



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

June 11, 2011

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Coordinating Kingdom Hall construction and renovation projects

Dear Brothers:

A great deal of work continues to be accomplished in connection with Kingdom Hall construction and renovation. Although not without its challenges, there is clear evidence of Jehovah's blessing upon this facet of sacred service. (Ps. 127:1) As with other aspects of theocratic organization over the years, some adjustments have been needed to accommodate increased activity. (Isa. 60:17) The purpose of this letter is to outline the recently-implemented organizational structure for Regional Building Committees (RBCs) and to notify you of some other changes that will simplify future Kingdom Hall projects. We trust this information will help you to more effectively support the efforts of the RBC and their hard-working volunteers.

All RBCs now operate with the same organizational structure. They are made up of five qualified elders, each with a specific role. The *chairman* coordinates the overall activities of the committee and is responsible for official communication with the bodies of elders, travelling overseers, and branch office. The *project development overseer* coordinates the departments involved in preconstruction work including engineering, legal, and real estate matters. The *personnel overseer* works with departments overseeing volunteer support, training, and safety. The *construction overseer* is responsible for the trade-related departments involved in the actual construction or renovation work. Finally, the *construction support overseer* assists with non-construction departments such as those that handle accounting, purchasing, and food service. Each of these five committee members has an assigned assistant. In addition, one or more project coordinators are assigned to each project to assist with day-to-day coordination and communication during the project.

In addition, effective immediately, there will no longer be a need to appoint local building committees or project committees for Kingdom Hall projects. Those that have already been appointed and are heavily involved in a project may continue to operate until the project's completion. Of course, the input of the local elders is still vital when it comes to making decisions regarding where a Kingdom Hall should be located, its size, its basic design, and the cost that the congregation(s) can support. However, the implementation of these basic decisions is cared for by the RBC.

With this adjusted arrangement, how will the elders communicate with the RBC as a project progresses, and who will care for the day-to-day coordination of the work? When the elders decide that Kingdom Hall construction or renovation is needed, they should submit a written request to the RBC prior to any planning or preliminary work being accomplished locally. The RBC will then gather information and provide helpful direction based on what the elders determine to be the needs of the congregation(s). Eventually, members of the RBC will meet with the involved body(ies) of elders to present a detailed proposal for them to review

and approve. This will include not only a written scope of work but also a proposed budget and project timeline. Once all the elders have agreed on these basic elements, the RBC will move ahead with implementing the project based on the decisions made. It is vital that the body(ies) of elders and the RBC work together closely in a spirit of love and unity.—1 Cor. 1:10; 16:14.

The RBC will discuss with the elders who should be selected from the involved congregation(s) to serve as contacts to assist with various aspects of the project. These brothers do not constitute an oversight group, nor do they make decisions regarding the development of the project. Their role is to assist the RBC to follow through with the decisions previously agreed upon by the body(ies) of elders and the RBC. These brothers must be outstanding spiritual men who are good communicators, are not procrastinators, and are well organized and sufficiently available to assist throughout the duration of the project.

One brother will be assigned to assist the RBC chairman with maintaining a project file and obtaining signatures of the local elders for meeting minutes, legal documents, and the like.

Another brother should be assigned to assist with accounting. He will work closely with the RBC's Finance/Accounting Department to set up the local building account, complete a *Kingdom Hall Loan Application* (S-84) if applicable, and confirm that the quarterly audits of the account are performed using brothers who have been preselected by the body(ies) of elders. He would also ensure that all congregations are provided with the *Monthly Report to Congregation—Kingdom Hall Building Fund* (S-93) form. It would be preferable that he have a measure of accounting experience.

In addition, one or more brothers should assist the RBC's project coordinator with organizing local support for the project. This could include scheduling local volunteers, arranging accommodations for out-of-town volunteers, organizing meals if necessary, assisting the project safety coordinator, and receiving shipments of materials and equipment. These brothers can also assist the RBC's project development departments with clerical functions related to obtaining permits and finalizing construction documents. They can also help identify skilled local volunteers who can fill specific needs that may arise.

As the project progresses, various delays might occur, unanticipated expenses can arise, or there may be a need to make an adjustment to one of the project elements already decided upon. The RBC will clearly communicate any such developments to each body of elders, through the coordinator of the body of elders. Depending upon the situation, this can be done either in writing to or by arranging a meeting with the entire body(ies) of elders. The body(ies) of elders can then make a decision that will allow the project to continue moving forward.

Especially as the construction work gets under way, the elders must appreciate their role in support of the RBC and its volunteers. Since all the significant decisions should have been made in advance and documented in a comprehensive written scope of work, there is generally no need for the local elders to question details of the construction or to give direction to the assigned RBC volunteers unless instructed to do so by the RBC. The RBC should be given sufficient latitude to make construction-related decisions as the work proceeds as long as they remain within the parameters of what has been approved by the elders. It must

also be recognized that while the brothers work hard to provide presentable, high quality places of worship, the volunteer workforce generally includes non-professionals, and they may not always be able to accomplish everything the elders desire. Their self-sacrificing efforts, which in most cases save the congregations considerable time and money, are deeply appreciated.

If any significant concerns develop, the elder that has become aware of the situation should speak to the coordinator of the body of elders to discuss how best to address the matter. Perhaps a misunderstanding has arisen that could be resolved simply by one or two elders speaking with the chairman of the RBC. On the other hand, for more serious matters, the coordinator of the body of elders may contact the chairman and request a meeting with the RBC. The local circuit overseer(s) may also be involved if necessary. In addition, the elders may write to the branch office if further clarification is needed.

It is vital to establish and maintain respectful, honest communication between the involved body(ies) of elders and the RBC from the inception of a project. (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:25) Doing so creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and helps all to have consistent expectations with regard to the project timeline, scope, budget, and other details. Additionally, your establishing a good rapport with the RBC even before any work begins will set a positive tone for the entire project. A reasonable, loving approach and a kind demeanour greatly assist in resolving any differences that might develop.—Matt. 11:29, 30; Phil. 4:5.

How thrilling it is to witness first-hand the Kingdom expansion now taking place in fulfilment of Isaiah 54:2, which states: “Make the place of your tent more spacious. And let them stretch out the tent cloths of your grand tabernacle. Do not hold back. Lengthen out your tent cords, and make those tent pins of yours strong.” We are confident that this refinement in the coordination for Kingdom Hall construction and renovation projects will open the way for further growth and for Jehovah’s continued blessing on this important work.—Isa. 60:17.

We know that the love you have for God’s flock will move you to continue to care for your responsibilities in a praiseworthy manner. It is a pleasure to be working side by side with you in whole-souled service to Jehovah. (Zeph. 3:9) We take this opportunity to send you our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN

cc: Regional Building Committee members
Travelling overseers

PS to the secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters. It updates paragraphs 14-16 of the November 2, 1995, letter to all bodies of elders. You may wish to update the congregation copy of *Index to Letters—For Bodies of Elders* (S-22) at this time as well.