

## Suffolk Guild of Ringers

### Minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002

**Present:** Brian Whiting, Sandra Pereira, Trevor Hughes, Rolie Whiting, Alan Mayle, Winston Girling, Eric Bull, John Taylor, James Smith, John Pereira, Matthew Cracknell, Alan Moulton.

**Apologies for absence** were received from David Mulrenan, Stephen Pettman, Richard Gates, Brian Aldous

**The minutes** of the previous meeting, having been previously circulated, were accepted as a true record.

#### **Matters arising**

**St Edmund Clapper.** The Chairman stated that reminders had been placed in the newsletter and it was hoped that there would be more participation in the competition this year.

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner.** Stephen Pettman was still awaiting a final decision from the Suffolk Police about the use of their headquarters. It was hoped that a venue would be finalised within the next two weeks.

**Web site.** John Pereira continues to work on this. Links with the Change Ringers Resources site still need correcting.

**Database.** Secretary now has full data on about 500 out of 700 members. Another circulation would be undertaken in the Autumn.

#### **Matters arising from the Annual General Meeting**

Membership status of Jeremy Spiller in connection with a peal no. 7838. In Stephen Pettman's absence, this was deferred until the next meeting.

Venue for 2003 AGM. SE district had discussed this and suggested Offton with ringing at surrounding towers. Facilities at Offton village hall are not ideal, but further discussion will be held with the district secretary to see if the problems can be overcome.

The SW district were reminded that the Guild Striking Competition would be held in their district in 2003.

#### **Correspondence**

A letter had been received from Stephen Young informing the Committee that the Guild had a Ringing World subscription, and he, as Report Editor, had received the copy. It was decided to discontinue this subscription for the time being.

George Pipe had requested that we reissue the Belfry Prayer on card and distribute to all towers for display. This was agreed. Secretary would produce cards and arrange distribution with next Newsletter.

An email had been received from Stephen Young informing the Committee that he would no longer collate peals and quarters for the Annual Report. James Smith volunteered to undertake this role.

A letter had been received from Keith Ashton-Jones, on behalf of the North West District, complaining about the behaviour of several senior members of the Guild in recent weeks. It stated that several towers in the district, which were classified unringable, had been rung as part of the Queen's Jubilee Quarter Peal event. Tower correspondents had been bypassed and not informed about ringing at their towers, and incumbents had been asked for permission to ring, without reference to local ringers. The complaints centred on the ways in which permission had been sought and on the insurance situation. There was doubt about whether our insurance would pay out if accidents occurred in towers which were classified by the Guild as unringable.

The Chairman, who had been involved in the quarters, then read out a letter which he had sent, in reply, to Mr Ashton-Jones, pointing out the reasons for ringing these towers, which included the pleasure that some local people had expressed at hearing their bells rung. He emphasised the fact that 191 out of 261 towers had rung quarters for the Golden Jubilee. The letter included an apology for any behaviour that had offended members in the district.

Alan Moulton disputed some of the facts in his letter, matters which could not be resolved, due to the absence of the Ringing Master. But he was very concerned about safety at several of the towers and insurance implications. He stated that Guild guidelines should be adhered to and stated that the word 'unringable' perhaps did not adequately describe the condition of some towers.

There then followed a lengthy discussion about insurance and classification of towers. There was consensus that 'unringable' was not a useful term and towers which should in no circumstances be rung, should be reclassified as 'unsafe'. Alan Moulton suggested that some towers, including some of those under discussion, should have limited ringing in order to make best use of their remaining life.

Following the discussion, the Chairman put four recommendations to the committee:

The tower directory in the Annual Report needs fundamental reassessment and updating.

A category of 'Unsafe to ring' should be used for some towers and these bells would not be rung under any circumstances.

A disclaimer should be included in the directory, advising that the classification shows the condition only at the time of inspection.

All clergy with unsafe bells should be informed, so that they are not put in a difficult position with requests to ring.

These recommendations were welcomed by the committee.

Winston Girling proposed, and Alan Moulton seconded that the BAC should take on the task of reclassifying towers with the above recommendations in mind. This was agreed by the meeting. The BAC will report back to the next GMC on progress made with the reclassification.



Members felt that those involved in the quarter peals in question had acted in good faith as part of the Jubilee celebrations, and there was no element of tower grabbing or maliciousness intended.

Several members expressed their dismay that such a dispute should arise in the Guild and hoped that a line could now be drawn under the matter and we now move forward to put the recommendations in place to avoid the situation being repeated.

### **Financial Statement**

Eric Bull presented the current situation. Over £9000 had been paid out in grants to Wingfield, Campsea Ashe, Mendham and All Saints Sudbury. There remained d£38,098 in our funds.

There was some concern about the grant to Sudbury having been paid before the bells had been tested. It was pointed out that only tower work was being carried out, and we had agreed to give to the tower in the expectation that the bells would be rung again.

Subs accompanied by Gift Aid forms had been disappointing. The Treasurer hoped to recoup some £1200 from the Inland Revenue. This to cover from April 2000 up to this year.

### **Ringling Master's Report**

In the absence of the Ringing Master the Chairman reported that 191 quarters had been scored for the Queen's Jubilee. Two ringable towers had failed to ring one.

The Ridgman Trophy ten bell competition had been held at Bury St. Edmunds the previous week and the Suffolk Guild had come fourth out of the eight entries.

### **Sub Committee Reports**

#### ***Belfry Advisory***

A meeting had taken place on May 30th. Report attached. The meeting had discussed the issues minuted above, and the Chairman of the committee had agreed to look into its membership, as some BAC members may have been involved in the controversial quarters.

Wingfield and Mendham had both been rededicated and the work there was satisfactory.

#### ***Recruitment and Training***

A meeting had been held, the minutes of which were in the Newsletter. Trevor Hughes reported that there were now no ringers at Saxmundham. He had offered to train a band, but finding recruits was impossible.

John Taylor reported two new recruits as a result of having the Dummy Bell at a Jubilee event.

### **Applications for Grants**

No applications for grants had been received.

### **Ratification of Non-resident Life Members**

The elections of Roger G Butt of Brentwood (elected at Walsham le Willows on 23<sup>rd</sup> February), Timothy FW Samson of Wellingborough, and Richard Allton (elected at St Mary le Tower on 11<sup>th</sup> May) were ratified.

### **Guild Library Insurance**

The Secretary had been in contact with the insurers. A price of £500 had been quoted. For a little more they were also willing to insure the handbells. It was proposed by Trevor Hughes, seconded by John Pereira that we drop the idea give the cost involved. Secretary to inform the Librarian.

Concern was expressed over our Public Liability cover (only £1,000,000). Secretary to contact the Central Council for advice.

### **Central Council Report**

James Smith had attended the Central Council meeting in his capacity as ANZAB representative. He reported that the CC now had a new President, Mike Henshaw, with Derek Sibson as Vice President. These were three year appointments, with Vice President normally becoming President after three years. A full account of the proceedings would be published in Ringing World.

The Ringing World AGM had seen the entire Board declining to stand for re-election, and a completely new one elected.

### **Any Other Business**

Rolie Whiting requested clarification that members who paid after the end of March did remain members. The end of March deadline is for insurance purposes, so members should be encouraged to pay on time.

Rolie Whiting reported that 20 badges in his possession had tarnished. The Secretary agreed to replace them.

**Date of next meeting:** October 19th 2002 at 6.00pm at Buxhall Village Hall

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

*R Whiting*  
*19 October 2002*

## Unringable Bells – Recommendations agreed by GMC on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002.

- 1) The Tower Directory in the Annual report needs fundamental reassessment and updating
- 2) A category of “unsafe to ring” should be used for some towers and these bells would not be rung under any circumstances
- 3) A disclaimer should be included in the directory, advising that the classification shows the condition only at the time of inspection
- 4) All clergy with unsafe bells should be informed, so that they are not put in a difficult position with requests to ring

### Proposed amendments

Directory being reassessed, updating as follows:

Conditions 2 and 3 – Unringable to be changed to “NOT TO BE RUNG”

The following two paragraphs to be added on classifications page:

**The Suffolk Guild of Ringers will not support or condone any attempts by its members or indeed anyone else to ring on bells which are classified as condition 3 or below. At these Churches The Suffolk Guild Technical Advisor or deputy, and if necessary the architect must be present when assessment of the bells or tower is taking place.**

(Please note that the classification is based on the condition only at the last date of inspection and any enquiries or requests for further inspections should be directed in the first instance to the Suffolk Guild Technical Advisor or Maintenance Officer)

Porch Cards to be re-issued, blue for ringable, red for unringable. **Arrangements to be made for all red ones to be delivered personally to incumbent and/or churchwarden for bells condition to be discussed.**

### Condition 4

No towers shown under condition 4. Delete present wording and substitute: **“Occasionally rung with difficulty for services/festivals. Frame/ fittings nearly life expired”**

Classification to be amended throughout to include condition 4 where applicable.