

COVID-19 - UPDATE 4

Introduction

Since our last Newsletter, the programme of vaccination has made substantial progress and there is at last hope of phased return to some semblance of normality. The national plan is to have the entire population offered vaccination by the end of July. Societies may be hesitant about an early return of physical meetings but things may be clearer by the end of the year.

Annual General Meeting 2020

The emergency arrangements agreed by the Executive Committee, involved members acceptance of the continuing service of the current Officers and Committee until the next AGM, the approval of the Minutes of AGM 2019, the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports, and the Trustees' Report and Financial Statement for 2019-2020. The Committee sought approval for the their appointment of the Auditor for 2021-2022. Replies were received from 20 members, all approving the suggested arrangements. The Committee also sought nominations from members of individuals who would agree to be co-opted to the Committee. Three members were suggested and were subsequently co-opted. These were-

Aine Ni Duibhne - Donegal Historical Society,

Helen Meehan -Donegal Historical Society, and

Sean Barden - Armagh and District History Group.

The Committee is grateful for the members' cooperation and thanks all those who participated.

Executive Committee

The Committee has continued to meet monthly, by Zoom; not an ideal way, but better than not meeting at all.

The committee has been considering how it might be possible to develop a programme of events; seminars, workshops etc using Zoom, which has extensive capability to host such events. Over the next period we will explore the opportunities and advise on progress.

One of the key issues discussed was the Federation's finances over the next period, specifically income from Public Liability Insurance (PLI), which is renewed in March, with contributions being sought from April, and membership fees, due to be renewed in October.

In Newsletter No 53 - August 2020, the Executive Committee set out revised fees and PLI charges, reducing all by 50%. Societies that paid membership fees by Standing Order were asked not to change the Bank Mandate and, as promised at the time, they were refunded £25 in November. Members that had already paid the full charge for PLI were promised that 50% would be taken into account in 2021-2022. At the meeting on 24 February the Committee discussed the position for the next period. A return to full fees and charges was ruled out because of the possible impact on societies. There were three options -

1. Continue the 50% reduction for both membership fees and PLI charges,
2. 50% reduction for fees and 100% for PLI charges
3. No fees or charges

It was decided that Option 3 was not feasible as it would result in a loss of income of almost £6,000.00. Option 1 would return a small surplus - £170. Option 2 leads to a loss of £3,500. Recognising the reduced circumstances of many of the member societies, the Committee approved option 2.

Consequently, there will be no call for contributions to the PLI scheme this year, which will nevertheless provide full cover for Societies' meetings and events. One consequence of this is that those Societies that paid the full amount in 2020-2021 for PLI will have the remaining 50% repaid as soon as possible. This amounts to almost £1,500 and contributes to the overall losses.

The result of these decisions means that the full cost of membership for 2021-2022 will be £25.00/ €27.00. As before, we ask societies who pay by Standing Order not to change their Bank Mandate and the excess will be refunded in November 2021.