

JR/ss

1 June 2020

Dear Member

The Fellowship Newsletter was circulated to all members with my letter in early May and both have been well received. You will also have received your new membership card that has also gone down well. That card is the one you will retain for the life of your membership. It will not be renewed annually as was the previous practice. This year I have not heard of anyone not finding their card in the well marked envelope.

I also wrote to all branches last month following a meeting of the Trustees to announce that the Conference planned for Manchester in October is cancelled. The AGM still needs to be held but has been postponed to a date yet to be agreed. The rationale for the decision was to not raise expectations but importantly it was not thought that any new government rules would be in place that would allow gatherings of 300 or more to take place or that we would be able to replicate the social atmosphere of previous conferences. The Trustees were also aware that there might be reluctance among members to travel on public transport or to attend large meetings. The letter also explained the Trustees decision that for this year 2020/21 a reduced capitation fee of £10 per member would be collected.

In the meantime a number of regional newsletters have been circulated to those members living in the South East, South West, North West and Scotland who have given us an email address and permission to use it. These newsletters are now available for all members to read on the website.

Live talks to be enjoyed from the comfort of your home have been arranged exclusively for NHS Retirement Fellowship members the first one which was on 19th May attracted 218 members. The next one is:-

30 June at 11am – My Favourite Poison

To register please go to www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF although it is surprisingly easy to register if you have any difficulty with this at all please contact a member of the Fellowship's staff.

We continue to have a difficulty with engaging frequently with all members as some are not on email or have not given permission for us to contact by email. If you do have an email address that you would feel comfortable with the Fellowship to use to make contact with you please contact Central Office. If we do hold our email address and under GDPR consents you did not give permission and would now like to change that please get in touch with Central Office.

NHS Retirement Fellowship
Central Office
Weymouth Community Hospital
Melcombe Avenue
Weymouth
Dorset
DT4 7TB
Tel: 01305 361317
Email: sherry.smith2@nhs.net

However, I do know that since the coronavirus lockdown took place in March many people saw the advantages of using computers/tablets/smart phones and platforms such as Zoom and Skype among others to continue contact with family and friends. Both Zoom and Skype are easy to install and use.

Last week for the first time the staff met virtually by Zoom and agreed that would be the way to conduct further meetings in future. The last trustees meeting was held by teleconferencing but will use Zoom for the next meeting in September. I am also aware that a number of branches are using Zoom for their committee meetings. Given the huge changes that people are experiencing we do want to be able to engage with our members as much as possible so that we are able to respond to what you want. Therefore, I do make a plea that wherever possible we can communicate with you by email.

Since the newsletter was distributed there has been a flurry of people joining our Facebook group and we are now close to 1,100 members. Facebook is a very useful way to communicating and keeping in touch and I would encourage you to look at it and join our group. If you want to join Facebook but are not sure how to go about it please contact the staff who will be only too happy to help get you connected.

I will be sending details out to branches on how to use Zoom in the future and while we are not experts and are still learning ourselves we would be very willing to help.

Who would have thought three months ago that so many activities would be by applications such as Zoom. Who would have thought that TV presenters would be presenting from their own homes and that it was possible to communicate in so many ways.

We obviously don't know how long the restrictions will be in place but as I write there has been some easing of the regulations today albeit with some variation depending on which part of the country you live. As the rules are being eased the safety of our members and staff continue to be of paramount importance. The Fellowship will work within the guidelines but the current relaxation has enabled us to reopen Central Office from today initially with one member of staff in the office each day.

We cannot at this stage give any real advice as to when branch meetings can take place. It would be foolish to predict a time but the general view is that such meetings will not take place before the autumn or even later. However as rules are relaxed so that more individuals can meet with each other we will continue to review the situation as we know that some people are keen to get back to meetings and outings.

I am aware of and very grateful for all the work done by branch officers and committees to engage with their members and I'm very impressed with all the voluntary work that has been undertaken by our members in these unprecedented times.

It is my intention to send a similar letter on a monthly basis to breach the gap until the next newsletter. Is this helpful?

From time to time I will include an update from a particular part of the country and this time it is from Hilary Robb the Development Officer for Scotland.

Update from Scotland

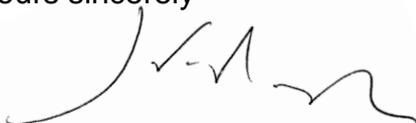
- *Well done and thanks to all those members and their friends and family who have made scrubs, uniform wash bags and masks for NHS Staff, Ambulance crew and care workers. To date we have donated 200 bags – a marvellous effort and a lot of duvet covers and sheets being recycled!*
- *Thanks to our members who have volunteered to help in their local hospitals and communities.*
- *Once it is safe for us all to meet up again, The Federation Officers will meet to set a date for our delayed AGM and Gathering to take place in Perth. Our speakers will be the Scottish Air Ambulance and Professor Heather Cubie, Chair of the Scotland Malawi Partnership. A former NHS consultant clinical scientist, Heather is currently a senior advisor to the Global Health Academy and an Honorary Professor at the University of Edinburgh. She is also actively involved in the Scottish Global Health Collaborative as a volunteer champion for retired healthcare staff. She will be talking about the work she is doing to reduce the number of cervical cancer deaths in Malawi. There will also be time for a wee bit of dancing and a chance to catch up with friends!*
- *Our hard working Branch Officers are keeping in touch with their Branch members to chat and check that everyone has what they need. If you are feeling lonely and would like to have a blether, please feel free to contact your Branch officers or Hilary, Development Officer for Scotland on 0131 333 3699.*
- *I am sending out an online newsletter every fortnight and if you would like to receive this, please let your Branch Officer know your email address. There will be a printed newsletter going out to all Scottish members in June.*
- *Take care and I hope we can all be together soon. Until then I will continue to keep in touch with my contacts in Health Boards to prepare for future discussions where we can promote the Fellowship and hopefully recruit more members. If there is one thing we have learnt from lockdown, it is the value of good friends.*

Hilary Robb – Development Officer, Scotland

Finally we do want to continue to engage with all our members and if there is anybody who would like to talk to someone from the Fellowship please get in touch by email, phone or letter.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely



John Rostill OBE
Chief Executive