

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers
held at Long Melford, Saturday 5th April, 2008

1. The Chairman, Winston Girling, opened the meeting by giving a warm welcome to the seventy five members present and visitors. He thanked Fr Nick Woodhouse for the service and Jeremy Blaiby the organist, those who helped with the tea, especially Sue Freeman, John and Stephen. He thanked the Tower Captains of Lavenham and Long Melford, Richard Brewster and Richard Lant and the SW district for the arrangements for the day and the warm welcome to the Guild. The meeting stood in silence in remembrance of the thirteen resident and five non resident members who had died during 2007.

2. Apologies for Absence were received from 32 members

3. Minutes of 2007 AGM

These had been published in the Annual Report and were signed as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Officers' Reports

Master: Richard Munnings presented the Master's Report as printed in the Annual Report. It was seconded by Chris Garner and accepted by the meeting.

Secretary: Mary Garner proposed the acceptance of the Secretary's report as printed. This was seconded by Steven Munford and agreed by the meeting.

Treasurer: Keith Ashton Jones presented the accounts as published, commenting that they had now been examined and were ready to be submitted to the Charities Commission. He said that the Trustees Report was reproduced in full for the first time in the Annual Report and will be put on the website.

Since the accounts were finalised, it has been realised that a deposit to the bank by the Peal secretary of £310 (for peal fees and NRLM subs) was wrongly assigned in the accounts to Affiliation fee income. The result of this is that in the accounts, Affiliation Fees are overstated by £310, whilst Peal fees are understated by £298, and NRLM fees are understated by £12. In terms of the Guild income overall, there is no discrepancy, and therefore the error does not misrepresent the Guild's overall financial position. Technically, however, the Restoration Fund benefited from 100% of the Affiliation Fees, whereas it would only have benefited from half had the correct attributions been made. The General Fund on the other hand lost out correspondingly. A retrospective adjustment could be made. However, the General Fund more than broke even last year, and had a healthy balance to start 2008. Keith therefore proposed that, subject to the AGM's agreement, the Restoration and General Funds balances as per the published accounts be allowed to stand.

The proposal was seconded by David Mulrenan and agreed by the meeting

Public Relations Officer: Bruce Wakefield reminded the meeting that the media are interested in anything that bellringers promote, especially restoration. He reported that the BBC had been filming and interviewing at Hollesley and Woodbridge in preparation for an item for Inside Out, to be shown on Friday 2nd May. He thanked Tony and Betty Baines for bringing their mini ring to Woodbridge. He proposed the acceptance of his report which was seconded by David Steed and agreed by the meeting.

Belfry Advisory Committee: Winston Girling proposed that the report as printed should be adopted. The report was seconded by Chris Garner and agreed by the meeting.

Librarian: Gillian Wakefield proposed the acceptance of her report as printed. This was seconded by Diana Pipe and agreed by the meeting.

Peal secretary: Christine Knight addressed the meeting and spoke of the Guild as a body which has always given support and encouragement to others. Richard and Christine have been very touched by the abundance of care and support shown to them during the past few months and offered their thanks to everyone.

She proposed the acceptance of her report as printed. It was seconded by Ruth Suggett and agreed by the meeting.

The chairman thanked her and added that it was good to see that the number of peals had increased from previous years.

Handbell Trustee: Brian Whiting, the Trustee, reported that a set had been returned and was in

need of some attention, and that he held a set of 25. Two sets were in the NE and he was pleased to know that they are being used for change ringing.

Winston Girling thanked all the officers of the Guild for their reports and work and for keeping everything running so smoothly.

6. Subscriptions, fees and donations for 2009

The GMC proposed that the subscriptions should be as follows

Ringling Member	£ 14.00	Peal Fee	£ 1.00
Ringling Member 65-74	£ 7.00	Donations:	
Members 75 and over	Free	Friends of St Peter's Sudbury	£ 50.00
Ringling member in full time education	£ 7.00 (from £5)	Friends of the Cathedral	£ 50.00
Associate member	£ 7.00	Suffolk Historic Churches Trust	£ 50.00
Non-Resident Life Member	£ 7.00 (from £6)	Donations in lieu of Wreaths	£ 25.00

This was seconded by Chris Garner and carried unanimously.

7. Proposed constitution changes

The GMC proposed the following:

A1 1.3 to read "The Trustees of the Guild shall be at least three members of the Guild Executive as defined in rule J 13, and shall be elected at the AGM."

A question from the floor prompted assurance that the Trustees would be named. The proposal was seconded by Jason Busby and passed unanimously.

C5 shall be amended by moving "Hartismere" from "1 North East" to "2 North West". This was proposed M.J.Rose, NW Chairman, and seconded by P.J.Gorrod, NE Chairman.

Discussion followed noting that one of two events organised by the NE in Hartismere Deanery received no support locally, also that the ringers at Gislingham feel it easier to support NW events. It was also reported that all the ringers in Hartismere had been asked which district they wished to be in and that they supported going with the NW. The current Deanery Representative reminded the meeting that the Deanery would need to appoint someone from within Hartismere since he resides in the NE.

The vote which followed recorded 56 for the proposal, 1 against and 14 abstentions. The proposal was carried with more than the two thirds majority required.

D8: to add "Webmaster" to list of members to be elected to Offices. This was seconded by John Taylor and carried unanimously.

It was noted that the rules dictate that these changes can only take effect from 1st Jan 2009.

8. Proposed rule changes

The GMC proposed the following rule changes:

The title of The Mitson Shield and Rose Trophy Striking Competitions shall read:

"The Mitson Shield, Lester Brett Trophy and Rose Trophy Striking Competitions"

Rule 3 shall read : "The Mitson Shield, Lester Brett and Rose Trophies shall be competed for as follows:"

MITSON SHIELD and LESTER BRETT TROPHY

(Rule 3.1 shall remain unaltered.) Rule 3.2 shall read:

"a) For the Mitson Shield the test piece will be 240 true changes of any recognised Doubles or Minor Method(s) Opening rounds will not be marked.

or b) For the Lester Brett Trophy call changes of at least eight minutes marked ringing, to include Queens, Whittingtons and Tittums. "Marked" changes start when the first change is made.

(Rules 3.3 and 3.4 shall remain unaltered)

The Master explained that he hoped that the introduction of a rounds and call changes competition within the Guild six bell would encourage more bands to take part and help boost the confidence of many ringers whilst enabling more people to hear and take part in good ringing. In the discussion that followed concern was expressed from the floor that an extremely capable band could enter for rounds and call changes. Qualification for the Essex competition was mentioned where each band must contain an appropriate number of rounds and call change only ringers. It was suggested that a tower should enter a method ringing team if at all possible and only call changes if not. Concern was also expressed at the need for tight rules at all.

The proposal was seconded by Veronica Downing. In the vote which followed 57 were in favour, none against with 13 abstentions. The proposal was carried.

The meeting was asked to vote for its introduction for May 2008. This was carried with none against.

9 St Edmund's Clapper Competition

The total raised in 2007 was £542 for the Bell Restoration Fund, with Offton raising £250, Sproughton £242 and The Folly £50. The trophy was awarded to Offton.

Maurice Rose thanked the GMC and all the Guild and District Officers for their hard work throughout the year, especially to Winston Girling at the end of his term as Chairman.

10. Election of Officers for 2008/2009:

Vice Presidents Maurice Rose proposed that Winston Girling should be elected as a Vice President. This was seconded and carried unanimously by the meeting. Chris Garner proposed and Keith Ashton Jones seconded, that the Vice Presidents as listed in the 2007 report should be re-elected en bloc. This was agreed.

Chairman: Winston Girling thanked the Guild for their support during his five years as Chairman remarking that he had enjoyed his time in office.

Chris Garner proposed and Alan McBurnie seconded that Philip Gorrod be elected as Chairman. It was explained that Philip was willing to stand. There were no further nominations and Philip was elected. Since Philip was unable to be at the meeting, Winston continued in the Chair.

Ringling Master: Diana Pipe proposed, seconded by Trevor Hughes, that Richard Munnings be re-elected as Ringling Master. Richard was elected.

Secretary: Maurice Rose proposed, seconded by Sandra Pereira, that Mary Garner be re-elected as Secretary. Mary was elected. She was thanked for her work during the last year.

Treasurer & Gift Aid Secretary: Sue Munford proposed, seconded by Sally Munnings, that Keith Ashton-Jones be re-elected as Treasurer and Gift Aid secretary. Keith was elected.

Technical Adviser: Winston Girling explained that Michael Rolph was unable to stand as Technical Advisor. Mary Garner proposed, seconded by Maurice Rose, that Winston Girling be elected as Technical Adviser. Winston was elected.

Chairman of the Belfry Advisory Committee: Maurice Rose proposed, seconded by Keith Ashton Jones, that Winston Girling be re-elected as Chairman of the Belfry Advisory Committee. Winston was elected.

Public Relations Officer: Alan Munnings proposed, seconded by Carol Girling, that Bruce Wakefield be re-elected as Public Relations Officer. Bruce was elected.

Librarian: Shirley Girt proposed, seconded by Suzanne Stevens, that Gillian Wakefield be re-elected as Librarian. Gillian was elected.

Report Editor: Kate Eagle proposed, seconded by Lesley Wilson, that Ruth Suggett be re-elected as Report Editor. Ruth was elected. She was congratulated on the report and thanked for all her hard work during the year.

Webmaster: John Taylor proposed, seconded by Sally Munnings, that Chris Garner be elected as Webmaster. This was carried unanimously and Chris was elected. (It was noted that this position will not be recognised officially until 1st January 2009)

Newsletter Editor: The Chairman explained that Carl Melville had moved to Yorkshire recently and was unable to stand. He was thanked warmly for all his work. Sheila Franks proposed, seconded by Ruth Suggett, that Carol Girling be elected as Newsletter Editor. Another nomination failed to secure a seconder. Carol was elected.

Peal Secretary: Ian Holland proposed, seconded by David Lee, that Christine Knight be re-elected as Peal Secretary. Christine was elected.

Handbell Trustee: Jonathan Stevens proposed, seconded by Diana Pipe, that Brian Whiting be re-elected as Handbell Trustee. Brian was elected.

Trustees: It was noted that the following were eligible for election as Trustees: The Chairman, Philip Gorrod, The Treasurer, Keith Ashton Jones, The Secretary, Mary Garner, and the Chairman of the BAC, Winston Girling. Jonathan Stevens proposed, seconded by Lesley Wilson, that the four be elected en-bloc. They were elected. (The four will be recognised under the new rules from 1st January 09, but until then will be Trustees under the current rules.)

11. Appointment of Examiner

Keith Ashton Jones proposed, seconded by Maurice Rose, that Larking Gowen be appointed as Independent Examiners of the Guild Accounts. This was carried by the meeting.

12. Election of Life Honorary Members

The GMC proposed seconded by John Girt, that Alan Smith and Albert Driver be elected as Life Honorary Members. The Chairman reminded the meeting of the contributions made by Alan Smith both as Guild Treasurer and as a Central Council Representative for many years. Trevor Hughes explained that Albert Driver aged 93, who has given very long service at Redgrave, has been teaching a new band at Rickinghall Superior. One of his pupils has just rung their first quarter on the treble.

Alan Smith and Albert Driver were elected unanimously.

13. Election of New Members

The following were proposed, seconded to become members of the Guild:

George Fry (full) Tunstall; Paul Bray and Anne Bray, (both full) St Mary le Tower; Angela Hay, (full), Adam Hay, Wingfield; Christopher Barber (full), Malcolm Roberts (senior) Fressingfield; Edith Nurse, David Reeve, (both senior) Ixworth; Roger Fouracre, Brenda Fouracre, Wickham Skeith; Henrietta Fawcett, Ruby Mason from Thornham Magna.

They were all elected and warmly welcomed to the Guild.

14. Date and Venue for 2009 AGM - NE district

On behalf of the NE District the Guild was invited to the AGM to be held on Saturday 18th April at a venue yet to be decided.

15. Any Other Business

a) Glenys Fear, Campsea Ashe, expressed their sincere appreciation to the Guild for their great support, both financial and technical, in their augmentation project. Their next fundraiser is a concert at Campsea Ashe church on Sunday 27th April (4pm-6pm) All welcome. For tickets call 01728 747177 or 01728 747995.

b) Veronica Downing announced that a Heritage Lottery Grant £40 000 had come through,. The total cost of the project is £120,000. They are still fund raising and the next event is The Old Time Faming Day on July 19th at Bridge Farm, Chediston.

c) Graham Downing, said that additional funds were being raised at Chediston where a local silversmith has been commissioned to produce ear rings. They are available in silver or gold (9 or 18 carat).

d) Brian Whiting gave the thanks of the Guild for the dinner arrangements to Mary and Chris Garner and to Christine Knight for her brilliant report on the website. Chris Garner added that Ruth Eagle and Richard Munnings had also done a great deal to help with arrangements.

e) Sally Munnings announced that she has a child's fleece for sale at £9.

f) The Dedication of the bells at Stradishall will take next Sunday April 13th,at 4pm.

g) Alan McBurnie explained that the BBC had become very interested in the ringing at Hollesley, particularly the Listening Course. He wanted to publicly thank Richard Munnings for getting the BBC involved. Richard had rung them and offered ringing as a possible item for the Inside Out programme. The BBC had spent 10 hours on the previous Saturday recording the ringing course and a cameraman came and looked at the mobile ring at Woodbridge on April 4th. He is coming back next Sunday to record service ringing. Three days will then be spent editing to produce a nine minute piece for the programme to be screened at 7.30pm on 2nd May on BBC1.

He further explained that the ringing course is for people who can handle rather than for complete beginners. He issued a general invitation for members to come and look at the installation and to take part.

Winston thanked Alan very much for telling the meeting about this exciting event.

h) Jonathan Stevens announced that 6 bells at Sweffling and 8 bells at Rendham are available for practice before the Guild Striking competition. He urged prospective bands to book times for a visit.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.40pm.