

Meeting of Suffolk Guild of Ringers Management Committee

Sunday 20th October 2024
held at Stowupland Church Hall

1. Welcome

a) Mark Ogden welcomed everyone to the meeting.

b) Members present:

Officers: Mark Ogden - Chairman, David Everett - Secretary, Katharine Salter – Ringing Master, Tim Hart – Treasurer, Chris Davies - Chairman of the BAC

North East District: None

North West District: David Steed, Mark Steggles

South East District: Mary Garner, Jenny Scase, James Smith

South West District: Pauline Brown, Richard Knight, Alan Moulton

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

North East District: Erika Clarke, Philip Gorrod, Sarah Plummer, Joanna Wilkinson

North West District: Neal Dodge

South East District: Stephen Christian

South West District: None

3. Absent Friends

From Mary Garner's Report, the Chairman read out the names of Absent Friends who have died since the last GMC meeting, as detailed in her report:

Dr Peter Ernst – Bredfield (SE), Evelyn Reeve – Bures (SW), David McLean – Lowestoft (NE) & Valerie Eagle-Bott – Wissett (NE)

The meeting took a few moments of reflection to remember them.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2024

Pauline Brown proposed and Richard Knight seconded that the minutes be approved as correct. They were, nem con.

5. Matters arising from the minutes, including actions completed

a) MO informed the meeting that he had received no alternative proposals for the use of the St Edmunds Clapper and so it would be awarded as in the past until an alternative use can be found for it.

b) MO thanked the NW District and Josh Watkins in particular for the excellent Open Day. It raised more than £2,000 for the Drinkstone rehousing project, however, it has now transpired that these funds are no longer needed for Drinkstone as they have received sufficient funding from elsewhere. The money has been put into the Bell Repair Fund.

ACTION LOG FROM 23rd JUNE 2024

Item	Action	Outcome
(23.10) 13 e	Exec to discuss the use of the St Edmunds Clapper going forward	Done
(23.10)14a	Veterans' Day ringing on 12 th July at 2pm at Debenham	Done

6. Correspondence

- a) MO informed the Committee of correspondence received from PA Media regarding a copyright infringement on the Guild website. Whilst the image was not shown on the website the link to it was referenced and this is also an infringement. Their claim was for £700 and after lengthy negotiations regarding this claim and guidance from Erica Clarke a settlement was agreed and £100 paid.
MO asked for vigilance when making posts on the Guild Website or social media in the future.
- b) MO said that we had received an email from the Central Council Secretary saying that they will be looking at membership systems for use initially by the Council but may be for use by Guilds in future. If anybody is interested in being involved with this project please contact the Guild Secretary.
- c) A email had also been received from Will Bosworth of The Ringing World saying that developments to the Bellboard system particularly around Performance reporting and them providing a paid service in the future for Guilds to buy into. We await further developments.
- d) MO informed the meeting that he had received an email regarding the ongoing access requirements since CCT took over responsibility for St Peters, Sudbury. He reported that many of the issues have now been resolved. However, there are still issues about ringing all 10 bells.

7. Officer Reports

a) Treasurer's Report

Report considered and there were no questions raised

b) Ringing Master Report

The Report considered and there were no questions raised.

KS raised the subject of the Safeguarding of adults. She reported that there have been a number of instances reported of people being shouted at after ringing has finished because they got it wrong! Whilst these instances are rare, they are all unacceptable. All people should be treated reasonably as we do not know what their vulnerabilities are at that time.

c) Recruitment and Training Report

KS informed the meeting that there is a shortage of mentors in Suffolk for those attending ART courses (it is a requirement that they have one before attending an ART course). ART have suggested that where possible people attend in pairs and buddy each other, but this is not always possible and not entirely satisfactory. Some have been unable to attend because of this stipulation.

d) Belfry Advisory Committee Report

The Report was considered.

- i. It was reported that Westhorpe no longer require their grant and that the Drinkstone work has been temporary suspended.
- ii. KS reported that following her visit to Fornham St Martins recently she was asking for 2 of the slider runners to be inspected. She also asked that the tenor bell be inspected by the installer as it does not seem to rise properly. It was also confirmed that the final sign off would not be given until the new ropes had been delivered and installed.
- iii. She also voiced concerns regarding the independence of those charged with signing-off projects before the grant is paid. If a person is involved in making / presenting the project for the grant and has a significant input in the management of the installation, could that person then be considered “an independent person” when it comes to signing-off the project for the Guild’s grant? Or is there a conflict interest? This applies equally to the Ringing Master and the Technical adviser involved. The Meeting agreed that the Exec should look at a conflicts of interest policy. TH advised the meeting that on our Charity Commission return we were asked if we had a conflict of interests policy and had to declare we did not.
- iv. It was reported that the SMLT project is currently on hold as is the R&T grant project at Henley.
- v. Chris Davies said that a grant for £1,000 had been granted to Blythburgh at a time when only 5% of the cost was being given. In the light of the change in policy to giving 10% he recommended that the Blythburgh grant be increased to £2,000. All were in favour.
- vi. The Secretary raised a question from Chris Garner regarding the comment in the BAC Report relating to the bells at Bramfield St Andrew. He suggested that the rating of bells in the Guild Directory related to the “ringing experience” (as this is what people looking at the Guild Directory will use it for) and not on the “quality of the installation”. Alan Moulton said that the opposite was the case as the quality of the installation was assessed and didn’t change however the ringing experience is affected by many factors many of which change regularly, such as the weather and bell maintenance. This was to be relayed back to Chris Garner.

e) Membership Secretary Report

There have been 67 new members since the beginning of the year

There 658 paid-up members for the Guild as at 15th October, however, there are 47 people listed in the last Guild Report who have not yet paid.

f) Safeguarding Report

Report considered and there were no questions raised.

g) PRO Report

There was no report.

h) Webmaster Report

The Report was received.

8. Applications for Grants and Grants Outstanding

There were no further requests for grants.

9. Ratification of NRLMs

There were 7 people ratified at this meeting.

Name	Residence	Elected at / Date
James Hollins	London	Stowmarket 16 th March
Catherine Sturgess	Norwich	Bardwell 2 nd August
David A Warwick	Wimborne Minster	Bardwell 2 nd August
Felicity S Warwick	Wimborne Minster	Bardwell 2 nd August
Alan T Winter	Cambridge	Meldreth 27 th July
Greg PH Chu	Cambridge	Norman Tower 14 th September
Catherine E Morley	Cambridge	Norman Tower 14 th September

10. CCCBR Updates

MO gave the following updates following the Central Council's AGM last month

- a) **Affiliation Fees** – the current Fee is 20p/Guild member. At the CCCBR AGM it was agreed to increase that figure to 40p from 2025. It also agreed that it would be increased to £1/ Guild member in 2026 although there is a possibility that this could be amended or rescinded if there are substantial objections at the next AGM. MO informed the meeting that the Central Council is unable to undertake all the work that is required because it relied on volunteers and the burden on those prepared to contribute to the work is too great. Some paid-for assistance is going to be needed to achieve all that has been agreed. He and others felt that the increase to £1 was justified and a small price to pay for all the good work they do to develop and promote bellringing. However, there was a feeling that we might get some pushback on this from the Guild membership and that its acceptance of this increase, if it did happen, should be made by our membership at a Guild AGM. MO said that because of the general support expressed at the Central Council AGM our Guild decision would be between accepting the increase or resigning our CCCBR Membership. Most felt that we should actively promote the work of the CCCBR at our next Guild AGM and support the increase in Membership fee.
- b) **Church Closures** – a Powerpoint presentation made at the CCCBR AGM on this subject had been distributed before the meeting. It was based around a review of the viability of churches made by the Lincoln Diocese. There is a significant concern regarding the closure of churches on bellringing. MO felt that we should be doing some research regarding towers with bells in Suffolk to assess the risk of closures here. DE for NW District volunteered to initiate the work in this District however he said that the Diocesan Office should be approached first to see whether they have undertaken any work on the subject of church closures already. MO also added that we should be adding an assessment of the church closure criteria as part of future grant considerations.

- c) **National Lottery Heritage Fund** – MO informed the meeting that the new guidelines for the making of grants included the restoration of bells within its parameters. This is new as it hasn't been in previous guidelines.

11. Any Other Business

- a) A proposal had been received from the NW District Committee that Ruth Young be made an Honorary Life Member of the Guild. At the last NW ADM she stood down from her position as District Treasurer after 29 years in the role! Indeed, before that she had also been District Treasurer in the NE District for some years and NW District Secretary for some time too. All of these roles she has undertaken with distinction. She has been a Guild Member continuously since 1966. The GMC unanimously and wholeheartedly endorsed the proposal and it will now go forward to the next Guild AGM for approval.
- b) The Rose Trophy has now been repaired and a locking mechanism has been made to hold the trophy securely on its base. However, the base is now full of the plaques of winners. It was initially thought that the plaques would have to be gradually removed and stored to make room for new winner's plaques. However, a suggestion was made that a new base is made and the old one stored on display at the Norman Tower where there is space to keep it. This suggestion was ratified.
- c) TH stated that in the light of the differing levels of expenses claimed by delegates to the recent CCCBR AGM, the Guild's expenses policy needs to be reviewed and probably revised.
- d) KS asked for permission to get prices for the replacement of the strap which the Master's Badge is held on. The existing one is extremely worn and is not secure. It is believed to have been used since the Badge was first commissioned in 1969! The Committee gave permission nem.con.
- e) Chris Davies asked that the Committee approve a proposal that Tim Hart becomes a member of the BAC Committee. This was agreed without objection.
- f) It was proposed that the Guild rules for making Grants be reviewed and proposals brought back to the next GMC Meeting.
- g) DE asked if the Committee were happy for the next GMC Meeting to be held on Zoom? The general feeling was that it is better to hold these meetings in person. It was agreed that the next one would be at Stowupland, however, if a week before the meeting the weather was forecast to be unsuitable for travelling then it would be changed to using Zoom. DE to discuss this with the NE GMC members.

Date of next meeting

Sunday 16th February 2025 (at Stowupland). Further Meetings in 2025 will be on 22nd June & 19th October (both at Stowupland). All these meetings will begin at 2pm.

ACTION LOG FROM 20th OCTOBER 2024

Item	Action	Owner
(20.10) 7d iii	Exec to review Conflict of Interest provisions in the Guild Rules	Exec
(20.10)10a	CCCBR Affiliation Fees to be included on the next Guild AGM Agenda	Secretary
(20.10)10b	DE to initiate work on assessing risks to bellringing of Church closures	Secretary
(20.10)11a	Proposal to approve Ruth Young's nomination as Honorary Life Member to be included on Guild AGM Agenda	Secretary
(20.10)11c	Review of Guild Expenses Policy	Exec
(20.10)11f	Review of Guild Rules relating to making Grants	Exec