

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Sunday 17th June 2007 at 3:00 pm, in the Methodist Chapel, Old Newton

Present: Winston Girling, (Chair), Mary Garner (Sec), Richard Munnings (Master), Jason Busby (NE/HI), Trevor Hughes (NE/Ht), David Mulrenan (NE/Hx), Jonathan Stevens (NE/Sx), Carl Melville (NW/St), Maurice Rose (NW/Th), John Taylor (SE/Bs), Richard Gates (SW/Sd), Rolie Whiting (SW/Hd), Richard Knight (SW/Cl),

Welcome: Winston welcomed everyone and asked the meeting to stand in remembrance of Peter Allen from Long Melford, who died recently.

Apologies for absence were received from Keith Ashton Jones, Rev Brian Redgers (SE/Ip), Stefan Labedzki (SW/Lv), Robert Scase (SE/Lo), Ian Harris (NE/Be) and Marion Turner (NW/MI).

The Minutes of meeting held on 17th February 2007 were agreed and signed.

Matters arising from those minutes not itemised later in the agenda:

85th Anniversary Dinner. This has been booked at Woolpit Village Hall for 15th March 2007 but caterers are still needed. It was agreed that further enquiries would be made and the results reported back to Richard or Mary. **Action: Maurice Rose** (re Mrs Hubbard of Walsham) **& David Mulrenan**

Correspondence

(i) A number of reports have been requested and sent out.

(ii) A letter has been received from John Banks thanking the Guild for his election as an Honorary Life Member. He will be 100 in October (maybe we could ring a peal for him, MSG)

Action: RJM to liaise with Ian Holland

(iii) Letter from Philip Gorrod, Chairman of NE District.

As a relative newcomer to the Suffolk Guild Philip's letter was written from a more objective viewpoint than is often possible from those who have grown up with it. It related to these main issues, the Guild accounts, the report and Hartismere Deanery. A full discussion of the letter followed.

Guild Accounts

a) Honorary Auditor. The meeting agreed that the address should be published in the report.

b) Independent Examiner's and Trustees reports. Because of the timescale between the examination (undertaken free) and the publishing of the report it would not be practical without a change of AGM time or the accounting year. Much discussion ensued and it was felt that something might be produced as a separate sheet for the AGM. **Philip Gorrod and KAJ to be asked to discuss this.**

c) Constitution Rule 9. The meeting agreed that the wording should be revised and this will be presented to the next AGM, to read "The Annual General Meeting shall appoint an accountant, who is not a member of the GMC and need not be a member of the Guild, to act as an Independent Examiner and to report on the annual accounts in accordance with the Charities Acts." **Action: Constitution change**

d) Subscriptions. It was agreed that these seem untidy at present and that they would be considered with this in mind at the February committee meeting, as usual. **Action February**

e) Subscriptions and the BRF. It was explained that subscriptions are set to meet the requirement of the General Fund and then doubled to allow for 50% transfer to BRF. The GMC already has authority to transfer any surplus at the year end.

f) Elections. It was decided to leave the current system in place. Whilst preparing nominees in advance is advisable, nominations from the floor ensure against things not going according to plan.

g) Vice Presidents and Patron. It was explained that Vice Presidents had been part of the GMC in the past. With voting rights this would make the committee very large. Discussion followed. A proposal was made that the current situation should remain.. The following vote had all in favour with 1 against and 1 abstention.

President. With the current bishop retiring shortly a letter will be written to the new Bishop to welcome to the diocese and invite him to be our President. **Action: WSG**

h) Guild Website. The meeting agreed that the Guild Webmaster should be an officer. WG asked that the thanks of the GMC and Guild should be conveyed to Chris Garner for his work as webmaster. **Action MSG and Constitution change**

Officers. The committee felt that the person responsible for St Peter's Sudbury should be an officer. Currently Alan Mayle is responsible there. **Action: MSG to contact Alan Mayle.**

i) Hartismere Deanery: Philip's letter asks the GMC to consider moving Hartismere Deanery from the NE to the NW. Discussion followed during which the point was made that historically the centre of ringing for the NE had been Beccles. Nowadays the ringing takes place towards the coast rather than inland. Losing Hartismere would mean nowhere to go for the people in the western part of the NE. If the lines are straightened, ignoring the deaneries would the situation be better? The deanery would not be out of touch if there was a core of ringing in the middle. Perhaps the division does not need to be formal, the situation could change again before long. It should be noted that Gislingham and Palgrave are keen to be attached to the NW. **Action: Maurice Rose, Philip Gorrod and Trevor Hughes to discuss further.**

iv) Letter from John Girt. A letter asking the GMC to consider an alternative structure to the current meetings programme was read. The main suggestion was to change one QDM a year in each district to a Guild General Meeting, enabling negating the unwieldy process of GMC referring items to districts and thence back again. It would enable the Guild emphasis to change from that of discussions to more ringing centred and/or social occasions. He raised the problems with recruitment and considering the fact that the most skilled ringers are not necessarily the best teachers and how this might be dealt with.

Discussion followed which highlighted the following:

- a) Restructuring would enable "higherprofile" people to visit towers.
- b) Getting people out of their own towers is a problem, possibly enhanced because many are so busy.
- c) We participate in a hobby where we can join in but how many people do it?
- d) People don't always manage to get round but it's two way, everyone would benefit from getting other towers than their home one.
- e) Surely the deanery reps provide an easier path from towers to officers?
- f) Teaching teachers and more PR, but how do you do it?
- g) Must be careful not to criticise people doing their best and keeping towers going.
- h) Adopt a ringer. A more skilled ringer to help and support another, visiting others practices etc.
- i) Could be taken forward by sliding in changes gradually. **Action: Secretary to write to John Girt.**

Financial Report

Keith Aston Jones submitted the Treasurer's update as follows (last June's figures in brackets)

Overall Guild assets £84,200 (£83,400)

General Fund balance £5370 (£4970)

Small rise due primarily to more prompt payment of subs and peal fees (£250),

reduced admin expenses paid to-date (£100), and saving on Report printing (£110)

Restoration Fund; Available for new grants £40,000 (£57,000)

Approved/awaiting payment £33,000 (£16,000)

Grant to Gislingham (£6000) paid 6/03/07

Summary: Guild finances to-date appear to be on track for the year, allowing an early forecast that, given no unexpected large expenditure, General Fund income/expenditure should just about balance. The Restoration Fund continues to benefit from the higher-than-normal interest generated by the larger-than-usual sum on deposit (resulting from the Lenny Sharpe bequest)

Ringling Master's report

Since last meeting, a team had taken in the 12 bells eliminator. Although named as Ipswich the team was drawn from across the Guild. We were placed last in the group, but not by very much, only 4 faults behind St Martin in the Fields.

The Guild 6 Bell Striking Competition was a successful event albeit a little disappointing that all but one team was from the SE. The 8 bell went well with teams from across the Guild. RM stressed that a competition is not meant to be elitist and everything from Bob Doubles to Cambridge is appropriate, the whole idea being to create an opportunity to hear good striking.

The Ridman Trophy was competed for on 16th June, the competition for 10 bells. Bedford won, they were outstanding, we came a close third with 11 faults. (One team fired out and the next team up had 81 faults.) RM was thanked for his report.

RM supported a call for reinstatement of a Guild Call Change competition. There is a Call Change Trophy in existence. RM said perhaps we should consider a rule change.

The question of qualifiers was also put forward.

Sub-committee reports: i. Belfry Advisory committee

A meeting took place at Clopton on 15th June.

In the NE a test ring had taken place at Cratfield with a view restoration

In the NW tightening at Tostock and Stowupland had been carried out whilst refitting a clapper, which fell out, at Bacton has been done.

In the SE a crack in tower at Monewden had stopped ringing. Soundbow wear was reported at Helmingham, they are looking at restoration. More work is needed at Easton. Pulley problems and odd striking at Orford have been sorted out. Framsdon are ringing the back 6 only for short periods.

In the SW Hadleigh have asked for bells to be looked at. All Saints Sudbury need wood for headstock.

Following this report Jonathan Stevens said that he could probably help with this. Maurice Rose proposed and Trevor Hughes seconded that JJS should join the BAC.

A question was asked about Bedfield. WSG told the GMC that George Pipe has been in contact.

ii. Recruitment and training

There had been no meeting since the last GMC.

Applications for grants.

Fressingfield. It has been proposed to put a steel frame below the restored wooden frame, the latter to be used for the lighter bells. Seems viable at a cost of £45000 for the bell work. Other work comes to £50000. We're looking at considering a grant on £50000. Richard Knight proposed a grant of £5000. This was seconded by David Mulrenan and agreed by the meeting.

Stonham Aspal wish to repair the frame for 7 and 8, tie rods etc with bells in place, cost £9065. It looks viable and should work really well. A grant of £1050 was proposed by Jonathan Stevens, seconded by Maurice Rose, and agreed by the meeting.

Ixworth have applied for a further grant since the cost of two new trebles with fittings has increased to £14000+. The actual shortfall for the bells is thought to be approx £4000. A further grant of £2000 was proposed by Richard Knight and seconded by Maurice Rose. The ensuing vote resulted in 6 in favour and 5 against.

(i) It was noted that a 25% grant had been offered for this project

(ii) The point was made that it was hoped that a precedent had not been set.

Stradishall bells were removed during the second week of June. The tenor is cracked and one wheel is unusable. The additional cost is £2689. A grant of £350 was proposed by Trevor Hughes, seconded by Jonathan Stevens, and agreed by the meeting.

Richard Knight said that he had received a list of grant awarding bodies from John Loveless and he would forward it to anyone who would like a copy.

Ratification of NRLM

No new members were put forward.

Lenny Sharpe bequest

Discussed fully under a further grant for Ixworth.

Scout Centenary Ringing

End of July, beginning of August. An e mail had been received regarding this event. **Action: Secretary to inform PR officer**

Ringing for Suffolk Open Churches week (15th-21st July)

MSG reported that she had been contacted by Margaret Blackall, Diocesan Tourism Officer, asking what, if anything is planned. She had responded to her and sent messages to each District Secretary, asking what they can report. One said she hadn't heard of Open Churches week and another suggested getting the dockside churches in particular ringing. What about asking deanery reps/district ringing masters to enquire

in their patches whether any would like to ring quarters that week. Help could possibly be supplied to boost numbers. Quarters could be recorded centrally and sent up together. PRO Viewing the bells.
The feeling of the meeting was positive.

Insurance

1. Renewal of Guild Insurance, 24 May, have kept with the current insurers. However the RW reported a seemingly much cheaper deal from Ecclesiastical. MSG did get details and sought advice from David Salter. He has now looked into it and suggests that we ask for a quote about April time next year. Our Public Liability cost c £525 this year, E would appear to be about £250.

2. A claim was made in February on the GPA policy and this was concluded successfully.

Saturdays for district events

It was noted in the NW that in May there were 2 district events on the second Sat. MSG had explained that the SE and NE had discussed and organised their events close by so that both could be attended. However perhaps we should give thought to our use of the Saturdays. In general the following happens: SE 1st Sat, NE and NW 2nd Sat, SW 4th Sat.

It was commented from the floor that May is difficult traditionally.

Any other business

1. The GMC offered congratulations to Trevor and Julie Hughes following their recent marriage.
2. Could be PR officer come to this committee since so much is discussed which is relevant to PR? Action: Secretary to invite him to attend.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.34.

Date of next meeting, Sat 20th October 2007, at 6pm.

Additional items for the October agenda to be notified in writing by 20th September, please.

Grid Ref 063628

Mary Garner
Hon. Secretary