

15 September 2023

Dear Member

Introduction

I hope you had a lovely summer and managed to enjoy some of the sunshine. As we approach autumn, I know many of you are looking forward to returning to your branches and participating in varied activities. I would encourage you to share photos, ideas for events, speakers, and activities on Facebook.

Sally Bundock

It is with great sadness that we need to inform all members of the Fellowship that Sally Bundock, our Development Officer for the South East and East Anglia died in August. Sally was a passionate supporter of the Fellowship and her dedication and advocacy for the branches in the southeast and East Anglia is a sore loss for the organisation. Any branches in these areas with queries can speak with your regional representative or the Central Office where all staff are helping out to cover this large area in the short term.

Conference in November

Plans are well advanced for the forthcoming NHSRF conference. This will be my first conference and I am looking forward to meeting the members attending and hearing your hopes for the future of the Fellowship. Our keynote speaker will be Samantha Allen, Chief Executive of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) and it will be interesting to hear her perspective on how life is on the frontline at the moment.

I'm also delighted to say that our partner Fred Olsen Cruises is donating a free cruise which one lucky delegate will be in with a chance of winning.

I'm really looking forward to the chance of getting to know members personally and finding out about life in the branches and why members choose to be postal members. It's also an opportunity for you to get to know me too as I continue to settle in and I'm sure that the conversations and questions across the conference weekend will help shape my thinking about how we can take the Fellowship from our 45th birthday to celebrating our 50th anniversary.

The conference takes place from Friday 24 November – Sunday 26 November at the Forest Pines Hotel and Spa in North Lincolnshire. Booking details are available via our website at the following link:

<https://nhsrf.org.uk/news/nhs-retirement-fellowship-conference-and-agm-november-2023/>

Cheltenham branch celebrate our 45th anniversary

On October 3, the Cheltenham branch is hosting a special anniversary afternoon in the hotel where the very first meeting of the NHS Retirement Fellowship took place 45 years ago, marking the culmination of our own anniversary celebrations. Our Chair George Kempton and South West Development Officer Paul Pople will be in attendance and I look forward to seeing the photos.

Travel insurance and new benefits

Our travel insurance partners are currently in the process of writing to all members who are signed up to the scheme with details of your renewals (which starts on 1 October).

I know members really value this benefit and we are looking to work with the service provider to see what other benefits we can extend to our members. If you are not already signed up it is advisable to join in October to benefit from the full year's coverage – you can join up at any point in the year but the premium would remain the same.

The policy is eligible for all members who are aged 50-74 years old at the time of joining and includes no medical screening, worldwide cover, no limit on the number of journeys and 24 hour emergency support.

We are currently finalising some new benefits which we hope to share in the next few weeks. These include Motorfinity, which provides deals on new cars, and Victoria Mekong Cruises.

New branches

We are delighted that over the last few months, we have established new branches in Doncaster, New Forest, Tameside and Trafford. Opening new branches takes a lot of time and effort for the staff involved and my thanks go to them. These branches would not come to fruition without individuals willing to take on committee roles and I am particularly grateful to those people in the new branches. Welcome to the Fellowship and I hope you enjoy your membership. If you are a postal member in these areas and would like to get involved with your new branch, please get in touch with the Central Office.

Members Council 5th September

As part of the September meeting, I was able to share and receive feedback on the strategic plan 2023-28 which has now been endorsed by the Trustee Board. Initial steps are to reaffirm our vision, mission, values and behaviours. New technical systems are being explored for central office and local branch support, which will help to safeguard the information we hold and free up capacity of staff. As part of this the staff team will be reconfigured.

Members Council Regional representatives needed

Lorraine Taylor is our Chair of the Members Council and Ros Lobo is the Vice-chair. They are looking to recruit several regional representatives from around the country and would love to hear from you if this is something you think you might be interested in. It's an opportunity to make new friends from branches in other parts of the country and build good relationships between different areas. It is a very important role as it provides support to branches in your local area and makes sure the voice of members in your region are reflected at national level, giving representatives the opportunity to make a real difference to the Fellowship and shape the way we do things.

If you are interested in taking on one of these roles, please get in touch with Central Office.

Online event for postal members

The postal member reps for the Members Council have arranged a special Zoom based event aimed at postal members. This event is the first of a programme of events taking place over the next few months exploring a number of topics which may be of interest to members.

The talk – titled “Re-inventing yourself after retirement” will include four health service retirees who have re-invented themselves and are following new passions and interests. Come along and join us to hear about ‘New Retirement’. The event is expected to be from 10.00 - 11.30am on Tuesday 10 October at 10am.

Any postal member interested in participating should contact your reps Jenn and Barbara at jenn@nhsrf.org.uk or Barbara@nhsrf.org.uk and they will send you the link.

This event has been put on as part of the ongoing work to improve the offer we make to our postal members. However, any branch member who may be interested in attending can contact Lucia Hiden at comms@nhsrf.org.uk and your name will be put on a reserve list in the first instance.

Heritage events

It was good to see branches in the North West taking part in a special heritage event at Trafford General Hospital – the birthplace of the NHS – to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the NHS and to promote the NHS Retirement Fellowship in our 45th year. Well done to all involved.

The Fellowship's community heritage programme has delivered several events targeting the East Midlands, East Anglia and the North West with further events planned in 2024 – watch this space for more details. In the Midlands, the Fellowship is working collaboratively with the Library Service in Staffordshire across eight libraries involved with the Staffordshire History Festival. The Festival is being used to recruit new members.

Obituaries

I am sorry to share news of the deaths of the following members:

Marion Green (Harrogate), long standing member.


Louise Simmons (Newham), vice chair until 2022

Ray Stanmore (Frimley and District), long standing committee member.

Olive Belfield, who represented the Fellowship at the NHS70 service at Westminster Abbey, was a long standing member of the South Manchester branch and its president. She sadly died on September 1.

Central Office contact details: telephone 01305 361 317, email sherry.smith2@nhs.net or Debbie.arnold4@nhs.net

With warm wishes



Mike Seaton
CEO