



**Minutes of the North East District Annual Meeting
held at Reydon Church Hall, Wangford Road, Reydon, Southwold IP18 6PB
on Saturday, 11th November 2023, commencing at 5.15pm**

1. Welcome, in memoriam and apologies for absence

The Chair, Dave Goldstone (**DG**), welcomed 18 other members to the meeting and began proceedings by announcing the deaths of two members of the District, namely Ian Harris who, until his sudden and unexpected death on 12 October 2023 at the age of 81 years, was tower captain at Rumburgh, and Malcolm Roberts, formerly tower captain at Fressingfield. DG presented a brief biography of Ian Harris's ringing career and role in the Guild and Richard Rapor (**RTL**) did likewise for Malcom Roberts. A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect for both men.

The meeting continued with DG noting apologies from 11 members of the District namely, Julie Rapor, Trevor and Julie Hughes, Julia Brown, Hal Humphrey, Suzanne and Jonathan Stevens, Owen Lower, Marie Owen and Michael and Sharon Peters.

2. Approval of the minutes of the previous ADM held on 12th November 2022

DG reminded members that the draft minutes of the ADM held on 12 November 2022 at Fressingfield 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

DG asked for any matters arising from the minutes of the previous ADM.

Kate Gill (**KG**) commented, in respect of Minute 9 (New Trophy), that the new District Striking Competition trophy commissioned by the NE District committee had been made by a member of the Beccles band, Andy Owen, and was much admired at its inaugural award (to the Halesworth band) at the striking competition held at Metfield in June.

There were no other matters arising.

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 emphasised its final paragraph in which he offered to assist with arranging quarter peals or special practices (noting that such requests were, sadly, infrequent) and was keen to see ringers push their capabilities which improves ringing in the District as a whole. Hilary Stearn requested more 8-bell practices in the District.

5. Election of new Members

New membership applications were received from Joseph Maurice (Aldeburgh) and Joanna Wilkinson (**JW**) (Halesworth). Joseph's election to membership of the Guild was proposed by Richard Rapor (**RTL**) and seconded by Julia Brown. Joanna's election to membership was proposed by PJG and seconded by Peter Lock. The meeting voted in favour of both applicants' elections.

6. Election of District Officers

DG explained that, as he was offering himself for re-election as District Chairman at this meeting he would step down from his role as Chair for the purposes of the next item of business which was the election of the District Chairman. It was noted 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

PJG took the Chair at this point and invited any other nominations for this role in addition to DG's (whose re-election was proposed by PJG and seconded by Sue Child (**SC**)). No other nominations were received and DG was duly elected as District Chairman.

b) District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary

DG explained that, as the role of District Secretary involved a number of duties, the division of these between the District Secretary and an Assistant District Secretary (a role created at the previous ADM) had worked well over the past year. KG confirmed that she was willing to remain as District Secretary for one more year only and Erika Clarke (**EMC**) confirmed she was willing to continue in the role of Assistant District Secretary. DG invited other nominations for the respective roles of District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary. None were received. Kate Bungay proposed both KG and EMC be re-elected to their current roles and this was seconded by SC. The meeting voted in favour of KG's and EMC's re-election as District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary, respectively.

c) District Treasurer

DG 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 EMC and seconded by Mike Rolph (**MR**) and the meeting voted in favour of JJR's election.

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

DG reported that PJG was willing to continue as DRM and invited other nominations. No other nominations were received. PJG's election as DRM was proposed by Mike Sage and seconded by MR and the meeting voted in favour of PJG's election. DG praised PJG for his significant contribution to teaching at The Hub at Reydon.

e) Magazine Correspondent

DG explained that the office of Magazine Correspondent would remain unfilled, as the Guild does not currently produce a magazine, but that the role was required to remain by the provisions of the Guild's constitution.

f) Guild Management Committee representatives (5 places)

DG reported that the District is entitled to elect five representatives to sit on the Guild's Management Committee (**GMC**) and that, of the current four representatives (the fifth place being unfilled currently) namely, PJG, Sarah Plummer (**SP**), DG and Mike Cowling, only PJG and SP were willing to stand again for election. PJG explained that the GMC deals with all the administration relating to the Guild (such as organising events and meetings) and that its meetings were friendly and constructive. Its members need not be proficient ringers and you learn a lot about ringing from attending its meetings (endorsed by KG). JW said she was willing to put her name forward and her nomination was proposed by PJG and seconded by SP. No other nominations were received. PJG's, SP's and JW's election as the District's representatives on the GMC was proposed by KG and seconded by Lizzie Wood and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

g) Recruitment and Training Committee Representatives (2 places)

DG reported that the District is entitled to elect two representatives to sit on the Guild's Recruitment and Training Committee (**R&T**) and that the two current representatives, PJG and SC, have been extremely busy this year with The Hub.

DG invited SC to address the meeting on the recent work of The Hub. SC reported that the first cohort of learners are progressing well and she would like to now see a second intake of fresh recruits. DG asked the members to spread the word about the opportunities offered by The Hub.

Both PJG and SC confirmed they were willing to stand again for election as the District's R&T representatives. There being no other nominations, PJG's and SC's election as the District's representatives on the R&T was proposed by Chrissie Pickup and seconded by Peggy Meredith and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

h) Other District Committee members

DG explained that others can be elected to serve on the District Committee. He reported that both Marie Owen (**MO**) and Tom Grady (**TG**) were willing to serve on the District Committee and RTLR and Keith Dennis (**KEJD**) had both confirmed they would be happy to continue as District Committee members. No other nominations were received. The election of MO, TG, RTLR and KEJD to the District Committee was proposed by SC and seconded by KG and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

7. Planning for 2024

DG referred the meeting to the draft programme of events for next year as circulated and invited questions and comments. No questions were raised.

KG explained the aim was to build on the successful events held earlier this year such as the picnic and walk at Barsham. There was a plan to re-incept the District outing originally planned for 2020 that had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

DG suggested that members email him using the nechairman@suffolkbells.org.uk email address with any comments on the draft programme after the meeting.

8. Reports

a) GMC and Belfry Advisory Committee (**BAC**)

KG addressed the meeting on the work of the GMC and the BAC in the District.

GMC

KG reported that GMC has had a busy year with planning for various Guild Centenary events. Highlights included the Guild Centenary Dinner in March which was excellent, very enjoyable and was attended by around 130 people. KG encouraged everyone to attend the next Guild Dinner and bolster the District's attendance. In addition, KG reported that the District hosted the Guild Centenary AGM in April, at Beccles which, despite it following hot on the heels of the Guild Dinner, was also well attended, with around 100 people there with some beautiful touches of ten-bell ringing.

KG added that other GMC business has continued very much as usual, with the new Chairman and Treasurer settling well into their roles. Topics covered at GMC have included Guild finances, recruitment and training, safeguarding and ringing matters that have generated good publicity.

BAC

KG reported that the BAC continues with its busy schedule of maintenance and restorations, and remains an invaluable asset to the Guild. She invited anyone who would like to be more involved in bell maintenance and restoration to let her know and she would be happy to make the initial contact with the BAC for them as the BAC would appreciate more helpers.

KG added that District towers that have benefited from the BAC's attention during the year include Barsham (where the bells are going much better, and it's now possible to get the tenor up!) as well as Wilby and Wingfield, and that phone advice had been given to Beccles. In addition, Blythburgh has had advice on rope replacement and refurbishing fittings (and Blythburgh has also received Guild approval for a grant to help with ongoing work).

b) Recruitment and Training Committee

PJG reported on the work of the R&T and began by explaining that different approaches to recruitment are taken across the four Districts of the Guild, although there is a coordination with ART courses and all District Ringing Masters exchange views on recruitment and training. The R&T also has input on grant applications. There is currently around £50,000 in Guild funds available for grants and, while applications from towers for bell refurbishment projects are welcomed, the concern is that, once the project is complete, the bells are never rung. The R&T wants to ensure that the Guild funds are allocated prudently and are applied for the purposes for which they have been given and are held.

9. District Centenary Certificates

DG explained that, in its Centenary Year, the Guild wishes to mark particular achievements of, and significant contributions made by, its members. The plan was to continue this practice going forward. DG invited PJG to present certificates awarded by the Guild to members of the NE District. These were as follows:

Recipient(s)	Achievement/Significant Contribution
Esther Knight	First Quarter Peal
Paul Weatherall	First Quarter Peal
Michelle Pearce	First Quarter Peal
Claire Whiting	First Quarter Peal
Erika Clarke	Ringling twenty-two Quarter Peals so far this year
Kevin Mossop	Ringling twelve Quarter Peals so far this year
Suzanne Stevens	First Quarter Peal following a period of ill health
Sue Child	Outstanding contribution to recruitment and training by setting up and running The Sole Bay Ringing Hub

10. Safeguarding

DG reminded members of the importance of safeguarding to the District which aims to protect everyone including vulnerable adults and children. He reported that he intended to contact all tower captains in the District reminding them of where they can find helpful training courses and resources.

PJG urged those who have yet to undertake the relevant course to do so as soon as possible. Mike Sage agreed, commenting that, by not doing so, it places the incumbent in a difficult position.

11. Any Other Business

DG invited members to raise any other items of business.

Julia Johnson asked that thought be given to arranging a Triples practice once a month at a Southwold practice night (Friday). She explained that the Southwold ringers rarely have the opportunity to ring Plain Bob Triples, let alone Plain Bob Major, and other commitments meant that they often couldn't attend other 8-bell practices in the District. PJG suggested, in return, members of the Southwold band could make up numbers for another 8-bell tower practice elsewhere so 8-bell practices could rotate between Halesworth, Aldeburgh and Southwold.

RTLr commented that the Quarter Peals rung for the Coronation were excellent and wondered if there was another event that could provide the basis for a similar series of Quarter Peals in the District? DG and PJG agreed that this would be considered.

DG ended the meeting by noting the excellent facilities available at Reydon and thanked The Revd Alan Perry for conducting the service, SC for reading the Lesson and PJG for playing the organ. He also thanked KG and her husband, Robert, and all their helpers for their hard work in connection with the catering.

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

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Chair

ATTACHMENT:

SUFFOLK GUILD NE DISTRICT RINGING MASTER'S REPORT TO ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING 2023

Despite our reduced numbers the District has had some notable successes in the last year. The "Ring for the King" fortnight saw no fewer than 24 quarter peals rung by District bands, as well as many towers ringing for the Coronation at some time over that weekend.

The other major success has been the launch of the Sole Bay Hub at Reydon, attended at different times by about 25 teachers and learners. Ask any learner who has been and they will tell you that their progress has been furthered by coming to these Saturday morning sessions. It is not necessary to commit to coming every week (we'd be overwhelmed if people did!) but usually time there will be well spent. The Hub has now been recognised by ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) which means we are supported with free resources, publicity and insurance. Sue Child has put a huge amount of effort in to getting this off the ground, and her cakes are worth coming for too!

The District Striking Competition at Metfield was less well attended than the previous year, but sunny weather and good facilities made for an enjoyable afternoon. I was pleased that my tower, Halesworth, was the first to receive the magnificent new Trevor Hughes Trophy, skilfully made by Andy Owen of Beccles. The Call-Change Trophy was won by Aldeburgh and the Harry Archer Trophy went to the local team, Metfield, fielding a number of new ringers.

Only one peal has been rung this year by a largely District band, at Reydon for Helen Price's 95th birthday. Over 50 quarter peals have been rung and congratulations are due to Ester Knight, Michelle Pearce, Paul Wetherall and Claire Whiting on ringing their first quarter.

I am always happy to arrange quarter peals or special practices on request and I am disappointed how infrequently I am asked to do so. If you are not sure how to progress to the next stage in your ringing career, do please feel free to have a chat with me about it.

PJG

November 2023