

Minutes of the South East District of Ringers Annual District Meeting, Saturday 5th December 2015 at Rushmere St Andrew

Welcome; The Chairman welcomed the meeting to Rushmere St Andrew, and thanked Revd Bruce Wakeling for taking the service, to Mary Odam for stepping in at very short notice to play the organ and to the ringers at Rushmere for making an excellent tea. Evening ringing will follow the meeting here until 8.30pm.

Apologies; Apologies were received from John Taylor, Jenny Warren, Marian Saker, Anne Buswell, Claire and Emma Godchild, Hazel Judge, Glenys Fear and Stephen Cheek.

Remembrances; George Pipe spoke of Dr John Blatchly, Archdeacon Terry Gibson and Bishop Clive Young. A memorial service for John Blatchly was held at St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich, where the family appreciated the ringing arranged for this. The meeting stood in a moments silence in their memory.

Election of New Members; There were no new members proposed for election.

Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting; The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from the minutes; There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Reports;

Chairman; The Chairman had distributed his report before the meeting. He commented that attendances had been somewhat sporadic over recent months, and that he had devised a questionnaire to gain feedback from the District members in order to arrange practices and events that would appeal to members. He thanked those at the meeting for filling these in, and that it would also be distributed online for those not at the meeting.

Ringling Master; The Ringing Master had circulated his report before the meeting. He reiterated the Chairman's concerns regarding attendances, and hopes that the District questionnaire will help to rectify these issues. Mike Whitby asked if the poorly attended practices were all at the same time of day, to which the Ringing Master informed the meeting that the poorly attended practices were not the same time of day.

Treasurer; Although the financial year does not end until March, the Treasurer reported that currently the District account was in good order, with a balance of £162.20. All surplus funds will be transferred to the Guild account. The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his report, and urged members to pay their subs promptly. The Treasurer said that he would be sending reminders to tower correspondents to encourage members to pay their subs by March. George Pipe enquired whether members could gift aid their subscriptions, which the Treasurer said he would be happy to accept. Mary Garner said that members should check that they were still eligible to pay gift aid with the adjustment to the personal allowance.

Recruitment and Training; Alan McBurnie reported that the R&T notes had been updated and were now on the Guild website. He also said that it has been difficult to get committee members together for meetings, which has limited progress somewhat. However, the main focus is still the ITTS programme run by the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART).

Belfry Advisory Committee; Chris McArthur had distributed his report before the meeting, which detailed works done to Wickham Market, Otley and St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich. There was a highly

successful steeple keepers training day, of which Winston Girling hopes to hold another one soon. The District still needs a technical advisor, as we are still the only District not to have one! George Pipe congratulated the fundraising team at Cretingham for raising £6,500 at their fundraising event in October at Framlingham College. There is still concern over the future of St Mary at Quay, Ipswich, where funds have run out. The Chairman said that action needed to be taken to prevent the bells from falling into disrepair, or from being hung dead.

GMC; Mary Garner reported that the committee had met three times during the year. It was decided that there would be no increase in subscriptions, and that the restoration fund had a balance of £46,600 at the end of the previous year. The committee passed on their thanks to the District Chairman and the Pipe Family for the Guild AGM and Exhibition in April. The Guild Striking Competitions were held in the South West District saw twelve teams enter the Six Bell Competition, and six teams in the Eight Bell Competition. Mary Garner has been appointed Membership Secretary, which will hopefully improve the efficiency that new members receive their welcome packs. These will also be reviewed, and Neal Dodge is devising a new member's handbook. Funding for ringing training is available upon successful approval of applications, which can now be made to the Guild Ringing Master.

Young Ringers; There has not been much activity from the Young Ringers in recent months. George Salter was elected Young Ringers Master, and Ambrin Williams was elected Secretary. It has been good to see them take on this responsibility, but they also need the support of others to continue with practices and events. There is no certainty whether there will be a team for the National Youth Competition for Summer 2016.

Deanery Reports; These were circulated prior to the meeting. Peter Harper correctly identified that these reports should be called 'District Area Reports' rather than 'Deanery Reports'.

Election of Officers; Before the election of officers began, the Chairman noted that he had forgotten to welcome the Guild Ringing Master, Jed Flatters, and Rowan Wilson from the North West District. The election of officers were as follows;

Chairman - Ralph Earey, proposed Tom Scase and seconded by Mary Garner

Secretary - The Secretary had advised at the previous meeting that she would not be prepared to stand for reelection. There were no nominations from the floor. The Chairman stated that the Treasurer had volunteered to take on the administration of the District until a replacement could be found. The Treasurer would not be willing to take minutes at the meetings, so there would need to be a volunteer to take the minutes. The Chairman proposed that this would be acceptable. John Girt said that it was disgraceful that a District of this size that no replacement Secretary could be found.

Ringing Master; Tom Scase, proposed Mary Garner and seconded by Diana Pipe

Treasurer; Eric Brown, proposed by Shirley Girt and seconded by Jenny Scase

Area Reprs; Adrian Craddock (Loes East), proposed by Ray Lewis and seconded by Robert Scase. Robert Scase (Loes West) and Diana Pipe (Ipswich), proposed by Tom Scase and seconded by Ruth Munnings. Duly elected. Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Shotley remain vacant.

Magazine Correspondent; Elaine Townsend, proposed by Ruth Munnings and seconded by Kate Eagle

R&T; Tom Scase and Alan McBurnie, proposed by Chris Garner and seconded by Sally Munnings

GMC; Peter Harper expressed a wish not to stand for reelection to the GMC. Alan Munnings was put forward for election to the GMC, proposed by Jonathan Williamson and seconded by Paul Sharples. Sally Munnings, Mary Garner, Tom Scase and Ralph Earey were proposed en bloc by Robert Scase and seconded by Diana Pipe

Young Ringers; George Salter, proposed by Mike Whitby and seconded by Ralph Earey

Programme 2016/17; The Chairman told the meeting that much of the programme for 2016/17 is subject to the results of the survey for District members. At present the programme is;

2nd January - St Matthew's Ipswich (10am - 12pm) tbc

6th February - Coddensham (10am - 12pm) tbc

5th March - Quarterly Meeting at Parham and Framlingham (afternoon and evening) tbc

16th April - Ringing up and down training event (10am - 12pm) tbc

7th May - District Striking Competition at Bredfield (afternoon) tbc

Guild Photo; The Chairman has a price list for anybody interested in buying a copy of this in order to put in a bulk order, as postage is £2.49.

Any Other Business;

Mary Garner asked members to take forms back to their towers to help her update the membership list for the District.

Jane Harper is still in need of ringers to help with the pre Christmas ringing in Ipswich. Please let her know if you are able to help. Please note there will be no parking at St Margaret's School.

Mike Whitby suggested that it would have perhaps been helpful to members to know which District positions needed to be filled. The Secretary stated that she had put this information on an email to members along with the agenda and minutes earlier in the week, and apologised if this had not been made clear to members.

John Girt added that officers previously went out to practices around the District to make members feel included and may encourage people to attend practices.

The Ringing Master asked members if anyone would be willing to ring in a peal at Debenham tomorrow (6th December 2015) to mark the 250th anniversary of the first peal. Please let him know as he is one short.

George Pipe asked members if they might consider where some handbells might be housed. They were being kept safe by Bruce and Gillian Wakefield, but will need to be moved as they are moving away from Suffolk. He then urged members to fill in the District questionnaire to help the committee. He pointed out that the Guild subscription rate is considerably cheaper than some organisations. Paul Sharples asked if the questionnaire would be put online, to which the Chairman said that it would be.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary for her hard work, and presented her with a gift and card on behalf of the District.

The Chairman announced that the cost for tea and tower donations would total £5 per head, and closed the meeting. Evening ringing followed until 8.30pm.