



The Royal Society of Saint George

Branch Toolkit

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BRANCHES ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST GEORGE

This document is a Toolkit to assist those forming a new Branch. It should be read in conjunction with the Recommended New Branch Rules.

1. INTRODUCTION

To form a Branch of the Royal Society of St. George is and should be an event of significance within the area it will serve.

Those who wish to inaugurate a Branch should satisfy themselves of the purpose, goals, geographic centre, resources and potential for Branch membership. A period of local consultation should take place.

The Royal Charter

The Charter of Incorporation of the Society shall be strictly observed and in any event the provisions of the Charter shall prevail in all cases. In accordance with the Charter the objects of the Society are:

- I. To foster the love of England and to strengthen England and the Commonwealth by spreading the knowledge of English history, traditions and ideals.
- II. To keep fresh the memory of those in all walks of life who have served England or the Commonwealth in the past, in order to inspire leadership in the Future.
- III. To combat all activities likely to undermine the strength of England or the Commonwealth.
- IV. To further English interests everywhere, to ensure that St. George's Day is properly celebrated and to provide focal points all the World over where English men and women may gather together.

Useful Definitions:

The Society

"The Society" shall mean The Royal Society of Saint George as incorporated by Royal Charter (See Copy of the Royal Charter at Appendix 1.)

The Branch

"The Branch" shall be a Branch of The Royal Society of St. George as incorporated by Royal Charter and named by agreement of the Council

Branch Members

“Branch Members” shall mean Members born in England or of English descent, who support the Objects of the Society. They may attend General Meetings, vote and be elected to the Branch Committee.

Branch Associate Members

“Branch Associate Members” shall mean Members of other than English descent that subscribe to and express a desire to support the Objects of the Society. They may attend Branch General Meetings and vote, but not serve on the Committee. (See Rule 7 of the Recommended New Branch Rules regarding an exception to Branch Associate Members not being able to serve on the Committee)

The Council

“The Council” shall mean the Council of the Society as constituted in the Charter and Bye-laws. (See copy of the Royal Society’s Bye-Laws at Appendix 2.)

The Committee

“The Committee” shall mean the Management Committee of the Branch as constituted in the Charter, Bye-laws and the Branch Rules.

2. INAUGURAL MEETING

Once the Council of the Royal Society of St George have approved the application to commence the formation of a new Branch, the Proposers should organise an open and public inaugural meeting. This should include invitations to all of the organisations and bodies locally, with which the Society may have good relations, to establish connection, support and possibly to introduce new members. The General Secretary of the Society will communicate with those Society Members who do not belong to a particular Branch, but reside within the geographical area of the proposed new Branch, inviting them to become involved in its formation and attend the inaugural meeting.

- a) At this meeting, or subsequent, an inaugural committee should be formed, and the appointments ratified by those present. Their number shall include the three Members of the Society previously notified to the General Secretary of the Society.
- b) The Inaugural Committee may operate on a formal basis with a Chairman and Officers. It will not be an official body of the Society at this stage.
- c) The minimum number of members required to sustain a new Branch will normally be ten. Please note that the entire membership will need to be Members, Branch Members, or Branch Associate Members of the Royal Society.
- d) The Inaugural Committee will draw up the RULES for the new Branch making use of the Recommended New Branch Rules, and identify the proposed Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Other posts such as a Deputy Chairman, Membership Secretary, Chaplain, Liaison Officer, Branch Events Organiser or ceremonial posts may be included, but are not an issue for foundation.
- e) The Minutes of the Inaugural meeting together with the names of the proposed Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and those who attended etc. shall be sent to the General Secretary of the Society together with the proposed Rules appropriate to the Branch, and application to the Council for Branch Formation.
- f) Upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Society, the Council will consider the application for Formation and make a ruling. The General Secretary will convey the result to the Inaugural Committee.

- g) After application for the forming of a Branch has been approved by the Council, a date for the Foundation meeting shall be established by the (now) Prospective Branch.
- h) The Prospective Branch Committee should seek a local person to be proposed as the President if, and only if, they can find someone to support the Branch who is of good standing and well known locally. The President, once elected by the members, will be the Branch figurehead whose job is to help it succeed in the local community.
- i) The Branch may wish to hold a reception or dinner to receive their Foundation Charter from the Society's Chairman, Regional Councillor or local dignitary.
- j) The Foundation meeting shall be arranged for members to formally launch the new Branch. They will accept the jurisdiction of the Charter of the Royal Society of St. George and its Bye-laws, and will adopt the Rules approved by Council and elect a Secretary, Treasurer, Committee members and other positions such as an independent accounts examiner and President as required within the Rules. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected by the Committee at their first meeting after the Foundation meeting.
- k) At this stage The President / Chairman may wish to offer loyal greetings to our Patron and forward greetings to the President of the Society. (See template letters at Appendix 3.)

3. GOVERNANCE: OFFICERS OF THE BRANCH

- a) The affairs of the Branch shall be controlled, managed and regulated by a Committee consisting of, as a minimum:
- Chairman
 - Vice Chairman
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer

Then, as membership numbers increase, a **Branch Membership Secretary** should be elected. The minimum number of members required to sustain a new Branch will normally be ten. **Please note that the entire membership will need to be Members, Branch Members, or Branch Associate Members of The Society.**

- b) Succession planning is essential for the longevity of the Branch. Even Chairmen get ill, go on holiday, or get caught up with work. A **Vice Chairman** keeps the momentum going.
- c) The **Treasurer** will open a **Bank account** in the name of **“The Royal Society of St. George followed by the title of the Branch”**; with two signatories being required on all cheques, one being the Treasurer. It is advisable to have at least two other committee members as signatories.
- In preference to payment by cheque, members should be encouraged to complete a Standing Order to their Bank for the annual payment of their combined Branch & Society membership fees to the Branch Bank Account.
 - In due time, the Treasurer may consider the introduction of Direct Debit Mandates as the vehicle by which members make all their payments to the Branch. See <https://gocardless.com/direct-debit/mandates/>
 - All donations, payments and subscriptions received by a Branch, or any Officer thereof, from the members of the Branch, or otherwise for the purpose of running the Branch, as well as all other assets of the Branch remaining after the discharge of its liabilities, other than members' Society fees due to The Society, shall be the property of the Branch.

- No Branch or Officer thereof shall have power to pledge the credit of or incur any liability whatsoever in the name or on behalf of The Society or any other Branch and neither The Society nor any other Branch or any Officer thereof respectively shall be liable for any act, omission, neglect or default of any other Branch or any Officer thereof.
- d) The Branch **Membership Secretary** will take over from the Branch Secretary the responsibility of administering the induction of new members, chase up membership renewals and take the lead on thinking of ways to increase membership. The Membership Secretary should liaise with the Society's General Secretary to obtain details of The Society members, living within the catchment area of the Branch, who have no affiliation to another Branch and did not attend the inaugural meeting. Contact should then be made with these members, to gently encourage them to join the Branch and, if appropriate, particularly form a relationship with housebound members so they have an active connection with the Society.
- e) The Society's General Secretary, will forward the details of any new applicants for membership who live within the Branch catchment area and have approached the Administration Office direct. The Branch Membership Secretary should then contact the applicant, establish suitability, and if acceptable initiate the joining procedure. The Society's General Secretary will already have passed the Branch contact details to the applicant.
- f) On the admission of a new member, the Branch Secretary/Membership Secretary should as soon as possible, send a copy of the approved application form to the General Secretary of The Society, for registration of the member's details on the Society's Nominal Roll, the Journal mailing list and The Society Chairman's Newsletter email distribution group.

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At the same time the member's initial annual Society membership fee should be sent in full by the Branch Treasurer to the General Secretary, preferably by electronic transfer to:

BANK NAME	NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK PLC
ACCOUNT NAME:	ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE
ACCOUNT NUMBER:	14742497
SORT CODE:	60-07-29
BIC:	NWBK GB 2L
IBAN:	GB19 NWBK 6007 2914 7424 97
REFERENCE:	BRANCH NAME & Member's surname

To be then followed up by an email to the General Secretary confirming the transfer.

- g) The next step will be for the Branch Secretary/Membership Secretary, to prepare a Royal Society of St George Certificate of Membership, membership card, visiting cards and The Society lapel badge for formal presentation to the new member by the Branch President or Chairman at the next suitable Branch function. (See templates of Membership Certificate at Appendix 4; Membership Card at Appendix 5; and Visiting Cards at Appendix 6.)

All committee members must go out of their way to make new members feel welcome.

4. BRANCH RULES

The affairs of the Branch shall be conducted in accordance with Rules formulated within the spirit of the Bye-laws set forth in the Schedule to the Royal Charter and the Recommended New Branch Rules.

5. NETWORKING

- a) Once the branch has been formed, the first and most important step to take is to get its existence known in the local community. You will already have a starting point of members from amongst your friends, family, colleagues and the inaugural meeting, but the more people that know of you, and the more people that join your Branch, the greater the likelihood of early success. Liaise with the local organisers in nearby villages, towns and cities who celebrate St George's Day. Consider contacting the Presidents of any military messes in your area and Station Commanders of the Fire & Rescue Service.
- b) The Society encourages fellowship and meeting new friends. Remember folk join for the social side too. The description on the back of the Visiting cards (See Appendix 6.) presented to new members will assist them to explain what the Society is about to their friends.
- c) Seriously consider the use of e-commerce, social media and local news media. Promote your Branch on the Society's website www.rssg.org.uk and in the journal.
- d) Consider giving each Branch Committee member a number of Branch leaflets, to be handed out at events at which there is an English/British/traditional flavour - and also to place through the letterboxes of those houses and companies which fly English flags. (See RSSG Branch leaflet for home printer at Appendix 7)

6. FOUNDATION CHARTER

Hold a reception or dinner when you receive your charter from the Society's Chairman, Regional Councillor or local dignitary. Send a press release to your local paper.

7. CHARITY

- a) Donating to charity has been a principle purpose since The St. George's Society of New York was founded by Englishmen in 1770 to celebrate St. George's Day and to assist fellow countrymen in need or distress.
- b) Pick a local charity, or a few, to support each year. Not only will you receive support for your events from other people, who support the charity, but it will be enormously helpful to have a reason to raise charitable donations, and the Branch will gain some valuable networking and publicity. Remember that we have our own charitable trust, the

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Royal Society of St. George Charitable Trust (Registered Charity No:
263076)

8. LOCAL DIGNITARIES

- a) Invite your local Mayor (or Mayors, depending on the geographical spread of your branch) to your events / functions. Their role is neutral as far as politics is concerned, and they are always involved in charities and community groups in their areas.
- b) All recipients of the Victoria Cross or the George Cross are automatically invited to be Honorary Members of the Society. Make sure you contact any recipients living in your locality. The General Secretary of the Society should be able to provide you with these member's contact details. (The Chief Executive/Secretary to the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association, Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX; Email: secretary@vcandgc.org; Telephone: 020 7930 3506)
- c) Make contact with the local Member of Parliament who may belong to the Royal Society of St George All Party Parliamentary Group at the House of Commons

9. EVENTS

- a) Events at different venues around your area could attract a wider network of people. So, although your annual programme of events will centre on the major English events (St George's Day, Trafalgar, Waterloo, Battle of Britain, etc.) consider other events of interest. We are not an elitist organisation so make every attempt to cater for all incomes and interests. Whilst loving England and Englishness and supporting the Objects of the Society, remember to have fun.
- b) It certainly is not easy, but if at all possible, it is strongly recommended that a Calendar of Events for the whole year be prepared by the Committee, to be announced at the Branch Annual General Meeting, for the benefit of members who wish to plan their social life well ahead. Improved attendance at events may be the reward.
- c) It is incumbent on the President and Committee to go out of their way to make members, guests and particularly new members welcome at every event. Don't let them just wander in. The person who you ignore as they come in is the person who will never come back and who might have been a valuable member.
- d) Keeping in the public eye is a vital part of your success, send a news release on every formal event you do to your local newspapers and radio

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/ television stations, advising them of the venue, anyone of importance who attended, and the charity you supported. Photographs are always good. Many areas have more than one local newspaper, together with monthly advertisers. They always welcome well produced text and pictures, with a decent report which can be turned into 'copy' without too much effort and there is more chance it will get published. Do not forget there is also a growth of online newspapers. These often get the news into the public domain quicker than traditional papers. .

- e) Have your own Branch page or pages on the Society's website www.rssg.org.uk so that you can not only show who you are and what you do, give contact details and officers, and share what you are doing, past current and future events and any other news. Consider a page on the websites of local towns as well. Your Branch can have its own email address. For details contact the Webmaster at webmaster@rssg.org.uk.
- f) Also consider using The Society's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/RoyalSocietyofStGeorge the Twitter account: @RSSStGeorge and why not join us on LinkedIn – The Royal Society of St. George Official Group.

10. SUGGESTED EVENTS

- a) In order to attract new members and keep old ones, you should hold regular formal and informal events during the year both during the day and in the evening thereby catering for all tastes. The major events in the Englishman's diary are:

Queen Elizabeth's Birthday	21st April
St George's Day	23rd April
Victory in Europe Day	8th May
"D" Day	6th June
Falkland Islands Liberation	14th June
Battle of Waterloo	18th June
Victory in Japan day	15th August
Battle of Britain Day	15th September
Trafalgar Day	21st October
Battle of Agincourt	25th October
Armistice Day	11th November
Remembrance Sunday	Sunday closest to 11 th November

- b) **Your Committee Members will have their own ideas** but you may like to also consider the following:
- Honour local recipients of the Victoria Cross and George Cross.
 - Celebrate and keep the memory alive of local famous English heroes, artists, musicians, inventors, scientists, etc.
 - A Garden party
 - Cultural pursuits – Trips to the theatre, art galleries, music/concerts, etc.
 - Skittles competition
 - Quizzes

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- Trip to a place of interest: breweries, fire stations, manufacturers, national trust historic houses and or gardens such as Chartwell for example
 - Visit to the battle fields of Europe
 - City Break in the UK or Europe
 - Fish & chip supper
 - Mini cruise
 - Attend a military display e.g. "Trooping the Colour", "Beating Retreat" or a local tattoo
 - Consider holding joint events with other branches in your region.
 - Hold luncheons as well as dinners
 - Dances
 - Wine Tasting
 - Cookery demonstrations
 - General community occasions, such as Village Fairs, Real Ale Festivals, Flower shows etc.
- c) There may be members who have no wish to participate in events, and want nothing more than to be members of a fine patriotic Society that supports their aspiration of The England that we would all like. Don't neglect them, try to keep in touch with them by sending them a Christmas card or a newsletter (if you do them), etc.

11. OTHER MATTERS

- a) **School Affiliation** – Branches may wish to consider the establishment of a liaison with local Heads of School, to establish whether promotion of Englishness and the values held dear by English people are taught to pupils as part of the history of our Country. Consider the annual presentation of a framed Royal Society of St George certificate to a pupil for sport or academic achievement. The concept of affiliation by the school to the society could be a possibility and the Branch may wish to sponsor an affiliation certificate for the school and fund the one-off £50 affiliation fee.
- b) **Easy fundraising** -- Encourage your members to help raise funds for the **Royal Society of St. George Charitable Trust** (Registered Charity No: 263076), if they or their partners buy goods online or participate in grocery home shopping, ask them to check out the easy fundraising scheme website below, as the Charitable Trust can get a donation every time a purchase is made through it. They will simply need to register at: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> & then select **The Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust** as their chosen charity and carry on shopping online as normal using this site as their portal. Participating stores include; John Lewis, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Amazon. **It's absolutely free to the individual shopper** and the Charitable Trust can gain donations from the participating retailers of up to 2.5% or more of the value of your shopping. **N.B. Every little helps.**
- c) **Regalia etc.** -- The Branch Secretary should maintain a small stock of Royal Society of St George lapel badges and ties; these and Badges of Office for Committee members can be purchased through the Society's Administration Centre which has a small stock of other Society related items for sale to members. (See "Shop Window" at www.rssg.org.uk and in "St George for England")
- d) **Promotion** – Consider a Royal Society of St George stall at village fetes, county fairs, and farmers' shows in-fact anywhere where you can present and preserve English culture but at the same time advertise your Branch and the Society. The General Secretary of the Society will know the location of the Society's gazebo, which all branches are welcome to use. Amongst your members there may be good public speakers who will be willing to add their names onto the Speakers lists of other local organisations, and offer to talk about St George, England's National Day and our Royal Society. If they do not ask for a fee, it will be a great attraction to many organisations. Such speaking engagements will be an

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ideal opportunity to distribute The Society's general information leaflet (See Appendix 7.) and may well result in membership enquiries.

- e) **Communication with members** – The Members should receive regular communications from the Committee. When known, the details of future events should be set out clearly – date, time, place, costs and description etc.
- f) **Annual General Meeting** – Consider having a brunch, tea and cakes or combining it with another event. It may encourage members to attend and give them an opportunity to chat amongst themselves. Make sure that there is time in the meeting for the members to discuss what is **important to them**. This meeting of the Branch should not just be a formality, but an enjoyable event.
- g) **Subscriptions** – The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society sets the Society's membership fees. The Branch AGM on the recommendation of the Committee will set any additional subscription for the requirements of the Branch. Members who belong to more than one Branch need only pay the Society's membership fee once.

12. REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

- a) The Society has divided the country into six regions: North, North East, Middle, South, South East and South West. Your Regional Councillor is appointed to serve all the Branch Committees in your Region, by providing support, advice, assistance, appreciation and encouragement. He/she is the conduit by which you can quickly raise issues of an urgent nature with the Council.
- b) Make a point of inviting your Councillor to the occasional committee meeting preferably at least twice a year. This will enable your Committee to be kept up to date with what is happening within the Society, and have a direct input into any innovations being considered by the Council. If the Regional Councillor is unable to attend your Committee, please send copy of the Minutes to him or her.
- c) Regional Meetings between the officers of neighbouring branches may on occasions be advantageous for the exchange of ideas and the organisation of larger combined events.
- d) To qualify as a Regional Councillor a candidate shall have been endorsed by at least two Branches situated in the Region from which the candidate comes, and seeks to represent. A signed Resolution of the Secretary on behalf of the Branch Committee shall be conclusive evidence of this support. Should your Committee identify and wish to promote a suitable candidate, the support of another Branch Committee in your Region will be required before the name can be put forward to the Council for approval.

13. HOLDING AN EVENT

N.B. Give Plenty of notice to the members!

- a) **Insurance:** The society organises public liability cover for Branch events and the Administration office will send information to the Branch Secretary on request and automatically on annual renewal. Be aware that it is the responsibility of the Branch Committee to ensure that any sub-contractors they use and any venues they hire have their own insurance cover.
- b) Make sure that you try the venue beforehand, so that you know that the quality and service is good. Arrange for a tasting of the menu choices well before the event.

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- c) Advertise the event in your yearly calendar, and then again to members and anyone else you would like to attend, at least two months before the event. If you have no restriction on numbers, use the Society's website to advertise the event to other members of the Society (See Advertisement sample at Appendix 8 and Sponsorship Request sample at Appendix 9.)
- d) If a formal function, find a key speaker, on the subject of the evening or about something of interest. If your key speaker is something of a coup, make sure you shout about this on all your advertising!
- e) Make it clear what the event is, the date, time, venue, and price. If there is a menu choice, specify this and be sure to ask for details of any special dietary requirements. Be clear on the dress code.
- f) If wine is included, say so. If it is not, make this clear and also make it clear how guests may deal with this on the night [Cash Bar, order in advance, for example]
- g) Give people a deadline to reply by, and make it clear that you cannot take any bookings after that deadline. If space is limited indicate that it must be "first come first served", consider a "reserve list" in case of cancellations.
- h) Ensure that people pay when they book. That way they won't duck out at the last moment for no good reason.

7 days before

- a) Hopefully, you will have filled all your places. If not, you still have time to ring a few people or send one last email.
- b) Advise the venue of menu choices, if appropriate, and numbers attending.
- c) Make sure your key speaker / entertainment is still available!
- d) Prepare a detailed **Running Order** and make sure the venue management and all committee members have a copy. (See Example Running Order at Appendix 10.)

A formal function

- e) **Menus:** no less than one for every two people. Include the toasts and who is giving them, any entertainment, perhaps some information about the Society and your branch, and particularly about your chosen charity. **(DO NOT FORGET TO INCLUDE THE CHARITY'S REGISTERED**

CHARITY NUMBER) Consider obtaining Gift Aid envelopes from the Charity and place one at each place setting.

- f) **Table plan:** give this some thought – you might want to put prospective or new members with long standing charismatic members and single people on a welcoming table. It doesn't work to have people sit where they please, no-one networks that way.
- g) **Place cards:** if appropriate, some branches put the menu choice on the place card. This is very helpful for all those people who forget what they ordered! If not, take a list with you so that at least someone knows who has ordered what.
- h) **Decorating:** make sure that you make good use of the cross of St George in your decorations, so it is clear who you are. Table flags, bunting, table mats, napkins, menu covers etc. But see Rule 5 of the Recommended New Branch Rules regarding the use of the Armorial Bearings of the Royal Society.
- i) **Chairman and/or President:** ensure that he/she are aware that they must be available to greet guests and make them welcome.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Copy of Royal Charter

Appendix 2 – Society Bye Laws

Appendix 3 – Letters of Loyal Greetings

Appendix 4 – Certificate of Membership

Appendix 5 – Visiting Card Front

Appendix 6 – Visiting Card Back

Appendix 7 – RSSG Branch Flyer

Appendix 8 – Event Advertisement Example

Appendix 9 – Event Sponsorship Request Example

Appendix 10 – Sample Event Running Order

Please note that all appendices can be found at the following page:

<http://www.rssg.org.uk/branches/establishing-a-new-branch/>