

Meeting of the Special Management Committee
held at 2:30pm on Saturday 12 December 1998
at Buxhall Village Hall

Present:- B Whiting (Chairman), D Salter, R Clouston, A Mayle, Mrs C Colman, W Girling, Mrs C Girling, Mrs G Wakefield, Mrs S Girt, J Girt, Mrs A M Webb, D Webb, T Bailey, Mrs P Bailey, Mrs W Lockwood, R Knight, Rev L Pizzey, S Harrison, R Gates, Dr B Wakefield (Secretary).

Apologies for absence:- M Rose, Ms A Richmond, S Young, R Whiting, P Stannard, Mrs K Salter.

Purpose:- To consider two draft documents concerning changes to the Guild's Constitution and Rules.

Introduction:- The Chairman introduced the meeting, explaining that it had been called by the Management Committee specifically to consider two documents which had been tabled at the October 1998 meeting. These contained proposals for changes to the Guild's Constitution and Rules. The first had been presented by the group which had been set up at the request of the Management Committee and convened by Mr J Girt. The second had come from a group calling itself the GK group. Both documents proposed radical changes. It was hoped that the meeting would review the documents, and agree whether it wished any of the proposals to be taken further and put to the 1999 AGM. The Chairman anticipated that any proposed changes would be folded into the existing Constitution and Rules. The current Constitution and Rules had taken some 20 years to "fine tune" and he did not wish to see the Guild spending another 20 years "fine tuning" the proposals which had been tabled.

Many members present complained that they had not seen the GK proposals, although most if not all had seen the document from the "John Girt" group. The Chairman explained that both documents had been distributed at the October committee meeting. As not all members had been present at that meeting he had requested that the authors of both documents ensure that those who were not present be sent copies before this special meeting. It appeared that this had been done in the case of the "John Girt" group, but not in the case of the "GK" group. In view of this the meeting agreed that it could not consider the "GK" document. Therefore it would concentrate on matters raised by the "John Girt" group (now to be referred to as the consultative document).

Discussion

1. **Abolition of Vice Presidents**

These currently are elected annually. The points under discussion were should there be Vice Presidents and, if so, should they have voting rights.

The meeting decided, on a majority vote, to keep Vice Presidents as at present.

2. District Structure

The consultative documents proposed the dissolution of Districts. Following considerable discussion, a vote revealed the meeting to be equally divided, with 7 voting “for” and 7 “against”.

3. Collection of Subscriptions

The consultative document proposed that this should be done by the Guild Treasurer, and not by the District officers.

In general the meeting believed this would put too onerous a task on the Treasurer. Unlike the District reps who could chase up “slow payers”, as they do at present, the Treasurer would certainly not have the time to do so. The size of the Guild would therefore be likely to shrink rapidly.

The meeting voted 9 to 4 to reject the proposal.

4. Appointment of Officers.

The consultative document proposed that only the executive officers, i.e. the Chairman, Ringing Master, Secretary, Treasurer and Belfry Adviser, together with the Central Council Representatives, be elected at the AGM. All other officers should be appointed by the Management Committee.

The meeting was equally divided on this issue, with 7 voting “for” and 7 “against”.

5. Training Working Party

The consultative document proposed the establishing of a working party to prepare training programmes, provide courses and to arrange and manage practice meetings throughout the Diocese.

The meeting was generally in favour of this proposal.

6. Bell Restoration Fund.

The consultative document proposed that rather than 50% of peal fees and subscriptions being transferred to the Restoration Fund, it should be divided between the Restoration and Education Funds.

The meeting felt that in principle this was a sensible proposal, but it was unsure of how the Charities Commission would view it. It was likely that they would consider the Education Fund as a “benefit in kind” to members and not eligible for charitable status. The proposal needed further consideration out of committee.

Way Forward

The Chairman summarised the outcome of the meeting, and considered that the way ahead was for the Executive Officers to meet and iron out some of the ~~deficiencies~~ ^{inconsistencies} of the consultative document, and then to present the amended document to the next management Committee meeting.

This was agreed

The meeting closed at 5:15 pm

B Whitmore
20 February 1999.