

Specialist Societies and Philatelic Federations have, from time immemorial, sought to bring their membership together by combining a social event with a philatelic get-together. Family and friends who are only marginally interested in stamps are encouraged to attend by arranging a venue close to non-philatelic points of interest.

You must be aware that for those intending to organise such an event, there are a number of considerations which need to be addressed, namely:

- The location needs to be convenient for the membership.
- How many people are you intending to accommodate:
a) in the meeting room and b) needing overnight accommodation?
- Will they be travelling by rail, motor vehicle or on foot?
- If by motor vehicle is there enough parking for cars or coach? Availability for helicopter landing facilities have been requested of some conference organisers.
- Provide full details of the venue including a telephone number and a postal code. In these days of the internet it is possible to download a detailed map of the immediate vicinity or use it on your SatNav. If you still get lost it is useful to have a telephone number for the venue. This can also be used should something unforeseen occur.

- Are there sufficient things of non-philatelic interest in the vicinity, to encourage other family members to attend?
- Does the venue have other facilities on site which could attract other family members? i.e. golfing range; swimming pool or gymnasium.
- If an outing or guided tour to local attractions is arranged as part of the Conference programme, ensure that a steward is appointed to each coach to keep account of those setting out and returning.
- Few attendees are likely to know every person present or can recall names easily. Name badges of sufficient size and legibility should be considered.
- Does the venue have sufficient capacity for your meeting?
- Is the meeting room(s) laid out to suit your needs, including lighting spread and levels?
- If you have dealers in attendance or display frames to unload is the transportation of goods step-free and easily accomplished with sufficient headroom for larger vehicles?
- If you have competitions, seek judges as early as possible and give them clear directions on how to get to the venue and timing. Ensure that secure storage for hats, coats and briefcases are

available. Two judges are better than one and they should be given sufficient time and seclusion to carry out their judging.

- Will you need speech amplification or any other conference aids? All speakers should be provided with a tumbler of water and a carafe for their comfort. A lectern and a stool could also be beneficial.
- Attendees should be made aware that they are personally responsible for the security of their own material. Ensure that the display room which you use is secure when unattended with lockable doors and windows.
- Is overnight accommodation available of sufficient quantity and comfort to ensure that all attendees are kept together?
- Are catering and dining facilities adequate?
- Consider pre-ordering drinks and the pre-selection of meals.
- If the dinner is intended to be a formal occasion a toastmaster should be appointed and persons identified to say Grace, to propose and respond to toasts and oversee presentations.
- Does the cost of the weekend fall within the price bracket which your members would expect?
- Are there any "hidden" costs, such as provision of refreshments at intervals;

the provision of special equipment or a single person supplement for overnight accommodation?

- Are disabled or elderly attendees easily catered for?
- Do you have attendees with any special dietary requirements?
- The organisers of the conference have a duty to make sure that all aspects of Health and Safety are attended to. i.e trailing flexes; obstructions to means of escape.
- Public Liability Insurance should be in place and may need to be extended to suit the venue. Advise them of your needs at an early juncture to be assured that this is applicable to your conference.
- Photographs of the event are desirable for the society archive, together with samples of menus and toasts arranged.
- In other financial considerations remember that Income will invariably be less than anticipated and expenditure greater and some people will let you down.
- For income, the organisers need to consider the likely attendance and hence the basic charge to attendees can be calculated. Additional income may be accrued from advertising; sponsorship and individual donations. This can be augmented through an approach to the

ABPS Small Grants Committee; by organising a raffle or an auction and by programme sales.

- Expenditure needs to include the hire of frames, judges' expenses and other hospitality, publicity, trophies, name badges, printing of handbooks and menus, Costs of tea / coffee / biscuits during breaks, flowers and committee expenses.
- It would be essential to determine the numbers of participants for outings in order to establish and pre-pay coach hire, gratuities and entry fees.

In compiling this thirty point list, the A.B.P.S. has used, extensively, the contents of the occasional booklet produced by Jeremy J. Martin FRPSL and Alan J. Wood FRPSL for the A.B.P.S. in 2000, entitled "THE ORGANISATION OF A PHILATELIC CONFERENCE", which is now out of print.

The A.B.P.S. has, with help from conference organisers in affiliated societies, compiled a list of hotels and other venues which may, or may not, be useful for Societies / Federations to consider when planning an event. This list is available to affiliated societies, upon request.

ABPS

The Society / Federation Conference Weekend

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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