

Branch Affiliation Procedure.

1. "General Notes for Guidance on Forming New Branches" set out the general procedure very briefly. These should lead to a request for the necessary draft Rules and affiliation forms when the Branch is large enough to want them.
2. Draft Rules for local branches (these were originally drawn up by the Sheffield solicitor (Baldwin) and revised & improved (!) by the Sussex Committee!) should be forwarded quite early in the Branch's history, together with the draft Deed of Trust. (Stencils for these are wrapped in brown paper, if & when present supplies run out).
3. The Branch Secretary then ~~requires~~ ^{needs} the printed Form of Application for Affiliation (in duplicate) and Form of Application for Representative Membership. These both need minor amendments

i.e. "reduction" for "resolution" and
~~also~~ amendment of the address for return.

4. The Branch should then forward these appropriate forms, together with a copy of the Branch Rules, as adopted by them.

These should be glanced through to see they accord reasonably with the recommended draft Rules, especially in those clauses affecting their charitable status, allocation of funds, winding-up etc..
If not satisfactory, return to Branch with necessary advice.

5. As a general rule, what is acceptable to the Charity Commissioners is acceptable to us.

I have on occasions used this yardstick when in doubt. E.g. Southampton protested at my refusal to accept their Rules, and they have since found the Reg. of Charities required their Rules to be amended \neq as I ^{had} warned them!

5. The Affiliation fee (10 gns.), plus 1/- per member, should be forwarded to Asbuk at the same time. (Forward to Treasurer).

6. If all is in order, these Applications,

i.e. for affiliation and for representative membership, are then submitted to the next Executive Comm. Meeting for approval, and if approved (should be only a formality) formal notice is sent to Branch Secretary. (see Affiliations file) & entries made in Register of Members and in Register of Affiliated Branches; ~~and~~ the Forms and Rules are retained.

The Branch is also sent a copy of the Mem. and Arts. of Hobah. (This has been sent free, although the Companies Act allows a charge of 1/- per copy.)

7. Only registered members are allowed to vote at the formal AGM, which for this reason is always held in two parts, representatives of un-affiliated groups being invited to take part in the informal part of the AGM only.

JH Amos
27.7.68

General Note re Branches and Structure

1. As I understand it, the reason for setting up an organisation with autonomous local Branches was to ensure legal liability was placed on local Trustees, who could control local activities. Failing this, a centrally based Committee (or a few "national" Trustees) would find themselves personally liable for any foisting anywhere in the country.
2. In 1965-66 there was some objection to this procedure from local Branches, who did not then want full independence. We wanted merely to be ^v ~~branches~~ _{part} of the national body.
3. This autonomy has now grown to be very precious to the local Branches, and any attempt to reduce their independence is ~~staunchly~~ sternly resisted. I think this is a sign of good heart and health, although clearly it has its drawbacks!
4. It is accepted by the present Committee that the support of all local Branches (affiliated or not) is the prime purpose of the Association. This reflects

the importance of social fatherings of parents, and the need for help and advice on a personal level, and for practical guidance.

The same requirement is written into the Opina Bifida Trust Deed.

5. Similarly, it is accepted that all the other activities of Asbah are secondary to the support of the Branches - e.g. major fund-raising for major projects is less important to the Executive than the health and support (both ways) of the Branches, affiliated or not.

6. I have warned, however, that the time must come when non-affiliated Branches of long-standing may have to be cut off (an early Newsletter). I do not think there are any ~~such~~ now.

7. There is evidence however that certain Branches are now ready for a stronger lead from H.O. - e.g. Liverpool, our largest Branch in England.

This has somehow to be reconciled with the fact that other Branches will react unfavourably to any form of dictation from H.O. (e.g. Southampton, S. Mercia, Scotland) and probably Sussex!

The reconciliation can be made, I think, by

^{the} subtle distinction between a "strong lead" and "dictation".

8. I can confirm from personal experience (nearly 2 years) that Secretaries of ~~local~~ Branches have a sizeable job on their hands. It must also be remembered that 90% of them are parents of young handicapped children, with a limited supply of spare-time and spare patience! (This was not always remembered by PBA). My own view is that, in about 5 years time, the position will ease, as more and more ~~SB~~ parents of SBs & Hs find their children reaching the ages of 10 and upwards and the mental & physical strain eases off a bit.

In the meantime, Branch Officers are often very hard-pressed.

The solution no doubt is to take Branch Administration out of the hands of parents, as a result of increased public awareness of the Association, which should result in more offers of help being received.

Naturally however there is the feeling that only parents know the problems involved and that other "supporters" will not run Branches satisfactorily. In

my view this is largely true.

Asbahi Ltd would in any case have to tread very warily, if it tried to take a hand in the ^{choice} appointment of local officers of autonomous Branches!

9. Late in 1967 relations with Branches were poisoned by a mis-guided Circular sent out by our then-consultants. In 1965-66 relations were also very strained by the snail-like progress made towards the formation of Asbahi; and the refusal of the then-committee (only 6 of these survive), on the advice of the solicitor from Sheffield to move ahead with any other projects in the meantime.

In 1965-66 (and probably in 1967 as well) there was talk of what is popularly known as "a U.D.I.". This was only prevented by a hair's-breadth, and I think those on the committee at that time (I was not) did not, and still do not know how near it came.

A break-away ~~movement~~ movement of this kind and the setting up of a rival organisation would of course be a major disaster.

10. Paras 4, 5, 7 and 9 above are intended to underline the need for close liaison with the Branches, on a personal level whenever possible, at all times.

JHAmom 27.7.68.