



## **Association for Language Learning**

### **Introduction to setting up a Branch or Network**

**2008**

## Introduction

The **A**ssociation for **L**anguage **L**earning (**ALL**) is a professional association with charitable status and a democratic structure; it exists to serve its members and to promote the teaching and learning of natural languages.

ALL operates at international, national and local levels and it is often at the local level, through the activity of a Branch, that new members encounter the Association, appreciate the benefits of membership, and engage in the work of the Association themselves.

The main income to the Association, allowing it to pursue its aims, comes from membership fees.

This is an introduction to the work of the ALL Branches and networks; there is also a *DRAFT* fuller Branch Handbook, with template documents, aiming to support

- those interested in setting up a local Branch
- existing Branch officers

and based on practical experience.

available via [stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk)

(This fuller Handbook is to be updated soon).

*Steven Fawkes, Membership Officer, 2008*

## Contents

	Page
1. Information and Guidance – the national association	
a. Aims of ALL	4
b. The structure of ALL	5
c. The Association's Office in Leicester	6
d. The Association's staff	7
2. Information and Guidance – the role of local Networks and Branches	
a. What are Branches and Networks for?	8
b. What is the difference between a Branch and a Network?	8
c. What does a Branch do?	8
d. How to set up a Branch / Network	9
3. Running a Network or Branch	
a. Running a Network	10
b. Running a Branch (Advice based on Branch experience)	10
i. Creating an effective Committee	10
ii. Committee Meetings	12
iii. The role of Branch Officers	12
c. Planning and managing local events	14
d. Managing Branch finances	16
e. Support for Branches and Networks	
i. The ALL Office and officers; the ALL website and ALLnet	18
ii. The Branch Forum and links to other Branches and Networks	18
iii. Other useful contacts	19

## **1. Information and Guidance – the national association**

### **1a. The aims of ALL**

The Association is established to promote and support the learning and teaching of natural languages.

In furtherance of the above object but not further or otherwise the Association may:

- Encourage an understanding of the importance of languages at all levels in our society
- Promote the development in the United Kingdom education systems of language policies which appropriately reflect the linguistic diversity and the language needs of the country and its population
- Advance public understanding of the nature and process of language learning and the techniques and approaches for successful language teaching
- Promote improved standards of language teaching
- Do all such other lawful things as shall be necessary to further the above object

The Association exists to serve its members through the provision of events at local, regional and national level, representation on national committees, involvement in policy discussions, and liaison with other national and international agencies.

**The activities of a Branch or Network are an important benefit to members of the Association, and offer significant potential for recruitment.**

## 1b. The structure of ALL

The following notes describe the most important features of the structure in relation to Branches and Networks.

<b>Branches</b>	Each member is allocated to his/her nearest Branch according to their mailing address, but may elect to belong to another Branch instead. In this case they should notify the ALL central office. Those wishing to be on the mailing list of a second Branch should contact the Secretary of that Branch. All members have access to any Branch events anywhere.
<b>Networks</b>	Where Networks exist, local members can attend events as with Branches. Networks are typically smaller and often advertise via the website and ALLnet rather than mailings.
<b>Management Board (MB)</b>	This is the major decision making body of the Association. It comprises five Officers plus four invited Trustees (see below). It is responsible for finance, legal matters, property, management of the charity and staffing.
<b>Officers</b>	The President, Past President and President Elect each serve a 3 year term of office: 1 year as President Elect, 1 year as President and 1 year as Past President. Presidents are assisted by the Honorary Membership Officer and Honorary Finance Officer.
<b>Trustees</b>	Four invited Trustees covering the following areas of expertise: the field of language learning and teaching, business, a national overview, finance, management/personnel.
<b>Language Committees</b>	These are elected by the membership every three years and currently represent French, German, Spanish and Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Arabic and Japanese.
<b>Advisory Panels/ Special Interest Groups</b>	From time to time these will be set up to consider and research specific topics, as advised by Executive Council. They may be short or long term and will be drawn from members with particular expertise. Currently there are SIGs for Primary Languages, Adult Education, Secondary, CLIL and ICT.
<b>Annual Members' Meeting (AMM)</b>	The AMM is open to all members and takes place usually at the Language World conference. It is primarily intended to act as a forum for discussion of matters related to language learning. Some time may be devoted to discussion of Constitutional and financial matters. Branches are encouraged to send representatives to this meeting.

<b>Branch Forum</b>	This occasional meeting affords an opportunity for Branch representatives to meet, exchange information and consider matters of mutual and general importance.
<b>Executive Council (EC)</b>	Membership includes Officers, Trustees, and 12 directly elected members, nominated by Branches or by individual members. There is no automatic Branch representation.

### **Action Points**

When Branch, Network or Language Committees meet they usually produce minutes or a note of the meeting, including Action Points relating to their plans and discussions. Most of these Action Points are to be carried out by members of the relevant committee directly; some though are more strategic and require potential centralised action from ALL's Management Board (who manage the financial affairs of the Association.)

Executive Council has recently (2007) agreed how such Strategic Action Points will be taken forward:

Normally, any Actions which are proposed by a meeting for consideration of the Management Board (because they would require central action or funding) should be highlighted as Strategic Action Points and sent to the Membership Officer ([stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk)) ; these will be referred to the Executive Council, who will discuss and prioritise them for the Management Board to consider.

### **1c. The Association's Office**

The Association's officers (local and national) and trustees are all volunteers.

The Management Board is the employer of the Association's paid staff who are based at:

Association for Language Learning  
University of Leicester  
University Road  
Leicester  
LE1 7RH  
Tel. 0116 229 7453  
Fax 0116 229 7454  
e-mail: [info@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:info@ALL-languages.org.uk)  
Websites: [www.ALL-languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-languages.org.uk)  
[www.languageworld.org.uk](http://www.languageworld.org.uk)

## **1d The ALL staff: contacts and key responsibilities:**

### **Linda Parker- DIRECTOR**

*The Director is ALL's figurehead, dealing with external representation, funding, press contact and external representations.*

Lindap@ALL-languages.org.uk

### **Yvonne Hogben- OFFICE MANAGER**

*Yvonne is responsible for office administration, finance, ALL's membership databases, library subscriptions and publications*

**Yvonne is the key Branch contact for labels, requests for capitation, financial issues.**

YvonneH@ALL-languages.org.uk

### **Sheila James- PROJECTS ADMINISTRATOR**

*Sheila organises and administers conference and INSET bookings, as well as servicing ALL's committees. She also handles telephone calls and post.*

SheilaJ@ALL-languages.org.uk

## **2. Information and Guidance – the role of local Branches and Networks**

### **2a. What are Branches and Networks for?**

The local ALL Branch or Network is a meeting place for local language teachers and others.

The Branch or Network is crucial to the recruitment and retention of members, who are the lifeblood of the Association. Local activity in Branches and Networks is therefore vital to our success.

### **2b. What is the difference between a Branch and a Network?**

A Branch is linked to, and supported by, the national Association but is autonomous in much of its decision-making, within limits imposed by the Charity Commission regulations and the ALL Constitution.

As well as raising its own funds and regulating its own finances, within a structure laid down by ALL, a Branch may claim an annual per capita allowance to support its planned activities.

The Branch has a committee, which consists of local members, usually nominated and elected at an Annual General Meeting; which is sometimes linked to another event. On occasions new members of the committee are co-opted during the year when need or opportunity arises.

While a Network is also linked to the national Association it is not formally constituted and does not need to have a full committee in the same way. A Network will typically be co-ordinated by a small number of enthusiasts and may hold only small-scale or occasional events. Networks do not have access to capitation but can request start-up funding for specific projects, normally on a break-even basis.

### **2c. What does a Branch do?**

- recruit local members and contribute to maintaining the level of membership nationally
- establish by election or invitation a committee to manage Branch affairs
- support local members, organise and promote the work of the Association in their area
  
- inform and consult members on key issues in education and languages and express their views, as appropriate, at local, national and international levels.
- offer information and opinion towards the Association's policy formation.



- liaise with the ALL central office with regard to events, publicity and administration as required
- manage Branch finances in accordance with the guidance provided by the ALL office
- nominate persons for election to the Executive Council or to the national Language Committees

Support for the work of a Branch is available. (See below: 3e)

## **2d. How to set up a Branch or Network**

Advice on setting up a Branch is available from the ALL website:

[www.ALL-languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-languages.org.uk)

as well as from Steven Fawkes, Membership Officer:

[stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk)

The Branch contact at the ALL office is Yvonne Hogben:

[yvonneh@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:yvonneh@ALL-languages.org.uk)

### **3. Running a Network or Branch**

#### **3a) Running a Network**

For ALL, Networks are quite informal:

- you don't need to create a committee unless you want to, or unless, in time, you decide you'd like to create a new formal branch
- you do need a person or a few people to take a lead in setting up an event of some sort
- you don't need to submit a budget or set up a bank account
- you do need someone to host the event (in a school, college, home, pub, etc.)
- you don't need permission to have a meeting on the topic you choose
- you just need some people who want to meet!

A Network is simply an informal arrangement allowing members to get together and set up small-scale events locally.

Network events take a range of formats:

Professional conversations (a few people at someone's house discussing professional things)

Social events (meals, drinks, going to a film – all contain a subtext of professional support)

Training events (a talk from someone about a resource they really like, an invited speaker recommended by another network)

Of course some events have financial implications (although many don't)  
Only Branches have access to capitation from ALL, but requests for small-scale funding of network activities will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The items on Events below may be relevant to Networks as well as Branches.

A Network raises the Association's profile in your area (and will hopefully bring in new members who don't know about ALL as yet.) If you are already running a network you might consider branding it also with ALL in order to reach more teachers through our contacts, and 'join up with the national picture'.

An item on the ALL website responds to frequently asked questions. Please visit [www.ALL-languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-languages.org.uk)

#### **3b) Running a Branch (Advice based on Branch experience)**

##### **Branch Committee**

##### **i. Creating an effective Committee**

##### **1. Who are the Branch Committee Members ?**

Committee members are local ALL members from a variety of backgrounds:

- teachers from a variety of sectors: secondary, primary, AE, FE, HE, community language schools etc
- LA officers
- Language College staff and managers
- ITT lecturers
- PGCE students
- Cultural agencies
- Local business people (e.g. from Chamber of Commerce)
- Other individuals or representatives from groups in the local community interested in language teaching and learning

The Branch decides on the size of its Committee, bearing in mind expense and the nature of the events it may wish to provide.

## 2. Why do people join the local ALL Committee?

Teachers / PGCE students

- for individual professional development
- to increase chances of promotion
- to access a network of contacts with similar professional interests
- to keep in touch and up-to-date

Language College Managers / LEA Officers / ITT lecturers

- as part of their area of work
- to influence ALL's work on a local and national level
- to access a network of contacts with similar professional interests

## 3. The Role of Committee Members

All committee members

- Attend committee meetings and participate actively in the planning of committee activities
- Take on responsibility for certain aspects of the committee's work as they arise, e.g. producing publicity material for a certain event, approaching potential speakers, hosting speakers at the event, etc.

## **ii. Committee Meetings**

### **1. When / how often do meetings take place?**

The Branch Committee meets regularly, usually about once a term, or when the need arises.

### **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

Each Branch should hold an Annual General Meeting, giving members reasonable notice of the agenda and an opportunity to nominate and elect committee members.

Invitations to the AGM should go out to every ALL member within the local Branch.

Many Branches hold an event alongside the AGM to attract a wider attendance (including non-members) for recruitment purposes; this is sometimes a social or cultural event.

## **iii. the role of Branch Officers**

Each Branch should elect

- a Chairperson
- a Secretary
- a Treasurer

Tenure of the office is ideally for three years, with a possibility of a further re-election for three years. The officer should then stand down (and may be nominated for a different office). However, this is not always possible, and Branches should make appropriate arrangements to fit their circumstances. Advance strategic planning, which may include shadowing, can help to ensure availability of officers.

Roles will depend on the activities of the Branch. The roles of the chairperson and secretary are flexible and might overlap or be shared between more than two persons.

The following are suggestions only:

### **The Chairperson**

- Sets agenda for Committee meetings in discussion with others
- Keeps an overview of events organised by the Committee
- Deals with communication with the ALL Office
- Deals with communication with external partners and support agencies
- Ensures that issues of local recruitment and retention of members are considered when planning Branch activity
- Encourages nominations from the local Committee to Executive Council and/or to the national Language Committees

**The Secretary**

- Calls committee meetings
- Takes and disseminates minutes of meetings
- Communicates with local membership, and manages these contacts
- Organises mailings to members (publicity for events, newsletters, questionnaires / surveys etc.)
- Administers events (communication with speakers / venue; bookings from members; attendance lists; attendance certificates etc.)

**The Treasurer**

- Manages Branch finances in accordance with the guidance provided by the ALL central office
- Invoices members / schools for events
- Oversees payments to speakers and facilitators

### 3c. Planning and managing local events

Each Branch is free to organise any activities it feels will be successful and will meet the needs of its members.

It is important to consider providing activities for all members in the area. Members will include teachers of all languages, including community languages, working in all sectors, from primary schools to higher education. Branch officers will play a major role in talking all of these needs into account. Events are sometimes cultural or social, but most frequently they are linked to local or national professional development needs, and take the form of talks, workshops or conferences.

#### i. What event? Where to find the speakers?

Topics for successful events can be found in a variety of ways:

- **national events and priorities:** new developments create a need for INSET; often it is only the local ALL Branch which can provide professional development sessions on such topics which is cost-effective and relevant to local need.
- **an annual members' questionnaire:** it is good practice to ask the "customers"; every language department draws up its development plan and accompanying INSET priorities and it is important to respond to these needs. Often priorities are shared across many different institutions across the region and responses to this questionnaire can form the basis for a Branch programme for the following year.
- **Language World:** the programme of ALL's annual national conference provides a wealth of ideas for sessions which are up-to-date, relevant and attractive. You can approach the speakers direct immediately after their sessions or ask the Office afterwards for a contact with a speaker.
- ALL's occasional **Branch and Network Forum** is a very useful occasional event for Branches to come together and share what was successful (and what was not!).
- **Local expertise:** every local Branch has members who themselves have expertise in a particular area or know good speakers / topics. Language Colleges, Beacon Schools, University Departments, PGCE institutions etc. all have excellent practitioners who may be happy to speak on a topic within their area of expertise. Many of them will even be ALL members. You may want to include an appeal for information in one of your mailings or ask your LA Adviser and/or local Language College.

**ii. Publicity:** the cost for publicity can be kept down to a minimum if mailings include flyers for several events; ALL South Yorkshire, for example, does only two mailings a year, advertising up to 7 different events per mailing. Don't forget to include group member schools in mailings.

Advertising local events increasingly takes place through the Events page of the website [www.ALL-languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-languages.org.uk) and via the weekly ALLnet email message. Entries for events should be sent well in advance to the Membership Officer (stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk)

### iii. Pricing structure

Every event is a potential opportunity for recruiting new members; for Networks this may be the first priority and events may well be costed to be free of charge or cost-recovery, in order to recruit. This of course relies on volunteer speakers, free availability of rooms and potential sponsorship for refreshments.

A pricing structure for a major Branch event should reflect the benefits of being an ALL member as well as being financially viable.

#### Sample

	Individual Members	Group Members / Individual non-members
Individual twilight/evening event (2 hours)	£ 12	£ 25
Series of 4-5 related even events (2 hrs each)	£ 50	£ 100
Half-day conferences	£ 50	£ 100
Full-day conferences	£ 75	£ 150

The above structure has obvious advantages:

- it encourages ALL membership
- it encourages good attendance, as group members can bring as many colleagues as they wish for the same price

(Group Members can attend as a group; i.e. the price is for all members of the department. This policy has proved extremely successful in South Yorkshire as it also ensures good attendance. It is also popular amongst INSET coordinators and HODs as it allows for cost-effective departmental INSET.)

Due to VAT regulations, it is not possible to offer an event free to members when charging non-members.

### 3d. Managing Branch finances

#### **N.B. Financial controls are imposed on the Association by the Charity Commission.**

i. A Branch should have a bank account with the title: Association for Language Learning, \*\*\*\*\* Branch. New branches, or branches changing their bank, should contact the ALL Office about setting up their account. On the advice of our auditors, we are currently working towards all Branches having accounts at NATWEST which are linked to the main ALL office accounts.

ii. Branches will be informed of their capitation in August and year end accounts packs will be sent out for completion at this time. An annual statement of accounts for the previous year (September to August) must be submitted by the Branch Treasurer to the Office Manager in the format provided by the Office. This should reach the ALL office no later than 30<sup>th</sup>. September for the Association's audit and to be eligible for the per capita allowance..

iii. Copies of bank statements for 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December should be sent to the office.

iv. A Branch may claim a per capita grant (currently up to £3.00 per individual member and up to £6.00 per group) to help run activities. The application for a grant should be made to the Office Manager by *30 September* each year, for consideration by the Honorary Finance Officer (and, if necessary, the Executive Council). The application should demonstrate the need for a grant by providing a programme outline for the forthcoming academic year. Additionally, the Executive Council will consider requests for special funding of particular events.

v. The Association is a registered charity no 1001826. It does not have to pay tax on bank interest. A CIT exemption form is required by the Branch bank to ensure that gross interest is received. This is obtainable from the bank.

vi. Annual subscriptions are collected in September, at the start of academic year (September to August). New individual members joining in the final quarter of the academic year will be considered paid up until September of the following year.

vii. Branches may raise money by any legal means and decide for themselves how they will organise their finances, to include any costs for mailings, photocopying, ink cartridges, etc.

As ALL is a registered charity it is not allowed to have its funds unduly dispersed. Therefore a Branch account should have sufficient funds to operate comfortably. (It is expected that Branches with large reserves that are not earmarked for particular events will not request all or part of their capitation for the following year.)



Branch funds are part of ALL finances, and as such are subject to audit by the ALL auditors and the Charity Commission. Branches must submit any financial information requested by the ALL head office to the Director or the Office Manager within 7 days of such a request.

viii. The Branch should reimburse travel and subsistence expenses incurred by its officers and speakers etc.

### **Insurance**

The Association has full public liability insurance to cover all in-service training events, and Branches do not need a separate policy.

However, for events which are attended by **students**, extra insurance cover may be needed.

Please check with the ALL Leicester office well in advance about plans for such events as any additional insurance charge will need be included by the Branch in the cost of the event.

See also the Treasurers' Pack, available from the Office .

### 3e. Support for Branches and Networks

#### i. The ALL Office and officers; the ALL website and discussion forum

Services and materials available from the ALL office include:

- The Association logo
- Headed notepaper with the Association's logo. There is space for local addresses and the paper is photocopyable.
- Lists of paid up and unpaid members in the Branch and lists of group member schools in their area.
- Copies of leaflets produced by the Association
- Access to advertising via the ALL website, ALLnet message or Language World newsletter
- Address labels for mailings.
- The office is exploring the possibility of other labels and lists, in response to requests
- **Please give two weeks' notice when labels are required.**

Correspondence for these services should be addressed to the Office Manager, Yvonne Hogben : [YvonneH@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:YvonneH@ALL-languages.org.uk)

The ALL website is to be found at [www.ALL-languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-languages.org.uk)

ALL also has two electronic distribution lists:

**ALLnet**, an information list for all members and

**ALL-Branch**, the list for Branch committees and other enthusiasts. Executive Council is considering extending use of this list.

ALLnet is useful for advertising events, especially as members will often travel long distances to attend a useful event - please contact the Membership Officer [stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:stevenf@ALL-languages.org.uk) if you would like to send a message to the list.

You might also wish to consider sending details of your events to Linguanet forum. This is particularly helpful in raising the profile of the association. For information on how to join the forum or how to contact the listowner visit <http://www.mailbase.org.uk/lists/linguanet-forum/>.

#### ii. The Branch Forum and links to other Branches

The Branch Forum meets occasionally and allows Branch representatives to meet and discuss issues.

Up-to-date details of Branch Officers around the country are available on the ALL website for informal contact and mutual support!

[www.all-languages.org.uk/branches.asp](http://www.all-languages.org.uk/branches.asp)

Many Branch colleagues use the national ALL Language Days and annual Language World Conference to catch up on news and plans and to share views on successful speakers and types of event.

### **iii. Other useful contacts**

Please see the ALL website for contacts with cultural and other agencies who can offer support , information and advice.

[www.ALL-languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-languages.org.uk)

Please see ALL Branch and Network websites for ideas of events

[www.all-london.org.uk/](http://www.all-london.org.uk/)

[www.ALLNE.org.uk](http://www.ALLNE.org.uk)

[www.alleast.org.uk/](http://www.alleast.org.uk/)

[www.languageworld.org.uk](http://www.languageworld.org.uk)

Please see ALL's Language Committee pages on the main website, as well as journals for further references.

Special Interest groups are also valuable sources of information and contacts.