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Chairman

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Dear Member

IMPORTANT MEMBER INFORMATION

Our Society has had an exciting year with more events than ever and a substantial increase in our membership. Over 100 people have joined the Society since June 2017 and our membership is now at 470. This growth is very encouraging as it shows that we are getting many things right and means that we will have a broader constituency and be able to offer a wider range of events. But it is also a challenge to the Committee and we have been considering how we can respond. We are taking a number of steps to manage the situation.

New membership procedure. More members are welcome but we foresee the day when we may need to restrict total membership numbers so that we can maintain our standards for existing members. In order to monitor total membership numbers, in future we will require new applicants to submit an application which will need to be confirmed and payment requested before membership is finalised. We are not putting a limit on membership numbers yet but this may come in time. Existing members will not be affected provided they renew their membership each year. When memberships are due for renewal you will be reminded, but we will not hold your place for ever and after six weeks without renewing, your membership will cease.

Subscriptions. We are increasing the subscription rates from £20 single and £35 joint membership, to £25 single and £45 joint membership with effect from 1st July 2018. People renewing after that date will have to pay at the higher rate. Your membership renewal date has not changed and you will be reminded by email or letter at the appropriate anniversary of your last payment. As we explained at the last AGM, when this increase was signalled, we are increasing these rates because the subscription is designed to cover the basic running costs of the Society including the *Review*, lectures and mailings. Last year these cost us around £12,000 but membership fees only generated £9,000. We need to close this gap gradually so as to avoid cross-subsidising between paid-for events and those benefits which are part of the membership fee.

Events. We are also going to tighten up the arrangements for events. Because the demand from members is so high we have decided that, as a general rule, we will no longer make study events open to non-members as guests. From now on, those attending events must be paid-up members who have booked and paid for a ticket. Turning up on the day without a ticket for study events or courses in the hope of joining the event is not permissible. If we were to allow this we would be unfairly favouring a gate-crasher over a person on the waiting list. I hope we can rely on your support in being firm in this policy which we believe is in the interests of all members. If anyone is in doubt about the status of their own booking they can easily contact us and ask. Please remember to bring your ticket or payment confirmation with you to the first day. Tickets can only be used by the member in whose name they were booked and cannot be transferred. If you cannot use your ticket, do let us know in case there is someone else waiting for a place.

Lectures are not subject to the same pressure for places and will continue on the current basis, ie. no booking is required and members may invite guests for a fee of £5 each, and visiting full-time students may attend for a fee of £3.

Waiting Lists. We take great care to manage waiting lists fairly. If a place becomes available we approach the first person to book a waiting list place and move down the list in strict order. Places can become available up until the afternoon of the day before the event. If you have not heard from us, that sadly means no place has become available.

Volunteers. All the events we put on are run by volunteers and we are extremely grateful for all their hard work. I always ask for new volunteers to help us to run events when I write to members. Putting on an event is not difficult and we have a comprehensive Handbook to help the event organiser. Please consider offering to volunteer if you think you might be able to help. Your contribution is guaranteed to be appreciated.

John Dunlop
Chairman