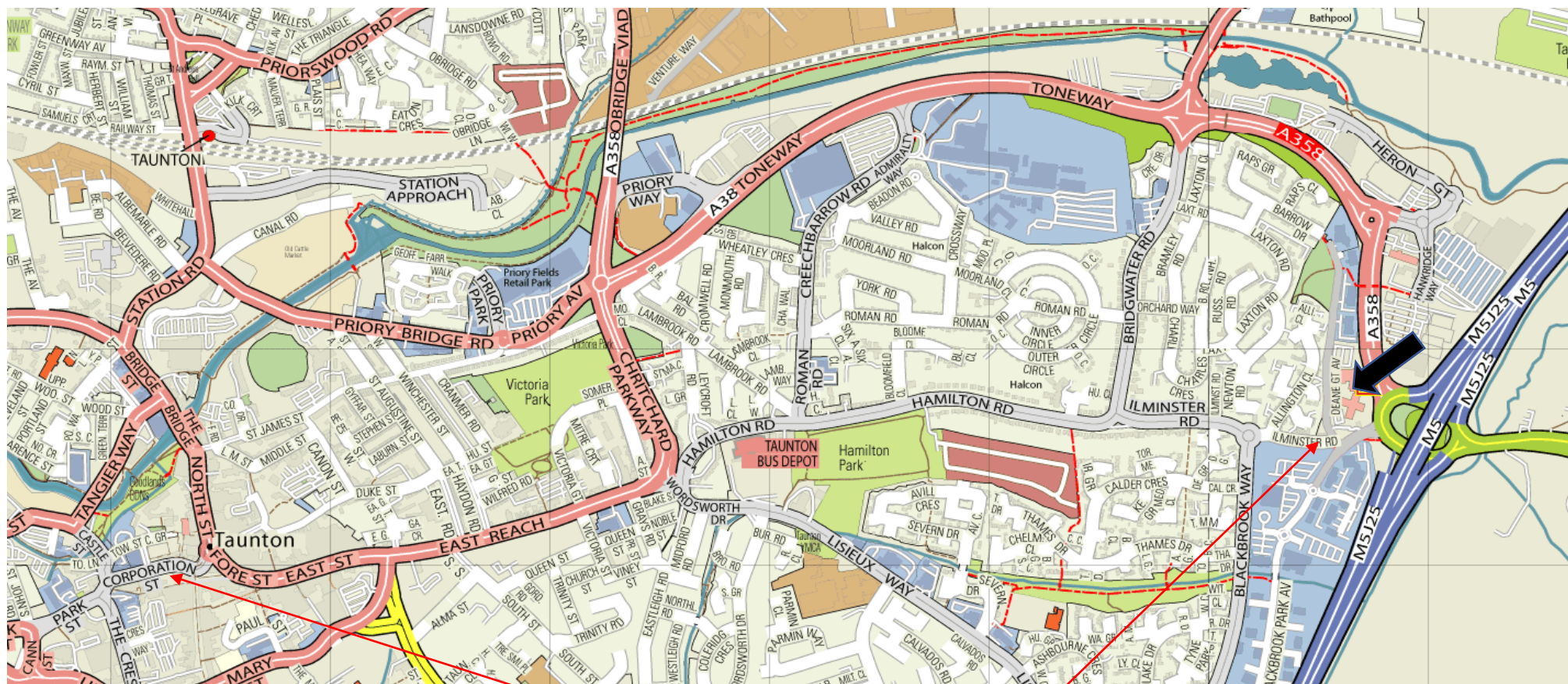
OFFICERS ATTENDING	First Time at the OC- ✓	APOLOGIES

Appendix 3

Holiday Inn Taunton M5 Jct 25, Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA

Telephone 03333 209354

<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/gb/en/taunton/tntss/hoteldetail>



First Buses of Somerset Service PR1 runs from Corporation Street (East-Bound) to Ilminster Road Busway.
First Buses of Somerset Service 29 runs from The Parade (South-east-Bound) to Ilminster Road Busway