



Women in Fellowship

From the Central Chairman

11th May 2019

Dear Members

Thank you to all members who attended our recent AGM. Whilst planning the event, Executive pondered how to structure the day to make the journey and commitment more worthwhile for attendees. Thus, after the business had finished we divided into groups and exchanged ideas.

One topic which we wanted to hear views upon was our current calendar. Attendance at events is waning as we get older. Members are reluctant to stay overnight and branches are ageing and downsizing and thus reticent to volunteer to organise large events. This is especially pertinent to Founders' Meeting and Autumn Conference but also impacts attendance at the AGM and Branch Officers' Conference (BOC).

There was no support for the continuance of BOC. Reasons cited were that it was 'a national event too many', 'yet another talking shop' and 'a waste of money'.

One proposal that we aired was to combine the AGM with another event, perhaps Founders' Meeting. Initially this was thought to be an option, however after further discussion many members felt that combining a business meeting with a more social and spiritual one was not viable; the day would be very long, the events appealed to different members and funding of places could throw up difficulties. The benefit of Regional discussion groups was valued but centralised 'hub' meeting venues weren't universally supported. Nevertheless the value of Regional WF gatherings was recognised and many members wanted more Regional and Fellowship Days.

As a result of the feedback we have received from members, Executive has decided to trial a new concept, similar to this year, which found favour with members. We propose that in 2020 the AGM and Regional Forums are combined into one event, the AGM on 1st April in Benn Hall. Following completion of business, instead of random allocation, members will be assigned discussion groups which reflect Regional groupings. Thus the repetition of discussion topics in the spring and autumn is avoided as we shall not be holding Regional Forums this year.

I know that work has already been undertaken at branch level to arrange venues for Regional Forums in October 2019 and we are very grateful, however they will now not be needed. There will be no Forums this autumn as there are no new discussion topics.

If any branch that has booked an external venue finds that any deposits paid are non-returnable, please get in touch with Alison, our Central Treasurer.

I hope that you will welcome this trial; we shall assess its effectiveness next year and report back to branches.

With best wishes and in fellowship
Sarah

P.S. From Central Secretary

Please note that the Digest of Group Discussion, which triggered the Executive decision, can be found on the website both in the Regional Forum and the AGM sections.

Also on the website in the main area of the Members' Area is the Chairman's April 2019 Newsletter