Queen's Council Handbook

A "Queen's Council" (Also known as a "Queenathon") is a meeting of chapter Queens/Vice Queens (or representatives), for the purpose of:

- Discussing issues relating to running a RHS chapter
- To share ideas and learn new things
- Networking and socialising with other Queens

As a result of discussions at the 2016 Queen's Council event, it was decided that future Queens Councils shall be run as daytime (over lunch) event on either the 3rd or 4th weekend in May each year.

Discussions at the 2018 Queen's Council decided it should be run as a midweek event, as venue and accommodation pricing can be cheaper midweek.

Discussions on facebook about the cost of running the www.redhatsvictoria.com website resulted in a decision to run a raffle or otherwise raise money or take donations at the Queen's Council to raise money for this yearly fee. The current costing for this is approx $40 a year for the redhatsvictoria.com website and an additional $20 a year for the aussiehatting.com website and forum (These are paid in US dollars, so the exchange rate does fluctuate a little)

It was suggested that the smaller gatherings often held at the end of a larger event, where all Queens who were present at that event have a small meet-up for a more social benefit – should not be called a "Queen's Council" (or similar sounding name) to avoid confusion with the larger stand-alone event. The suggestion was that they should instead be called a "Queen's Gathering" or something similar.

At the Queen's Council, agenda topics can be discussed and then later reported on for the benefit of those who were unable to attend. As there may be no right or wrong answer to a particular topic that has been discussed, or no resolution able to be reached - the different points of view will be noted for reference.

This Handbook aims to record the points previously raised during Queen's Council events about how the event should be run, as well as providing tips and a guide for those members wishing to host a Queen's Council event in the future.

- **Who should run it:**
    - It should be shared around, not run by the same person each time
    - Should alternate city/country to make travel distance fairer.

- **When it should be:**
    - Yearly – So that new Queens can benefit
    - Suggested luncheon timing (which could make it possible for a day trip)
    - Having it on the same basic time every year, so that other events can be planned around it and everyone will know when it will be held.
    - Not near school holidays, not during June/July as some people travel at this time.
    - Almost unanimous voting for the 3rd or 4th week in May (with no preference for either). Host may choose which weekend to use.

- **Cost/Financial factors:**
    - Costs should be kept reasonable to make sure more people can attend.
    - A suggestion was made that it would be helpful if the cost could be kept at a fairly consistent amount, so that there wouldn't be very elaborate expensive Queen's Councils. (No amount was discussed as being an ideal cost, as venue costs and other expenses will vary - perhaps $30-$50).
    - Decorations and other such items should be kept and given to the next host, to prevent unnecessary purchasing of items that could be shared.
    - Any additional unused money left over from the event could be donated to charity. Suggestion being that the hosting group decides which charity to donate to.

- **Who is allowed to attend:**
    - Queens, Vice Queens and those intending to become a Queen/Vice – As well as acting Queens/Vice Queens and/or a nominated representative if a Queen/Vice Queen is unable to attend.
    - (Not discussed, but may be assumed – More than one Vice Queen may be in attendance unless numbers need to be limited)
    - A suggestion was made that only (Current) officially registered RHS members should be allowed to attend the Queen's Council. It was discussed that whoever hosts the Queen's Council event can set this requirement, or not, as they choose.
    - A suggestion was made that a discount could be given to officially registered members (who provide their membership number when booking) to encourage registration. Whoever hosts can set this requirement, or not, as they choose.
    - If an invited Queen/Vice isn't interested in attending – asking why they do not wish to come may help to overcome some issues that may be preventing them from attending (such as transport or other logistical issues)

- **Other Queen's Council Points:**
  - Organising "Billet" accommodation (and carpooling) for visiting members would be helpful to avoid accommodation costs.
  - A special welcome for "Virgins" (those Queens who have not attended a Queen's Council event previously)
  - A guidebook could be created to help the event host find supplies for showbags and other items, as well as specific tips for hosting a Queen's Council Event.
  - Event should be easily accessible to public transport.
  - Information about the event needs to be available to those who do not have Internet access.
  - There was a discussion on the low attendance of Chapters (21 out of the 75 known Victorian & border chapters came to 2016, even less for 2017). This could be due to a number of reasons, including: timing, the event being newly-rebooted, lack of planning for what carpooling non-queens would do during the event, non-registered Queens feeling they could face hostility, issues arising from previously unsuccessful events. Suggested survey of Queens to ask why they would or would not participate in a Queen's Council event.

- **Dress code for the Queen's Council:**
  - This was discussed as the majority of the attendees were wearing standard Hatter attire, and some of those who had dressed in crowns/robes felt overdressed. Not all Queens are comfortable with the idea of wearing crowns and other regal attire, however some Queens like to use the Queen's Council as an opportunity to dress up. Attendees can choose to wear what they wish, perhaps with invitations for the event including a note that dressing up is optional but encouraged.

- **Stand-Alone Event or part of a Weekend Convention:**
  - Some felt it needs to be a stand alone event – having it the only thing planned for that weekend.
  - Some felt it needs to be part of a weekend event – to make the travel more worthwhile for those who would need to find accommodation in the area to attend.
    - If it is made part of a weekend or multi-day event:
      - Queen's Council would need to be charged separately to the other components of the event, so that members can choose to only attend the Queen's Council if they wish.
      - An alternate activity (or activity ideas) could be scheduled for the chapter members who accompany their Queen but are unable to attend the Council event.
      - (Alternative event shouldn't be too exciting that would discourage attendance of the Queen's Council)
      - An alternative activity for husbands/partners could also be scheduled, as some members are driven to events by their husbands.

Tips and advice from previous Queen's Council Hosts:

From Queen Obsidian (Millinery Madames) Queen's Council 2016:

- Work out the costings for the room hire and food, and come to a per person price based on the minimum numbers needed to attend to cover the expenses. This should ideally be kept around $20-$30 per person.

- Add on a few dollars per person to give an extra allowance for any giftbags and other expenses. Also have in mind what sorts of things you'll provide and how much you'll spend per person.

- When numbers are confirmed and you know exactly how much money would be available for these extras, then work out what you can afford to buy with the money available.

- To keep costs down, search places like ebay for cheap items (often in bulk pricing) to help get the most value for money.

- Ask Queens to bring their own notepad and pen, to avoid needing to spend money on these – not all Queens will want to make notes, and a summary should be provided for those Queens who were unable to attend.

- Try to keep costs low, especially on the extra goodies.

Items purchased for the 2016 Queen's council which are communal property and to be passed on to the next Queen's Council host include:

- 1 photographraphy background ("stairs") - not including hanging frame

- 6 table runners (3 purple, 3 red)

- Red and purple Bomboniere boxes (Exact number unknown, around 50 of each colour)