



**Minutes of the North East District Quarterly Meeting held at  
All Saints' Church, Laxfield, Suffolk on Saturday, 11 March 2023  
commencing at 16.30 hours**

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Dave Goldstone (Chair of the North East District) (**DG**), welcomed 14 members to the meeting together with Rowan Wilson (Chair of the Suffolk Guild) (**RW**), Neal Dodge (Suffolk Guild's Public Relations Officer) (**NTD**) and two other members of the North West District.

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Cowling, David Mulrenan, Graham Downing, Suzanne Stevens, Jonathan Stevens, Richard Stevens, Julia Johnson, Trevor Hughes, Julie Hughes, Michael Peters, Sharon Peters, Helen Mower, Mike Sage and Kate Assman.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the North East District Quarterly Meeting held on 3 September 2022 at Wissett**

The minutes of the last North East District Quarterly Meeting held on 3 September 2022 at Wissett (a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda) were approved with no amendments or additions proposed.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the North East District Quarterly Meeting held on 3 September 2022 at Wissett.

**4. Guild Centenary AGM in Beccles - Saturday, 15 April 2023**

DG and Kate Gill (District Secretary) (**KG**) summarised the plans for the forthcoming Guild Centenary AGM to be hosted by the District in Beccles. These included the installation of the mini-ring in the nave at St Michael's, a commemorative group photo of those attending to be taken on the steps of the church, a brief church service to be conducted by The Revd Canon Rich Henderson followed by a ringing tea. There would also be ringing at Yoxford and Wilby for those travelling to Beccles (as well as on the ten bells at Beccles). Philip Gorrod (District Ringing Master) (**PJG**) explained that a skeleton band would be present at both Yoxford and Wilby to ensure that those visiting the towers en route to Beccles would have sufficient numbers to ring. All were asked to promote attendance of the AGM amongst their fellow Guild members.

**5. Ringing for the Coronation**

DG reminded the meeting that the Coronation will take place on 6 May 2023 and that guidance as to ringing on the day will be issued by the CCCBR once the timing of the ceremony is known. PJG explained that, while it would be good to be able to have ringing in all towers in the District, there were just not enough ringers to achieve this. Consequently, ringers should aim to ring as much as

they can and help other towers where required. PJG added that he was aiming to recruit for and coordinate a “Quarter Peal Fortnight” in the lead up to the ceremony with 35 towers in the District being considered suitable venues. Bids had already been received from Blythburgh, Chediston and Halesworth. He invited ringers interested in taking part to contact him.

NTD asked that any commemorative ringing for the Coronation be recorded on Bellboard and tagged accordingly so that a commemorative certificate can be generated.

## **6. Recruitment and training**

DG asked Sue Child (SC) to address the meeting on the new “Sole Bay Ringing Hub” initiative (brief details of which were set out in a leaflet circulated by SC at the meeting). SC explained that the aim of the Hub was to complement the existing training within local towers by supporting the teaching and learning of bellringing in the District. It would not only offer tuition for learners, but would also aim to encourage and tutor existing ringers to become teachers or in developing their confidence to be able to help with teaching, so as to expand the District’s teaching resource. The Hub will be based at Reydon and the first session will be held on 22 April between 9.30am and 11.30am with an ART teacher. It is not intended that ringers need to attend every session. SC explained that she wanted to develop a network of teachers (as well as learners) to support tower captains and to bring an ART course to the District. SC asked that members promote the Hub and asked that details be circulated by DG to the District by email.

PJG commented that people can forget how lonely learning to ring can be and that it is helpful to build camaraderie amongst learners and even some competition. DG also endorsed the benefit of learning with others. The meeting congratulated SC on setting up this important initiative.

## **7. Progression of ringing in the North East District**

PJG reported that, since the pandemic, Guild membership had fallen by 20 per cent and that all towers were struggling. This included Halesworth. The numbers at Aldeburgh were variable while Beccles tended to only ring on the front six bells at present. PJG commented that ringing in the District was now experiencing “regression” rather than “progression” and reminded the meeting that, if any tower had a learner who showed the ability to progress, their learning need not be limited to their home tower. For example, he had organised periodic call changes practices at Wissett for learners from both Halesworth and Fressingfield.

## **8. Election of new members**

It was reported that an application for Guild membership had been received from Paul Wetherell (Aldeburgh) with his proposer and seconder being Richard Rapior and Michael Rolph, respectively. PJG confirmed that he had seen Paul ring at Chediston and was satisfied with the application. The meeting approved acceptance of the application and DG duly countersigned the application form.

## **9. Safeguarding**

DG reminded the meeting of the importance of Safeguarding in practice and in ensuring that everyone’s training and certificates were up to date. He directed the meeting to the Guild’s Safeguarding Policy that can be found on its website. PJG added that it is not clear who is responsible for chasing people to complete their training. While he, in his role as a tower captain, chases members of the band at his tower, he is not chased by the Parish’s Safeguarding Officer when

a ringer fails to obtain their certificate. A discussion took place regarding the ability to secure a rolling renewal of DBS clearance and how this was meant to operate for volunteers.

## **10. Open towers event**

DG reported that he understood there was to be an “Open Towers” event in 2023. He mentioned Beccles’ current plans to open the tower one Saturday to visitors who would like to try to chime a bell. Tea and cake would be available.

KG invited RW to comment on the Guild’s plans for the Centenary year in this respect. RW explained that the Guild was proposing “Open Days” at various towers for existing ringers rather than recruitment focused events, however, the Norman Tower does run an open day involving an introductory talk about the bells and ringing and the Peal Boards. She mentioned that they had found it was important not to involve too many people in the day and suggested there should just be a single bell rung to demonstrate handling technique.

Sal Jenkinson added that Halesworth’s annual open tower event took place alongside the town’s Heritage Open Day and the Ride and Stride fundraiser. As a result, it secured a greater number of visitors (and potential recruits) than a discrete open tower event.

DG invited members to share their ideas for similar events in the District.

## **11. Other events for 2023**

DG summarised the various events currently planned for 2023. These included:

- the Guild Centenary Dinner in Bury St Edmunds on 25 March (132 tickets having been sold to date, however only 10 members of the NE District were attending);
- the Guild Centenary AGM in Beccles on 15 April;
- celebratory ringing for the Coronation;
- the District Striking Competition at Metfield on 10 June;
- a “Ringing Games” afternoon (involving various ringing exercises designed to improve striking) led by SC at Rumburgh on 8 July;
- a “Ringing Walk and Picnic” at Barsham on 12 August;
- the CCCBR meeting and associated events in and around Ipswich on 1-3 September - the Guild website will be updated with full details nearer the time but NTD outlined the broad range of anticipated events including targeted ringing sessions, particularly involving larger numbers of bells, a social event on the Friday evening, a CAMRA run beer tasting and curry night at St Peter’s on the Waterfront on the Saturday after the formal meeting, service ringing on the Sunday at towers where there are no regular bands currently followed by a Ringing 2030 Initiative event at St Clement’s in Ipswich led by Simon Linford (President of the CCCBR) as well as training sessions on maintenance, conducting and ringing handbells;
- the ADM on 11 November (venue to be confirmed).

NTD added the Guild’s 6-Bell Striking Competition at Troston (on its newly restored bells) on 20 May (draw to take place at 10.00am).

## **12. Any other business**

DG invited contributions for any other business.

RW mentioned her “100 Towers Cycling Challenge” as part of the Guild’s Challenge 100 initiative for the Centenary year. She invited members to sponsor her and explained that all funds raised would go to the Guild.

PJG announced that *The Ringing World’s* “method of the week” was Huntingfield Bob Doubles, providing some kudos for the District.

With no further business being raised by those in attendance, DG concluded the meeting by thanking Fiona Shuttle for her help in organising the day at Laxfield, to RW and NTD for attending and to KG and her husband Robert for their work in connection with the ringing tea.

The meeting closed at 17:35 hours.

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**Chairman**