

## Guidelines for branch finances 2023-2024

### Branch bank accounts

From the financial year 2017-18 onwards the rules governing branch bank accounts changed. This is required by both the Charity Commission and by the RSB auditors. All branches must have accounts with online access and full login details must be provided to the RSB finance manager.

If branches do not want online access, branch finances can be handled directly by the RSB finance manager at Head Office. In this case the branch bank account should be closed at the end of the financial year and all remaining funds transferred to the Head Office account.

Several branches already make use of this facility, which removes the need to submit an annual return and involves less admin for the treasurer. Invoices and expense claims are submitted to and paid directly from branch funds held at Head Office and receipts from events are directed to the branches funds.

Please contact us at [regions@rsb.org.uk](mailto:regions@rsb.org.uk) for all document submissions or questions.

Branches are still required to submit the annual **Budget Proposal** document for the financial year.

### Schedule of financial procedures for 2023-2024

The RSB financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> October until 30<sup>th</sup> September.

#### Summer 2023:

- Plan activities for 2023-2024 and submit details on the Budget Proposal document. Branches are required to run a minimum of **four events** each year

#### Before 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023:

- Prepare and submit the Branch Annual Return form for 2023-24 to Head Office.
- Submit the branch bank account statement as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to Head Office.

*NB: These two documents are **not** required for branches where accounts are managed at Head Office and there is no local bank account.*

#### After 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023:

- As soon as **all required documents have been received**, funds will be transferred to the branch account or made available in the Head Office account to top up the balance to the level of the annual allocation.  
**NB:** there is no carryover of unused allocated funds or additional event funding from one year to the next. Where branches have raised additional income from other sources, carry over should be discussed in advance with Head Office.
- Branch treasurers manage finances throughout the year and branches can apply for additional event funding either from the RSB or outside sources as required to run their programme.

Copies of the branch budget proposal and annual return forms can be downloaded from the branch resources page: [www.rsb.org.uk/branch-resources](http://www.rsb.org.uk/branch-resources)

### Branch funding allocation

Each branch will receive a set amount of funding (the branch allocation), after the branch return, bank statements and budget proposal documents have been received and approved by Head Office. The branch allocation will be transferred less any balance remaining from the previous year. For branch accounts held centrally, funds will be available from Head Office once the budget proposal document has been received. The sum allocated should cover the branch general administrative costs, the AGM and as much of the planned programme as possible.

**The branch allocation of funding from RSB in 2023-24 will be the same as for 2022-23.**

### Branch Returns

Each branch holding its own bank account, is required to send a return of branch income and expenditure at the end of each financial year.

The branch annual return form is available on the [branch resources page](#). An example of the completed form is shown below.

<b>EXAMPLE Royal Society of Biology Branch Return 2019-20</b>				
		<b>Year Ending:</b>		<b>30 Sep 2020</b>
<b>Branch Name:</b>				
		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
		<b>Gross Income (£)</b>	<b>Gross Expenditure (£)</b>	<b>Net Funds (£)</b>
Cash Balance @:	30 Sep 2019			£2.00
Branch AGM		£1.00	£1.00	£0.00
Branch Events		£2.00	£2.00	£0.00
Other Events		£3.00	£3.00	£0.00
Branch Administration			£4.00	£-4.00
Branch Committee Travel			£5.00	£-5.00
Other Expenditure			£6.00	£-6.00
RSB Branch Allocation		£15.00		£15.00
Other Income; e.g. Sponsorship		£5.00		£5.00
Bank Charges			£0.00	£0.00
Bank Interest				£0.00
Total Income / Expenditure		£26.00	£21.00	£7.00
Cash Balance @:	30 Sep 2020			£7.00

### Branch planning and budget proposal

We expect each branch to prepare a plan of activities and events during the year and a proposed budget for submission to Head Office, using the budget proposal form. Branches are expected to run a minimum of **four events each year**. We understand that some activities and costs will change during the year but branches are asked to provide as much accurate detail as possible for effective financial planning. Actual expenditure from previous years will be useful in this planning process.

The budget proposal form plus a completed example are available on the [branch resources page](#). and a completed example is shown below. There are two sections within the one-page form:

Table 1: Branch Administration

Table 2: Branch Events

The totals columns in the tables will populate automatically.





### Cash and gift prizes for competitions and regional awards

Cash prizes and vouchers are not permitted for regional competitions and award winners. However, branch funds can be used to purchase small biology related gifts (such as a biology text book or non-fiction book or similar). Gifts should be agreed with the regions team in advance of publicising the competition and all receipts retained as appropriate.

Branches can award prizes of a certificate, a year's complimentary membership / renewal (on request and agreement to the associate director of membership via the regions team), an RSB pin (depending on the event) and acknowledgement of achievement in *The Biologist* or on the RSB website.

Should local sponsors wish to cover a larger cash prize, this would be acceptable however any contract or agreement should be with the RSB and not local members or committees.

In addition, Branch funds **cannot** be used for the following items:

- Charitable donations
- Cash sponsorship of non-branch events, e.g. conference sponsorship
- Transfer of funds to third parties for non-branch events, e.g. school events or prizes
- Cash payments to speakers/presenters unless this is the speaker's main business. Allowed payments should be supported by a business invoice. NB. Fees for specialist guided tours or behind the scenes tours **are** permitted and should be accompanied by an invoice from the attraction/venue. See 'Gifts for speakers' policy above.
- Cash payments to volunteers including branch committee members **except** for expenses incurred in attending branch meetings or organising branch activities. All such expenses must be supported by an expense claim form approved by the branch treasurer and with accompanying receipts.
- Competition / event prizes e.g. cash prizes, vouchers or gifts except as described in the section above.

### Additional event funding

In addition to the basic branch allocation, branch committees will have the opportunity to apply to a separate allocation of funding for specific events (up to £500 for each event), which Head Office will approve on an individual basis for each event.

This additional event funding is intended to supplement branch committee's basic allocation, so that committees with plans to run additional events throughout the year have the opportunity to apply, as and when opportunities arise. A key aim is to help ensure the overall budget for all branches is used effectively and efficiently across all 19 branches throughout the year, maximising the collective impact and efforts of our branches.

The additional event funding application form is available on the [branch resources page](#) and applications can be made at any time during the year.

Branch committees will receive a decision as soon as possible after submitting an application but are encouraged to apply as early as possible to avoid delays in event organisation. We will not necessarily give a yes or no decision, but may instead, offer part funding or suggest alterations to the event proposed.

There is no limit to the number of events branches are able to apply for funding for and each will be judged as much as possible on their individual merit. As with all branch events, impact and value for money will be important considerations, as well as their congruence with the aims of the RSB, and overall budget limits. Another important factor is that there is a balance of events throughout the country and throughout the year.

Half the overall funding pot for additional event funding will be set aside to fund events in the first six months of the financial year, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and half to fund events in the second six months of the financial year, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This is to enable an equal spread of events throughout the year and to ensure all funds are not allocated within the first half of the year.

### **Sourcing additional external event funding**

In addition to branch's basic allocation and additional event funding, branches may wish to seek funds from elsewhere. A list of some [public engagement funding schemes](#) is available.

Individual members can apply to the [Outreach and Engagement Grant](#) scheme for event funding. Grant holders can work with branch committees to organise and deliver events funded through the Outreach and Engagement grant scheme, however events are distinct from branch committee activity, and the individual making the application remains solely responsible for the event.