



Making your retirement work for you.

PATRONS: Ethel Armstrong MBE
Ken Jarrold CBE

25th March 2020

Dear colleague,

Following our communication earlier in the week, we have been monitoring the situation and would like to update you.

Central Office has now temporarily closed to ensure we comply with current Government guidelines so that we do not put staff at any unnecessary risk. The Central Office staff are, however, continuing to work from home, as are our Development Officers and project staff. There are now a number of additional matters which we wish to share with our branches and members.

This letter will be sent by email to Chairs and Secretaries of our branches, and a copy will be posted on our website and on our Facebook page. Please share this with the Treasurer and other members from within your branch.

All of our deliberations are aimed at keeping our members safe and supporting them.

In these unprecedented times we are unable to predict how this situation will develop but we will continue to adhere to Government guidelines and update our advice to branches accordingly.

Currently the rules for staying at home and away from others are:

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

- *shopping for necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.*
- *one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.*
- *any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.*
- *travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.*

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household

As a result of this, we need to introduce some special arrangements.

Although the 2019/20 subscriptions have been collected and are due to be sent to Central Office, we appreciate that cheques need to be signed by 2 people. We do not feel that the personal contact required to do this should take place at this time and therefore, we ask you not to send your cheques for the capitation fees until Government guidelines enable us to re-open Central Office.

For the same reason, we think it advisable that branches do not send their accounts to Central Office until such time as it reopens. We will, of course, let you know as soon as this happens and the capitation fee cheques and accounts can then be sent to us.

It is understandable that a few members have raised the issue of capitation fees for 2020/21. After due consideration we have agreed that we cannot yet make a decision on this until we see how this situation evolves.

At this stage, we are particularly keen to emphasise that the Fellowship looks after and supports its' members. With this aim in mind, we would particularly like to hear of any ideas branches have implemented or are considering, to keep their members engaged and supported, and which could be adopted across the Fellowship. We have heard from Basildon and Thurrock, Suffolk West, Banbury and East Hertfordshire branches that they are arranging rotas for members to be contacted by telephone on a regular basis. Please let us know what your branch is doing. We are especially keen that our more vulnerable members have a point of contact. If there is a way the staff can help with this, please let us know.

You can contact us in the usual way by e-mail or by leaving a message on the Central Office number 01305 361317 and we will return your call. We would love to hear from you. You could also post your suggestions for keeping in touch with members on our Facebook page.

Further messages will be circulated as the situation develops.

In the meantime, we would like to thank you all for your understanding and ongoing support. Please stay safe.

Kind regards

John Rostill