



**Minutes of the North East District Annual Meeting
held at Sancroft Memorial Hall, Fressingfield
on Saturday, 12th November 2022, commencing at 5.45pm**

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair, Sal Jenkinson (SJ), introduced herself and welcomed 25 other members to the meeting.

SJ noted apologies from the Guild Chairman, Rowan Wilson (who had to leave before the meeting to attend the NW District ADM), the Guild Ringing Master, Katharine Salter, and 7 members of the District.

2. Approval of the minutes of the previous ADM held on 13th November 2021

SJ reminded members that the draft minutes of the ADM held on 13 November 2021 had been circulated with the agenda and asked whether anyone present wished to propose any corrections. No corrections were proposed and the meeting approved the minutes as a true record of the business transacted at the previous ADM.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the ADM held on 13th November 2021

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous ADM other than items on the agenda.

4. District Ringing Master's Report (*copy attached at the end of these minutes*)

The District Ringing Master, Philip Gorrod (PJG), referred to his written report presented at the meeting. He commented that, with the reduction in the numbers of ringers returning since the pandemic, there was a need for more experienced and able ringers to attend practices other than those of their own towers in order to help other bands develop their skills. He also asked ringers to contact him if they needed help with getting support/training.

The consensus of the meeting was that former ringers needed to be attracted back to ringing (it was hoped the "*Ring for the King*" initiative would help with this) and that those still ringing should help with Sunday ringing in other towers within their Benefice and in adjacent Benefices wherever possible.

5. Election of new Members

A new membership application was received from Helen Mower (Aldeburgh). Helen's election to membership of the Guild was proposed by Richard Rapior (RTL) and seconded by Mary Garner. The meeting voted in favour of Helen's election.

6. Election of District Officers

SJ explained that she would be retiring as District Chairman at this meeting. As she was not standing for re-election she stated that she would continue to act as Chair of the meeting and that all appointments approved and any consequent changes in the composition of the Committee would take effect at the end of the meeting.

a) District Chairman

SJ reported that Dave Goldstone (**DG**) was willing to assume the office of District Chairman. No other nominations were received. DG's election as District Chairman was proposed by SJ and seconded by Kate Gill (**KG**). The meeting voted in favour of DG's election as District Chairman.

b) District Secretary

SJ explained that, while KG is willing to continue as District Secretary, the additional work created by her other role as Guild Secretary had led the Committee to propose that an additional District Officer post of "Assistant Secretary" should be created to support KG in her District role. SJ reported that Erika Clarke (**EMC**) had been helping KG with District administration on an informal basis for a number of months and that EMC was willing to take up the office of "Assistant Secretary" if the meeting approved the creation of this new role. SJ invited other nominations for the role of District Secretary and the proposed new role of "Assistant Secretary". None were received. Consequently, SJ proposed and PJG seconded the creation of the new role of "Assistant Secretary" and the meeting voted in favour of this proposal. KG's election as District Secretary was proposed by PJG and seconded by Sue Child (**SC**) and the meeting voted in favour of KG's election; EMC's election as Assistant Secretary was proposed by Veronica Downing (**VAMD**) and seconded by DG and the meeting voted in favour of EMC's election.

c) District Treasurer

SJ reported that Julie Rapior (**JJR**) was willing to continue in office as District Treasurer and invited other nominations. No other nominations were received. JJR's election as District Treasurer was proposed by Suzanne Stevens (**SMJS**) and seconded by Mike Cowling (**MJC**) and the meeting voted in favour of JJR's election.

d) District Ringing Master (**DRM**)

SJ reported that PJG was willing to continue as DRM but was happy for someone else to take over the role and invited nominations. No other nominations were received. PJG's election as DRM was proposed by Kate Bungay and seconded by VAMD and the meeting voted in favour of PJG's election.

e) Magazine Correspondent

SJ reported that the office of Magazine Correspondent would remain vacant as the Guild does not currently produce a magazine.

f) General Management Committee representatives (5 places)

SJ explained that the District is entitled to elect five representatives to sit on the Guild's General Management Committee (**GMC**) and that the current representatives, PJG, Sarah Plummer (**SP**), DG and MJC have all indicated their willingness to stand again for election (the fifth place being unfilled currently). No other nominations were received. PJG's, SP's, DG's and MJC's election as the District's representatives on the GMC was proposed by Julia Johnson and seconded by SC and the meeting voted in favour of their election.

g) Recruitment and Training Committee Representatives (2 places)

SJ reported that the District is entitled to elect two representatives to sit on the Guild's Recruitment and Training Committee (**R&T**) and that, of the two current representatives, PJG is willing to stand again for election, while Fiona Shuttle wishes to stand down. SJ went on to explain that SC had expressed interest in being elected as the second representative to the R&T. There being no other nominations, PJG's and SC's election as the District's representatives on the R&T was proposed by VAMD and seconded by Jon Isles and the meeting voted in favour of their election.

h) Other District Committee members

SJ explained that others can be elected to serve on the District Committee and that RTLR and Keith Dennis (**KEJD**) had both expressed a willingness to stand for election to the Committee. No other nominations were received. The election of RTLR and KEJD to the District Committee was proposed by SMJS and seconded by Hilary Stearn and the meeting voted in favour of their election.

7. Reports

a) Belfry Advisory Committee (BAC)

In the absence of a written report from the BAC, KG addressed the meeting on the BAC's work in the District (also covered in the GMC report). She explained that a lot of work had been carried out by the BAC across the Guild during the year with 49 towers having been visited, 4 of which were in the District: Blythburgh, Monk Soham, Wilby and Horham. Ringsfield and Barsham were also booked to be visited in due course. KG praised the work of the BAC including in connection with grant funding applications. She also mentioned the ongoing need to recruit additional steeplekeepers.

b) Recruitment and Training Committee (*copy attached at end of these minutes*)

PJG's written report on the R&T had been circulated before the meeting. No questions were raised or comments made on this.

c) General Management Committee (*copy attached at end of these minutes*)

KG briefly summarised her written report which had been circulated before the meeting. She explained that the GMC was focussing on Guild Centenary events for 2023 and securing payment of membership subscriptions. She reported that membership numbers were slowly increasing as people returned to ringing after the pandemic. KG acknowledged the excellent work carried out by Chris Garner on the Guild's website and reported that the GMC had been active in promoting ringing to mark the death of HM The Queen and her state funeral. KG added that the GMC has carried out a review of the insurance cover offered to members and this was now back to the position as previously understood by the membership at large.

8. Planning for 2023

SJ explained that the Committee was developing a programme of events for 2023 starting with a ringing and social event sometime in January and a ringing games event mid-year. She reported that events were already in the calendar for March including the District Quarterly Meeting at Laxfield (11th) and the Guild Centenary Dinner in Bury St Edmunds (25th). These would be followed by the Guild AGM hosted by the District in Beccles on 15th April. SJ gave some brief details about the Guild Centenary Dinner including its venue at Ashlar House, its ticket price of £55 per head and a plan to issue 100 Certificates recognising ringers' specific achievements. KG added that a District striking competition was planned for May/June and that the District could expect to have some involvement with the Central Council for Church Bell Ringers' meeting taking place in September in Ipswich.

9. New Trophy

PJG explained that the Committee proposed to commission a new District striking competition trophy. The design would be carved in wood and in the form of a bell on a circular stand with metal plaques to allow the name of the winning band to be recorded each year. He reported that two offers of funding for the new trophy had been received. KG added that the partner of one of the Beccles' band was prepared to carve the trophy. The meeting voted in favour of the proposal.

10. Safeguarding

SJ reminded those present of the importance of safeguarding and commented that, while the culture of ringing was that everyone looked out for each other's welfare, PCCs require evidence that ringers have undertaken the appropriate training. She reminded the meeting that the Guild's website includes the Guild's safeguarding policy and links to further guidance on the Diocesan website <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/safeguarding-training/>. She explained the need for all to undertake the Basic Awareness online training and those ringing with or teaching children were also required to have undertaken the Foundation training course. These had to be renewed every three years. Copies of certificates obtained on completion of training should be sent to the relevant tower captain or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. SJ explained that the Guild Safeguarding Officer, Liz Christian, safeguarding@suffolkbells.org.uk is also available to give advice if needed.

11. Any Other Business

DG expressed the District's thanks to SJ for her sterling work as its Chair over the last four years. KG presented SJ with a token of the District's appreciation.

SJ concluded the meeting by thanking those attending and made special mention of the work undertaken by Chris Barber and Adam Hay in making the Fressingfield tower available and their support for the day, and thanked The Reverend Canon Susan Loxton for taking the service, RTL for reading at the service and PJG for playing the organ. SJ also thanked KG and her husband, Robert, for all their hard work in connection with the ringing tea.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm.

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Chair

ATTACHMENTS:

SUFFOLK GUILD NE DISTRICT RINGING MASTER'S REPORT TO ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING 2022

A full year of the so-called post-pandemic era has seen a gradual return to something approaching what we used to think of as normal. However, the significant reduction in active ringers that I reported on last year has meant that bands have, without exception, struggled to maintain the level of ringing they previously enjoyed. The most active bands have been those who have drawn in ringers from nearby towers to operate on a wider geographical grouping. Aldeburgh, Beccles, Southwold and Halesworth have become informal hubs, albeit the latter operating mostly from Blythburgh due to the difficulty in getting eight competent ringers to Halesworth regularly. Virtually all of the 30-odd tower bell quarter peals rung in the District since the last ADM have been by the Aldeburgh or Halesworth extended bands.

Other bands have struggled on alone, but mostly precariously, and I foresee that most of them will collapse altogether within the next couple of years unless they can overcome their reluctance to communicate with and join together with nearby bands to pool their resources.

I was very pleased with the turnout for the District Striking Competition at Wissett. We had eight entries and most people seemed to find the experience enjoyable and not too pressured. I hope word will get around and even more bands can be tempted to enter next time.

HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee saw eighteen District towers reporting celebratory ringing, three of them with quarter peals. Then, the subsequent death of the Queen and accession of King Charles meant lots of overtime as ringers nationally were called into action, with steeplekeepers given extra work thanks to the "muffle kerfuffle". Here in NE Suffolk we did our bit for the national effort with in memoriam ringing or tolling recorded at ten towers, and rumoured to have taken place at a few others. Well done to all those involved!

Next May we shall have the Coronation to celebrate and initial plans include a quarter peal fortnight spanning the event. We also have the Guild's centenary, and it would be good to ring a quarter in as many of our District's towers as possible for one or both of these.

And finally, congratulations are due to Kevin Mossop on ringing his first quarter peal. And there were a number of other firsts - first inside, first in method etc. - so progress is being made.

PJG
November 2022

REPORT ON GMC TO ADM 12 NOVEMBER 2022

GMC has continued to meet regularly, despite the restrictions during the earlier part of the year because of the pandemic. We had our first 'in person' meeting in October.

One of our main points of focus this year has been preparing for the Guild Centenary in 2023. This will be a major milestone in our history and lots of exciting projects are underway, including:

- The Guild Centenary Dinner on Saturday 25th March in Bury St Edmunds.
- The Guild AGM on Saturday 15th April, to be held in Beccles. We will be seeking offers of help in due course!
- A special edition of the Ringing World.
- The Guild is hosting the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, in Ipswich, over the weekend of 1st to 3rd September. Plans are still being formulated, but a large 'training event/spectacular' is one of the ideas, involving ringers from all the districts.

GMC has also focused on the usual business of reviewing membership subscriptions, simplifying and improving our safeguarding processes, keeping the finances in order etc.

The sad death of HM the Queen, and the associated ringing around the initial tolling after her death, the Proclamation of King Charles III and the Queen's funeral have all provided excellent publicity for ringing.

Additionally, we have looked at the Personal Accident Insurance we offer members and ensured that this provides coverage, as far as possible, to Guild members during their day-to-day ringing activities.

The Belfry Advisory Committee continues to be very busy, with numerous pieces of advice and work undertaken, and work associated with the grants process for restorations and augmentations.

Kate Gill
November 2022

REPORT ON RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES TO ADM 12 NOVEMBER 2022

The Committee is made up of the Guild Master and two representatives from each District (one usually, but not necessarily, being the District Ringing Master). We meet 3 or 4 times a year ostensibly to discuss matters relating to recruitment and training, but the most useful aspect is the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Recruitment, we have learned from experience, is something best done at a local level. We do organise larger events (e.g. taking the Vestey Ring to "Gather", an event for young people at Bury Cathedral) but these tend to be more of a PR than a recruiting exercise.

Back in 2020 the Guild added "*Applicants must demonstrate....that they have initiated or at least have a credible plan to initiate, the recruitment, training and development of a band of ringers to enable the bells to be rung regularly.*" to the terms and conditions for receiving a bell restoration grant, and charged the R&T Committee with reviewing grant applications in this regard. Quite a lot of time this year has been spent on two such applications, from St Gregory Sudbury and Westhorpe: in both cases we were pleased to recommend that the applications were successful. We

expressed reservations about another application which had been made and accepted before the rule change, and if an extension to the two-year time limit is agreed it will be on condition that the new rules apply: then we may show some teeth! There is no point in spending vast sums of money restoring bells if they are not going to be rung.

A lot of teaching is going on as the more active bands try to rebuild numbers after the pandemic. The Committee reviews local ART programmes and helps to organise courses for teachers. Everyone involved in teaching should be encouraged to go on one of these which I can say from personal experience are excellent.

PJG

November 2022