

# SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BRANCHES AND CENTRAL COUNCIL

## INTRODUCTION

Branch chairs in England were phoned by BF and asked to help with two related issues:

- A longstanding problem that branches have felt distant from CC with poor communication
- The recent problems as a result of branches elected unconstitutionally no longer being represented on CC.

What follows are the main themes people discussed. They include results from SHA London's formal vote on the issue.

## INFORMATION FLOW THROUGH NATIONAL MEMBERS.

**Oxford:** There is a channel to and from CC through national members. However, they are not delegated by the branch to vote on the national CC so cannot be a reliable channel - in either direction.

**Chester:** Their national member keeps them informed about CC business.

## A BRANCH CHAIRS' GROUP, BRINGING BRANCHES TOGETHER, SENDING MESSAGES TO CC

**Oxford:** With no powers, may be useful, but is limited. It would need teeth - fitted into the governance arrangements.

**Yorkshire:** A group of branch Chairs

**London:** CC to set up a liaison group between branch chairs, and to include Wales and Scotland.

**West Midlands:** There should maybe be a permanent chair plus secretary or nominated branch member WhatsApp group which would link all. Hopefully this might be a forum where co-operation could develop. Also a regular face to face meeting of branch Chairs and Secretaries.

## SHARING AND SUPPORTING BRANCHES' ACTIVITY

- Jean to write to branches to ask them to send her anything that your branch is doing.
- Set up a branches section on website. (Oxford and Manchester)
- National SHA will notify branches of work with Shadow teams and invite relevant expertise to input
- SHA will formally notify SHAL and other branches in writing of any actions or decisions which directly impact on branch functions
- To optimise on skills and avoid duplication, SHA will keep branches in the loop re work involving local CC members
- Not formalized. Ad hoc. Or joint action, or supporting others' action.
- Branches could write blogs, as Vivien Walsh of Manchester has done. She had lots of very useful responses to her article on the fight for Manchester Royal Infirmary.

## CO-OPTION

Oxford: W Mids has a lot of people on CC. Why can't you co-opt others?

London:

- 67% of respondents support asking the CC to co-opt all of our 9 delegates to CC
- keeping the current arrangement until next AGM and organising as many co options as possible – including ensuring those branches without CC reps of any kind are given space.

## DATE OF AGM

Oxford: hold an early AGM

London:

- Hold an AGM in 2021, planning appropriately around public health needs, co-opting our delegates onto CC in the meantime.
- In the event that Central Council does not agree to interim co-option, in the interests of inclusivity we would expect that the AGM is brought back to December 2020 and proper timely notification to branches in line with Clause 13 in either case.

#### **OTHER SUGGESTIONS:**

- Defer decisions till after AGM
- One off rule change to co-opt previous delegates.
- More listening to the branches. Before CC makes a decision – asking branches what do they think of this?
- CC needs to base its decisions on what the membership thinks.
- Branch chairs could be trained up to be national chairs.
- Hold an SGM to reinstate delegates.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

##### **Probably the most popular and practical suggestions were:**

- Branches should use their national delegates to feed back on CC decisions
- A process to bring together branch chairs and secretaries
  - A WA group
  - A regular or ad hoc meeting
- Co-opt onto CC as many people as is constitutionally allowed from those branches with no CC delegates
- Set up a branch section of the website where branches can announce their local activities
- National SHA to notify branches of work with Shadow teams and invite relevant expertise to input
- SHA will notify branches of any actions or decisions which directly impact on branch functions