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PATRONS: Ethel Armstrong MBE
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17.03.2020

"Coronavirus update from the NHS Retirement Fellowship"

Please see below a message from John Rostill in relation to our latest advice regarding branch meetings..

A shorter version of this letter appeared on our Facebook page on 16.03.20. Unfortunately there was no-one available in Central Office to send out the letter to branch Chairs and Secretaries – we apologise to those who do not use Facebook.

This updated letter contains important information about branch AGM's, accounts and capitation fees which was not included in the version published on Facebook.

As you will appreciate this situation is ever changing and John and Lucia Hiden are working together to ensure that the most up to date messages are shared with staff and branches
Many thanks all and best wishes!

Dear colleague

I wanted to give you an update on the position of the NHS Retirement Fellowship and our accompanying advice to branches.

As you will be aware, we moved into the delay phase of managing coronavirus last week. We are now expecting further ongoing guidance this week as part of a rapidly developing situation. We are also extremely aware that in addition to this, our members are very much in the at risk category.

With this in mind, we are reluctantly advising branches to suspend all meetings, activities and events until further notice. Already, a number of branches have made their own decisions to cancel meetings for the foreseeable future.

We appreciate this will come as a huge disappointment for some members and we have not taken this decision lightly. However we feel it is sensible advice in the current environment.

It is entirely understood that this is the time of year when branches would normally hold their AGM's. Under the current circumstances, all AGM's can be postponed and held later at a more convenient date.

Please note, 2019/20 Branch accounts will still need to be sent to Central Office by 30th June 2020. The Capitation fees from 2019/20 also need to be paid before 5 May 2020

There have been some queries regarding capitation fees for 2020/21. This will be discussed by the Board of Trustees once the situation becomes clearer.

We know that our members believe in our motto of friendship, fun and fellowship and in these difficult times we would ask all our members to consider their fellowship role with other members and to keep in touch via phone and social media. We appreciate it may be difficult for members to offer practical support but we would like to think that members will have the interests of other members at heart.

We would love to hear about any actions you are taking to keep in touch with your members and to look after their health and wellbeing. We have heard from the Basildon and Thurrock branch that they have divided their membership list into small groups alphabetically and contact will be made with everyone by a small team from the branch.

We would also remind you of the best advice for helping to protect yourselves and your families is to wash your hands frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds and to self-isolate for seven days if you have a temperature over 37.8, a new, persistent dry cough and aches and pains. You should only call 111 if you feel you are suffering with shortness of breath and/ or your symptoms have not improved after seven days.

We are in comparatively uncharted waters and we will all need to be flexible. With this in mind we have decided to postpone the P60 recruitment exercise which was due to start in April. This will now take place when P60's are distributed in April 2021

We will of course keep in touch with branches through our central office and development officer relationships with committees and regional reps but also through our Facebook page, which is already offering support and information across the organisation.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding. We wish all our members the very best.

John Rostill