

The Role of the Treasurer

Along with committee roles such as chair, vice chair, secretary, publicity officer, webmaster, branch /group contact, fundraiser, the role of the treasurer is important to the smooth running of a branch. The treasurer looks after all financial aspects of the branch activities, including day to day book-keeping, banking, volunteers expenses, completion of quarterly returns.

The treasurer alone however does not make decisions about financial support. The committee of a branch makes decisions together regarding financial support, but the committee should be able to look to the treasurer for advice on guidance, particularly relating to monies in their account and forthcoming expenses anticipated. The treasurer should, in turn seek advice when necessary or appropriate from David Niven House.

To help facilitate decisions that need to be taken, the treasurer should provide relevant accounting information to the committee on a regular basis and should also be prepared to explain and report upon the accounts produced. It's important for the committee to be aware of the financial position of the branch.

What does a treasurer do?

The various aspects of the treasurers' role includes:

- maintaining accurate accounting records
- preparing regular reports including accounts for the branch committee ensuring the committee are aware of all forthcoming expenditure
- ensure appropriate financial controls are established and complied with
- advice the branch on effective financial management and the financial implications of committee decisions
- ensuring volunteers expenses are refunded
- ensuring funds received are banked properly
- preparing quarterly accounts and ensuring they are submitted to David Niven House
- it is usual for the treasurer to be one of the signatories to the branch bank account
- taxation, including VAT and Gift Aid
- advising when funds are decreasing and encourage planning to raise additional funds.

Branch treasurers need to submit on a quarterly basis their accounts to David Niven House. The Finance Team have produced pre-populated templates for treasurers to use when filling in their quarterly returns.

Volunteers' expenses

We value highly the work of our volunteers and therefore in line with good volunteering practice and our volunteering policy, all branches and groups are asked to ensure that out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers carrying out their role are reimbursed promptly. This includes all volunteers: committee members, volunteers involved in any satellite groups attached to the branch and Association Visitors.

Expenses claim forms are available on the Volunteer Zone.

What can a volunteer claim for?

- Telephone costs – non dedicated lines and dedicated lines. For dedicated lines a branch contact or Association Visitor may prefer to have a separate phone line installed or wish to purchase a mobile pay as you go phone. There should be no private usage for this phone.
- Travel – costs of taxi, bus and train (standard class) fares for travel which is necessarily undertaken in the course of volunteering
- Mileage allowance (volunteers' own car) currently paid at a rate of 45p per mile.

Wherever possible, receipts should be kept for expenses incurred, which should be attached to the claim form. Further information about claiming expenses can be found on the Volunteer Zone.

The role of treasurer in a group

The role of the treasurer within a group is different, as the accounts for a group are prepared by the Finance Team at David Niven House. A group still needs a treasurer or an appointed person to take on the role of paying money into the group bank account and reporting to the group on what funds are available, this role is often carried out by the group correspondent.

The Finance Team, on a monthly basis, will email an appointed member of the group, or the person taking on the role of treasurer, with a cash flow forecast so this can then be presented to the group for information.

It is important that the treasurer, or the person appointed to bank money and receive the cash flow forecast, keeps the group informed about the finances so this helps to feed into any fundraising plans that the group may have.

Petty cash/cash float

A branch holds their own cheque book so they can pay directly for the hire of venues, refreshments and transport for example. A group however, does not hold their own cheque book so volunteers will often need to pay for items then claim the expenses back from David Niven House.

It is a good idea for a group to ask if payment for items can be via invoice so in effect there is an agreement of credit terms, (the invoice is sent to David Niven House for payment) to keep to a minimum, the amount by which a volunteer is out-of-pocket.

However, where a supplier or venue is not willing to extend credit terms, and there is a regular requirement to use a particular venue or supplier, then it may be suitable for a group member to hold a cash float.

The amount of the float will depend on the particular situation and the group will need to nominate a volunteer to be responsible for the float. The volunteer will need to acknowledge receipt of the float and will be responsible for maintaining a record of spend from the float and submitting this to David Niven House on a monthly basis together with receipts. This will allow for:

- accurate recording of expenditure, and
- to provide the request to top-up the float to its initial level.

As soon as a group decide that a float is no longer required, the balance (after deducting any expenses which have not yet been reimbursed as at that date) should be returned to David Niven House.

For further advice and guidance on floats, or queries relating to group accounts please contact the finance team: finance.team@mndassociation.org or 01604 611814.

Further detailed information on accounting, banking, charity law and many other issues can be found in the Treasurer's Handbook which is available on the Volunteer Zone.

For more information contact the Finance Team or Volunteering Team:

Phone: 01604 611814 (Finance Team)
or 0345 6044 150 (Volunteering Team)

Email: finance.team@mndassociation.org
or volunteering@mndassociation.org

Website: www.mndassociation.org/volunteerzone

