

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Sunday 25th June 2006
at 3.00pm in the Methodist Chapel, Old Newton.

Present: Winston Girling (chairman), Mary Garner (secretary), Richard Knight, Trevor Hughes, Jonathan Stevens, Jason Busby, Rolie Whiting, Carl Melville, Maurice Rose, Revd Brian Redgers, Richard Gates and Carol Girling (observing).

Welcome: Winston (WG) welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Revd Brian Redgers to his first management meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Keith Ashton Jones, Richard Munnings, Ian Harris, John Pereira.

2. **Minutes:** The minutes of the February meeting were agreed and signed.

3. **Matters arising** from those minutes not itemised later in the agenda.

(i) **Insurance.** Mary (MG) reported that she had attempted to distribute a summary of the Insurance cover to be displayed in every tower. It was produced by David Salter and distributed at the AGM. Trevor Hughes noted that one had not yet been displayed at Aldeburgh.

(ii) **Membership Forms** MG reported that membership forms were arriving steadily and that it was her intention to send certificates and brochures to those who have joined this year. She also reported that the data forms were coming in steadily and that we should soon be in a good position to estimate our income from subscriptions from this information. WG thanked her for the work being done.

(iii) **All Saints', Sudbury.** Richard Knight reported that he has passed the information requested to the Vicar but as yet had received no response.

4. **Correspondence:** The insurance renewals had been received and dealt with. Nothing else extra to requests for reports and grant requests (later in meeting) had been received.

5. **Financial Report:** The Treasurer's Report stated that the overall Guild assets stand at £83 403. The General Fund balance is £4970. In the Restoration Fund the balance available for allocation, before the Lenny Sharpe bequest (currently at £34 154), is £22 854. The balance allocated but as yet unpaid is £16000, Parham £5000, (due any time, with the dedication on July 2nd), Gislingham £6000 and Hopton £5000. There is still fund raising at Hopton.

The Guild finances appear to be in a reasonably healthy position for this stage of the financial year, and mirror closely the position in June 2005.

6. Ringing Master's Report:

The Ringing Master's report was read to the committee. In it Richard recorded that he considered it an honour to have been elected at the AGM. He commented on the Striking Competitions at Tunstall and Orford, and the Ridgman Trophy at Writtle, the previous weekend. He hopes to be reporting on progress through the National Twelve Bell competition in 12 months time, hoping that it will be possible to involve twelve bell ringers from across the county, not simply St Mary-le-Tower. As well as many local practices he has attended practices at Debenham, Stowmarket and Tostock. This latter was a young ringers' practice. Richard sees this as the future of the Guild and was keen to encourage any young ringers from around the Guild to contact the Monk girls. He is also looking forward to the Veteran's Day in Debenham in July. He is looking forward to the next few months, hoping to bring some ideas to fruition in his new role, and helping to take the Guild forward.

WG thanked the Master for his report. Maurice Rose congratulated Richard on his report and was pleased to hear of his ideas to carry the Guild forward. He thought it would be good to see us in the 12 bell if possible. Well done to the Tostock Young Ringers.

Ridgman Trophy WG reported that nine teams took part and that the bells were quite challenging. He thought that the Suffolk team, which came third rang really well. Essex came first with Bedfordshire second. There was a bit of controversy after the results had been announced and the shield collected. It concerned one team over running practice time by 37 seconds.

Richard Knight enquired when the competition might next be expected to be in Suffolk. WG explained that there is a rota for the venues.

In the discussion that followed the idea of a Guild ten bell competition was put forward as one means of improving the general skill level within the Guild. This would be mentioned to Richard Munnings for him to investigate a way forward.

Action MG

7. Sub-committee Reports:

(i) **Belfry Advisory Committee (BAC)** held at Kersey on June 10th. WG reported that Work at **Gislingham** is progressing ahead of schedule. It was suggested that the frame supporting 7 and 8 at **Stonham Aspal** could be repaired and the bells rehung with new fittings. At **Felsham** the new ringing floor is almost complete, the proposal for the eight bells to be tuned as a descending melodic minor scale. WG is about to attend a PCC meeting at **Stowmarket** with respect to a possible rehang and augmentation to 10. The 6 at **Parham** has been installed and rung. **Rattlesden** has held its first fund raising event. English Heritage have agreed with the proposals, Taylors Eayre and Smith are the chosen bellhangers. The PCC at **Assington** refuses the Guild any access to check the tower and bells, a matter for concern.

Discussion followed particularly regarding Assington. It is known that the frame moves. The committee felt that we should be able to inspect them to monitor the state of the tower and the fixtures and fittings. There might be an issue of Health and Safety if neglected. A letter to the incumbent and the Archdeacon of Sudbury was felt to be appropriate. It was suggested that a phone call to Laurence Pizzey be the first move as he will have local knowledge about the situation.

Action: WG to ring Laurence Pizzey

(ii) **Recruitment and Training:** ~ no report.

8. Applications for Grants

(a) **Ixworth** Quotations had been submitted to the BAC. The PCC has chosen Whites to do the work, retaining but strengthening the wooden Bullock frame, which was made in the village. Cost £31 408 for the six, with an additional £12000 to augment to eight.

The BAC has expressed reservations about the wooden frame but the GMC felt that Whites could be expected to strengthen the frame appropriately.

Much discussion followed, especially with regard to the Lenny Sharpe bequest. An initial suggestion of a grant of £8000 for the restoration and rehang of six bells with £10 000 offered were there to be a rehang, was followed by a suggestion of £25000. Further discussion ensued and the following proposal was made, seconded and carried unanimously: a grant of £8000 be offered towards the project, the Guild to give two trebles to augment to eight, in memory of Lenny Sharpe. This would not include the fittings for the new bells and would be subject to a ceiling of £6000.

Action: MG to write to Ken Brown

(b) **Stradishall** The chosen bellhanger is Whites. The quote for removing the bells, drilling out the crown staples, strengthening the frame, strengthening and re rimming the wheels with all other fittings to be renewed came to £18 321. The BAC had asked that the Technical advisor should look at the wheels.

It was reported to the GMC that the parish was keen to go ahead and that after grants the project was to be funded largely by one person.

A proposal was made, seconded and passed unanimously that an offer of a grant of £2000 should be made.

Action: MG to write to Mr Robert Clinton.

(c) Fressingfield

Dr Paul Cattermole from Norfolk has now visited and made recommendations based on a new steel frame underneath the present lower wooden frame. Heavier bells would be installed in the new steel frame while the lighter would be in the lower wooden one, which will be strengthened. The final report is not through yet but the price being quoted by Fressingfield remains at £100 000. This seems out of line when most restorations seem much less. Any decision regarding grant offers will be held over until the next meeting, when further details should be available from Whites.

Action: WG will write to them

(d) **Bardwell** Three reports have been submitted to the BAC. The PCC have chosen Hayward Mills as the bellhangers. It is proposed to fit a six bell steel frame, which would be extendable to eight, underneath the present frame, rehang with all new fittings, replace or recast the third (a poor bell). Total cost £49 166.

A grant offer of £6000 was proposed, seconded and passed unanimously by the GMC.

Action: MG to write to Dave Ray

(e) **Chediston** Three reports have been submitted and Nicholsons have been chosen as the bellhangers. It is proposed to fit a steel frame under the present frame, refurbish and re hang the bells. Cost £39 858.

A grant offer of £6000 was proposed, seconded and passed unanimously by the GMC.

Action: MG to write to Veronica Downing

9. Ratification of NRLM

Emma J Southerington elected before a peal at the Norman Tower, BSE on 25/03/06

Roger G R Collins elected before a peal at Stowmarket on 21/05/06

Further, the Peal Secretary reported on the withdrawal of Jeremy Spiller's Handbell Peals. Although she had received no direct notification from Jeremy, the two peals (on 4 March 2005 and 28 September 2005) have now been removed from The Ringing World website (www.peals.co.uk). Details should appear in the "Amendments and Corrections" column in due course.

There was some comment regarding the withdrawal of something which had already been printed in the Annual Report. Was this possible, did it mean that the whole report was invalid?

10. Any Other Business

(i) Clarification was asked for regarding the posts of Technical Advisor and the Representative on the DAC. Would there be a conflict now that these positions were held by two people? It was explained that the DAC post was a Bishop's appointment. The committee could only advise and that any decisions made lay with the Chancellor. Furthermore it was recommended that these posts should be held by different people and that no conflict would be expected.

(ii) Rolie Whiting drew the GMC's attention to the SW Car Outing to mid Suffolk on July 15th, saying that further details were available from him. These will be posted on the website. **Action: RW and MG**

(iii) Mid week ringers based on the SE, organised by Brian Redgers, were meeting next at Offton on Wednesday July 26th, the emphasis on 5 surprise. Lunch to follow in the Limeburners. All welcome. This will be put on the website. **Action: MG**

(iv) Spare Newsletters. Carl expressed concern about the monies being spent on the newsletter. He was reassured that the costs were lower than in the past and that if he has a few spare copies they could be sent to District Secretaries to give to new members along with a Report and a badge.

(v) GMC attendance Concern was expressed that attendance was only about 50% at the meeting where important decisions were made about the whole Guild. It was felt important that each area had the opportunity to air its views at the meeting.

(vi) Jonathan Stevens raised the question of Guild control of bells in churches which became redundant or even sold. In particular he expressed concern that we might award grants and then a few years later no longer have access. Some discussion followed during which it was felt that at least if the Guild were informed of any change of use, we would be in position to make some suggestion about the bells if necessary. This would be far preferable to "just finding out".

Action: MG to write to Diocesan Secretary

(vii) WG had been contacted by the Tower Captain of Barsham regarding difficulties between the bell ringers and the PCC during an interregnum there, concerning the appointment of the next priest. The committee was advised that things had moved forward now and it was likely that the situation would be resolved soon.

(viii) Concern was expressed about the cost of circulating minutes and agenda separately. The Secretary explained that she thought it important that minutes were sent round as soon as possible, but that the Agenda would not be prepared for another 14 weeks or so. She added that more than two thirds of the committee were contacted by e mail, which costs the committee nothing.

WG thanked Carl and Carol for making refreshments. The meeting closed at 5.04pm

Please send items to be included in the Agenda for 21st October to Mary by 21st September 2006.

Mary Garner
Hon Sec