

Dinner Secretary

The dinner secretary has an important role to play in arranging, facilitating and co-ordinating the institute's annual dinner which is seen to be the most prestigious event in the local insurance community's annual calendar.

Every opportunity should be taken to use the event for networking, sponsorship and to promote the local institute and the CII to the local community.

Remember, the role of the local institute is primarily to adopt the objectives of the CII, as defined in its Charter and Bye-laws, for the benefit of your local members, prospective members, students and the local insurance and financial services community.

Consequently, the dinner secretary should develop a close working relationship with the CII and also with the Regional Membership Manager for the region.

Main responsibilities

- Deciding, with the president and council, the type of function to be held – formal dinner or dinner dance.
- Agreeing, with president and council, the anticipated number of attendees.
- Sourcing a venue at least a year in advance of the event.
- Overall project management of the event.
- Agreeing, with president, the deputy president, the treasurer (and, in most institutes, the whole council) a budget for the whole event.
- Booking appropriate accommodation for the president (and partner), guest speakers, the CII president or CII president's representative and any other VIP or special guests.
- Identifying and, in conjunction with the president, issuing invitations to local civic and business leaders, representatives of other professional bodies and presidents of neighbouring institutes.
- Contacting local employers to encourage attendance at the event – particularly by younger employees.
- Contacting prospective sponsors (e.g. to arrange sponsorship for the president's pre-dinner drinks, the top table drinks, the cost of some hotel rooms, the printing of the menus, raffle prizes, the ticket costs for some young attendees, the table decorations etc.) NB: A suitable acknowledgment should be printed on the back of

the menu covers, if there is space, and the president should be asked to verbally thank sponsors during the speeches.

- Contacting the (Lord) Mayor's Office (or the office of any other civic dignitaries) to check protocol, arrival times and agree a meeting point and time on the night.
- Providing all top table guests with confirmation of their accommodation arrangements, agreeing travel and/or meeting/collection arrangements.
- Confirming final bookings with venue – ensuring that arrangements are confirmed in writing.
- Ensuring that all speakers are aware of the maximum time allowed for their speeches (usually no more than seven minutes except for the speaker responding to the toast to the guests) and, where possible, topics being raised by other speakers.
- Providing all top table guests with details of those seated on top table well in advance of the dinner.
- Devising the seating plan, ensuring that any 'special' guests (e.g. colleagues from the president's company) are located suitably close to the top table.
- Ensuring, wherever possible, that there is at least one person on each table who has responsibility for ensuring good behaviour – especially during the speeches.
- In conjunction with the president, identifying a charity (wherever possible this should be The Insurance Charities although presidents will often identify charities with which they are already involved) and ensuring that arrangements are made for a suitable collection to be made during the dinner. NB: where possible, the charities money collected on the night should be counted and attendees advised at the end of the formal proceedings of the total amount collected.
- Ensuring that any prize winners and/or students who have completed their examinations are invited, that their prizes/certificates/diplomas are available on the night and that the local president or CII President/Representative is aware that presentations will be made and when they will take place. NB: in the event of a CII award, this will be made by the CII President/Representative towards the end of his/her speech.
- Ensuring that top table guests receive first class service from the catering staff and that a member of the catering staff has specific responsibility for ensuring that glasses are kept topped up especially before the toasts.
- Ensuring that, where such an event is normally arranged, venue staff are on hand as the formal dinner ends, to open any room set aside for the president's post dinner get together and that someone is available to serve drinks as the top table party and any other invited guests enter the room.