

Trustees' Annual Report

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018.

Charity

The Suffolk Guild of Ringers was registered with the Charity Commission on 10 December 1975, registration number 266869. The Charity's registered address is Denton House, Colchester Road, Ardleigh, Colchester, CO7 7NS. It is governed under a constitution originally registered in 1977 and most recently revised in 2017.

Principal Objectives

The purpose of the Charity is to promote and encourage the practice of bellringing within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich; to recruit, train and encourage bellringers in the practice of their art; to cultivate the art of scientific change ringing; and to promote and advise on the preservation of bells in an efficient condition.

Trustees

The Trustees during the period were, 1st Jan-7th April 2018:

Chairman: A F Stanley Treasurer: O P Claxton Secretary: C N Melville

7th April – 31st December 2018

Chairman: R P Wilson Treasurer: S A Cheek Secretary: C N Melville

Review of Progress and Achievements

Bellringing

The Guild aims to offer support to its members to not only ring for Sunday service and practice nights but also to improve and progress their ringing. District events have been held across the whole Guild including open practices, quarter peal weeks/months, training activities, outings and social gatherings. Whilst the number of people attending these events is difficult to gauge, a broad spectrum of the membership get involved with these and hopefully benefit from the opportunity to ring at different towers and meet other ringers.

The total of quarter peals rung has increased this year to 450 (441 in 2017) but the number of people involved remains fairly steady at 374 (379 in 2017) as does the number of towers at 98. Peals rung in 2018 have also increased from 103 to 108 (the highest since 2014) in 48 Suffolk towers and this year includes two 12 bell peals. This increase is due largely to the re-introduction of peal week which also enabled nine ringers to ring their first peals.

The Recruitment and Training Committee continues to hold quarterly meetings to review training and recruitment activities and opportunities across the Guild. This year the committee attended Gather 2018 and used the mini ring to encourage young people from across the Diocese to 'have a go'. An exciting new opportunity also now exists in Norwich with the opening of the Mancroft Ringing Discovery centre and members are being encouraged to make use of these state of the art training facilities.

The commemoration of the end of WW1 created a lot of opportunities in 2018 through peals (13 rung), quarter peals and Ringing Remembers with 30 new ringers being recruited. Armistice 100 on Sunday 11th November was the pinnacle of achievement for the year with ringing at all but three of the ringable towers in the Guild at some point during the weekend.

The excellent news that we had won the Suffolk Heritage Award was announced at the Guild's 95th Anniversary Dinner held at Elmswell in March which was attended by the High Sheriff himself. Even the Beast from the East couldn't stop 84 people from enjoying this five yearly occasion although it did delay it by three weeks!

Restoration activities

2018 has been another busy year for the Belfry Advisory Committee with three major restorations being completed at Cretingham, Little Cornard & St. Margaret's Ipswich. The teams of people who worked on these prominent restorations are to be congratulated for their determination and hard work as the resulting peals of bells are an important addition to the rings of bells rated as condition 10 within the Guild. The work of the BAC is never-ending however and projects in the pipeline include Redgrave, Stowmarket, Laxfield, Fornham St. Martin, Combs and Hitcham.

Guild Finances

Reserves Policy

In line with advice from Larking Gowen, the appointed examiners for the Guild, the Trustees have formulated a Reserves Policy. The Guild will expect to hold at the bank a surplus of approximately one year's running costs.

Policies

All money in the Guild's funds not required for day-to-day purposes is invested or deposited by the Treasurer, as directed by the Guild Management Committee (GMC). Grants from the Restoration Fund are authorised by the GMC, but are only paid after completed work has been approved by the Guild Ringing Master and the Technical Adviser. Grants are normally only offered for work to restore bells and their fittings for full-circle ringing, but may include augmentation and other ancillary work associated with any such project. In order to respond to the short-term need to provide financial support to training activities, the GMC introduced a process to enable grants of up to £50 to be made immediately, at the discretion of the Ringing Master, and grants of up to £500 to be made within seven days at the discretion of the Guild Executive, in both cases subject to appropriate records being kept and presented to the GMC. As an enabling measure, the Public Relations Officer has been given a budget, the purpose being to enable greater flexibility, and faster reaction, to PR recruitment opportunities when they arise.

General Fund

Net income to the General Fund, before transfers to the Restoration Fund, was 51% up on 2017. However, after transfers for subsidising the Guild Dinner and half of all subscriptions/peal fees, there was an increase of just £1,744.15 year on year. It should be noted that this modest increase resulted mainly from an extraordinary donation of £1,000 from the Suffolk Community Foundation, and as in recent years the only guaranteed income to the General Fund (i.e. 50% of subscriptions) did not meet our expenses.

Restoration Fund

At year end the Restoration Fund totalled £57,795.64, including £38,850.00 already allocated for approved grants and awaiting payment. This leaves just £18,945.64 available for new grant applications.

During the year grants totalling £28,900.00 were approved for Stowmarket (£11,000), Laxfield (£12,000), Fornham St Martin (£5,600) and Gt Barton (£300).

Other Restricted Funds:

The Golden Bottle Trust Fund provided £142 for training activities and stands at £4858.00. All other restricted funds (Library Fund, Handbell Fund, Jubilee Fund, Pipe Family Trust Fund and St Peter's Sudbury Fund) have positive balances.

R P Wilson
Trustee & Chairman
December 2018

S A Cheek
Trustee & Treasurer
December 2018

C N Melville
Trustee & Secretary
December 2018