

## Finance FAQs

Committees are reminded that the RSC is a charity and that as such all RSC funds should be used wisely to fulfil the purpose of the networks and to support our community.

### FAQs

The following questions have been asked on a number of occasions so to support our volunteers we have captured them here - if you have any suggestions for other points to include please just let us know.

### Charitable donations

Can we spend our committee funds on...

- Sponsoring a committee member/member who is raising funds for another charity?
- Making a donation to a local charity?
- Making a donation to the Chemists' Community Fund?
  - Generally the answer is no, our charitable status means that we cannot use our funds to support other charities unless their purpose is aligned to that of the RSC. If you believe that this is the case, please contact the Networks Team for confirmation before committing any funds.
  - An exception to this is the case of a funeral where a charitable donation is asked for instead of flowers. This can use committee funds, and needs to be recorded as "in lieu of flowers for the funeral of XXX" in the report so that is not queried on submission.

### Gifts

- Can we buy a gift for a committee member/member who is retiring/unwell?
  - Please refer to our [Gift and Hospitality Policy](#).
  - We do have some items on the brand centre which are suitable for use as gifts which can be purchased with the committee funds in line with the Gift and Hospitality Policy.
- Can we buy items from the brand centre for all members of the committee as a thank you for volunteering for the committee?
  - Not normally, we have a recognition process to thank our volunteers and welcome nominations for the Long Service Award, Volunteer Recognition Awards and certificates of recognition.

### Committee

- Can we have an annual dinner for the committee to celebrate our achievements?
  - No, while refreshments at meetings are acceptable we cannot fund celebratory meals.
- Can we buy alcohol for committee meetings?
  - No, we do not consider it appropriate to have alcohol at any business meetings.

### Resources

- Can we buy a computer/laptop/tablet/printer/camera/tablet... for the group/section for use at our events?
  - Not without prior approval - normally hardware purchases would not be approved, if approval is given then each item should be registered with the Networks Team and allocated a committee member responsible for the safe storage of the items.

### Professional services

In some cases, it is necessary for our member networks to engage the services of professional support services to enhance their programme of activities for their community. In all cases there **must** be a contract approved by our Legal Team and signed by a member of RSC staff before work can start.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Event organisers

- Science communicators
- Professional trainers or presenters
- Website designers

Our member networks are not permitted to employ anyone, including students, to undertake work on behalf of the network - this includes running social media, undertaking projects or any other casual work.

If any committee is considering paying an individual for any activity this **must** be highlighted to the Networks Team before any agreement is made. In the past, networks have paid students to complete projects on their behalf and this has put the RSC at significant financial and legal risk. Regardless of the financial value of the work, our member networks do not have the authority to employ anyone on behalf of the RSC. If a bursary is made available to support specific projects or a student placement they **must** adhere to the guidelines for bursaries.

### Online platforms

The RSC has acquired licences for GotoMeeting, GotoWebinar and Zoom specifically for the use of our member networks. Although individual licences for these types of platforms are not costly, the changes in data protection law mean that the RSC has negotiated specific contracts with the providers to protect our members and as such, our member networks, must not purchase their own licences without prior consultation with our Networks and Legal teams.

Other platforms may be more appropriate for online events and conferences and where necessary they can be used but the RSC Legal Team must be consulted on the terms and conditions prior to purchase.

### Expenses

We are often asked for guidance on acceptable expenses to be claimed by both speakers and committee members both for travel and miscellaneous committee expenses. We want to ensure that no volunteers are out of pocket for activities supporting the RSC on behalf of their network however, we do recommend that the following points are noted:

- All expenditure should be approved in principle by the committee, before it is accrued, and noted in the minutes to avoid disputes.
- Volunteers cannot be paid for any part of their role, only out of pocket expenses may be reimbursed.
- The cost of a licence for software or online platform can only be reimbursed following approval from the Networks Team.

### Travel expenses

The following guidance is standard across the organisation and we recommend that all committees adhere to these points.

We strongly recommend that you advise speakers of these points before they book their travel.

- First class travel costs cannot be reimbursed unless evidence is provided to show that the first class fare was lower than standard class.
- A glass of wine or beer with dinner for overnight stays is reasonable but further drinks should not be reimbursed.
- The cost of overnight accommodation should be approved by the committee prior to booking.

### Brand Centre

Most of our member networks have a small allocation of budget to purchase items from the brand centre. This was put in place to enable our volunteers to make branded literature and to acquire promotional items for use at their events. We ask that committees only order items that they need for specific events, there is no **need** to spend the allocated funds and as charitable funds should only be used as needed. We also ask that volunteers consider the environmental impact of over-ordering and only using promotional items that will add to the impact of activities.

### **Bursaries**

All bursaries should be registered with the Networks Team before they are promoted - we hold a register of all awards and bursaries offered by our member networks so that we can ensure that all available support for their operation and promotion is offered to the managing committees.

While the decisions on the details of bursaries sit with the committee the following guidance should be taken on board by all of our committees.

- All decisions regarding the bursaries must be recorded in committee minutes which should then be sent to the Networks Team for archiving.
- All bursaries must be promoted to the network community and the following should be publicly available - details of the criteria, value, judging process and application deadline.
- Bursaries should not be open to members of the committee.
- If any bursary applications are received from anyone with a working or personal relationship with any committee member then this should be noted and the committee member must not be involved in the selection of successful candidates. The conflict of interest should be noted in the minutes and registered with the Networks Team.

### **Awards**

All awards should be registered with the Networks Team before they are promoted - we hold a register of all awards and bursaries offered by our member networks so that we can ensure that all available support for their operation and promotion is offered to the managing committees.

While the decisions on the details of awards sit with the committee the following guidance should be taken on board by all of our committees.

- All decisions regarding the awards must be recorded in committee minutes which should then be sent to the Networks Team for archiving.
- All awards must be promoted to the network community and the following should be publicly available - details of the criteria, judging process and application deadline.
- Awards should not be open to members of the committee.
- If any awards nominations are received from anyone with a working or personal relationship with any committee member then this should be noted and the committee member must not be involved in the selection of successful candidates. The conflict of interest should be noted in the minutes and registered with the Networks Team.

### **Conflicts of interest**

In any case where a financial transaction, support or payment in kind is made, all conflicts of interest must be noted in the committee minutes and registered with the Networks Team. This includes, but is not limited to, awards and bursaries, funding opportunities, payment for services and sponsorship.

A conflict of interest is where there is a benefit for an individual or organisation to whom a member of the committee has a relationship. This includes, but is not limited to, personal and professional relationships, organisations of which a committee member is a member or trustee or company.