

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Sunday 22nd June 2008 at 3.00pm in the Methodist Chapel Hall, Old Newton.

Present: Philip Gorrod (Chair), Richard Munnings (Master), Mary Garner (Sec), Winston Girling (Chair BAC), Trevor Hughes (Ne Ho), Jonathan Stevens (NE Sax), Brian Hale (NW Ix), Maurice Rose (NW Th), Peter Harper (SE Col), John Smith (SW Sud), Richard Knight (SW Cl), Bruce Wakefield (PRO), Chris Garner (Webmaster)

Welcome: Philip warmly welcomed everyone and thanked Carol for the refreshments.

Apologies for absence were received from Keith Ashton Jones (Treasurer), David Mulrenan (Ne Hart), Jason Busby (NE Bc), Stefan Labedzki (SW Lav) Kate Eagle (SE Wd)

The Minutes of meeting held on 16th February 2008, previously circulated, were agreed and signed. Proposed Jonathan Stevens, seconded by Maurice Rose.

Sub-committee reports:

i. Belfry Advisory Committee

(a) **Clappers:** This item was deleted since it was reported that the matter had been resolved,

(b) **Meeting Report from 13th June**

The following district reports were presented:

North East: Chediston (Jonathan Stevens) funding is now in place. The bells should come out this month and be on display in the Church on July 1. Cratfield (Jonathan Stevens) Architect Donald Peacock and Naomi Shaw are a delight in that they are sharing this project. They have had a positive report from structural engineer Adrian Dempster and are in negotiations to move the windlass and clock case. They have had reports from Andrew Nicholson and Whitechapel. Nicholsons were briefed to use the existing fifth as a tenor, Whitechapel were asked to use the existing tenor. Rope circle leaves a lot to be desired but it is hoped that all six bells will ultimately be used. Fressingfield (Jonathan Stevens) who has fitted sound baffles to the louvers which should help to balance the external sound. Some wood removed from above the new treble pit and scaffold boards are to be removed from the redundant wooden pit above the treble. This should improve the air path considerably, and may save having to relocate the treble to the upper layer. The remedial work requested of White's has all been done except drawing the 6th rope through the clock case. Go of bells much improved as is the internal sound. The clappers all remain un-machined. Great Glemham (Jonathan Stevens) Toilet installed in ground floor ringing chamber, making it impossible to ring the bells from this floor. Jonathan requested a temporary scaffold ringing chamber which is in place. With Stephen Pettman's help ropes raised, wheel on 3rd re-fixed, new ceiling bosses fitted, rope chutes realigned and adjusted to fit sallies. Go of bells improved. Proper ringing gallery and restoration of bells may be considered by Parish in long term. Metfield (Jonathan Stevens) Was asked to replace a broken rope on the 5th (upper tier) The bell had set itself. Poor access and no headroom. No local willing to go up and undertake maintenance. Jonathan has done some work on the ropes and has more to do. This installation raises serious questions about safe access to repair and maintain bells. It may be that we need to consider a grant condition seeking to ensure the safety of steeple keepers. Rendham (Jonathan Stevens) Treble has been piped and scaffold boards placed under the fifth. The hatch has been opened a little. Aimed at improving sound levels in the ringing chamber. Also retaining the sound balance outside. Bronze rope bosses have been fitted to the front five and back two and a plastic boss to the sixth (bronze bosses courtesy of Winston) Southwold and Wingfield Jonathan has been asked to sort out striking at both towers, both of which may need some re-clapping. Wissett. After six years of negotiating project now moving forward Chediston HLF grant for £40,000 awarded.

North West: (Chris Nunn) bells are all out at Ixworth and Brian White has been back to take measurements. Stowmarket (Winston Girling) simulator received and would be fitted as soon as possible. Hopton Letter received from Stephen Young that the restoration appeal beginning to move forward - £17,000 of required £44,000 raised to date. Eye Letter received about potential restoration and asking about grant aid. Replied that Guild would be pleased to consider a grant providing all the necessary conditions were in place. Mendlesham (John Taylor) There are local disagreements about the fitting and form of ringing gallery, and the bells are urgently in need of restoration. Some progress has been made, however.

South East: Ipswich, St. Mary at Quay (Neville Whittell) said that Rev. Brian Redgers had asked if we could hold our October Meeting here. David Salter said that these bells required a bit of attention but not too much work was probably needed to improve them. The possibility of going there in October will be looked at. Dennington (Winston Girling) now has £15,000 towards their restoration. Ufford (Jonathan Stevens) attended with Alan Moults as Taylors had shut bells down claiming loose gudgeons. Clappers need some minor attention but Alan has agreed that it is safe to continue ringing the bells. In the long term re-hanging the back four bells on canon retaining headstocks would be beneficial.

Bruce Wakefield reported that Jonathan had assisted with improving the striking of the bells at Woodbridge and they were now much more even striking. Brandeston (Chris McArthur) has re-built the pulley boxes on three of the bells.

South West: Sudbury All Saints Neville Whittell asked if there was any further news. Winston Girling said that he had completed a Faculty application for the Church which was now with the Churchwarden for signing and submission. Long Melford (Winston Girling) reported that he had met with Alan Moulton and Graham Pledger and Church authorities and it was agreed that the present wooden bell frame is beyond redemption. Various schemes were suggested and the most suitable one was to lift up the old frame and secure it higher in the tower to preserve it. A new, 10 bell steel frame could then be installed in place of the present wooden frame, the bells restored and rung from the first floor gallery, using the present ringing chamber as a silence chamber, which would also assist with drawing the ropes into a circle."

It was further reported that Fressingfield was ready for another test ring, having worked through a long list of remedial works.

It was reported that considerable discussion had taken place with regard to the Guild's Grant Conditions. It had been decided that a sub-committee of four BAC members would be convened to discuss and produce an updated grant information sheet, including sharing of information with all concerned in the particular project, compliance with them, overseeing the project as it progresses and safety issues connected with bell maintenance.

Discussion followed and the GMC said that once drawn up the conditions should be sent to all the major bellhangers and be put on the website.

Concern was expressed about whether all of the projects should be passed. It was also felt that there was a compromise being suffered along with the need to preserve. It was felt that perhaps more money should be given to fewer projects in the future.

At the end of his report WSG told the meeting that he would be standing down as BAC Chairman and Honorary Technical Advisor with immediate effect, although he would continue with projects he was concerned with in the NW. He said that it was due to personal circumstances but that he was pleased to tell the meeting that Jonathan Stevens had agreed to take on both positions.

PJG thanked WSG for all the work he had done and time he had spent over a great number of years.

ii. Recruitment and Training

No meeting had been held, however PJG and RJM had approached Alan McBurnie (AJM), who has agreed to arrange meetings, acting as secretary to the convenor (RJM). AJM has promoted the art a great deal through courses he has organised at Hollesley.

iii Guild Executive

PJG reported on a meeting of the Guild Executive together with the Publicity Officer (Bruce Wakefield) and the Webmaster (Chris Garner) held during May.

PJG outlined what he hoped to achieve as Guild Chairman. He will encourage Officers to delegate parts of their jobs, both to reduce the burden on individuals and to involve more people and to train up future officers.

He is keen for R&T to be a county wide resource and recognises the need for good teachers and a system to teach the teachers.

Publicity for the Guild needs to feature highly and the Guild has done well recently with features on Lundy, our new chairman, the situation at Aldeburgh etc. Coming up will be a feature about Albert Driver becoming a life member.

Regarding money he feels very strongly that all expenses should be claimed. He would prefer that claims are made and that if individuals choose they can donate them to the Guild, with Gift Aid.

Communication is important, both us to members and members to Officers and Committees.

Each new member should receive an information pack.

Applications for grants

1. Wissett. An application for a grant had been received by the BAC. A two tier wooden frame has to be removed in order to fit a steel one. The old frame will go to the local museum whilst the bells will be rehung in a new two tier steel frame. A total of £55000 is needed, which includes £10000 for a new ring beam and £8000 for a new frame. The job will be carried out by Taylors Eayre and Smith, who will machine the clappers. A grant of £5500 was recommended to the GMC. This was carried unanimously.

Action: MSG to write

There are 6 bells and the Halesworth ringers are currently teaching a band, which will be in place once the restoration is finished.

2. St Lawrence, Ipswich.

WSG reported that he had received a letter from GWP in reply to the questions regarding access and sound control. GWP said that the ringers will have their own access to the bells and that sound control could be fitted. He said that the bells needed to be heard. He said that there would be safe access down to the bells once they are lowered. He said that there would be an additional cost of £6100, including works on a glass screen and the bell chamber.

Discussion followed and it was the feeling of the meeting that if there was no material change to the bells proposed the grant offered should stand.

Action: MSG to write to GWP saying that the grant offer stands.

Ringling Master's Report

RJM reported that the Guild Dinner had been a great success. He thanked MSG for all her hard work. He was pleased that the striking competitions had been well supported, congratulating Pettistree and SMLT on their respective wins. He thanked Sweffling and Rendham for their organisation and wonderful tea. A Guild band had recently taken part in the Ridgman Trophy. Only 5 of the possible 10 had taken part which was a bit disappointing. Most teams left early because there were no facilities close to the isolated tower.

A question was asked about the National 12 Bell competition. Our team pulled out this year because two members had to withdraw. It is planned for next year, but represents a large commitment so assurances will be needed before embarking on it.

RJM said that he was trying to visit as many towers as possible and was very grateful to others who were representing the Guild at various practices and meetings.

Financial Report

The following report was read to the meeting:

“The Guild finances (as at 15th June 2008) are very much where we should expect them to be at this mid-year point.

General Fund

Income achieved is within £4 of the corresponding figure for June last year. 87% of anticipated subscription revenue has been received. All other income streams are broadly similar to June 07 figures. A tentative forecast can therefore be extrapolated to suggest that General Fund income for 2008 will be close to that of 2007.

Expenditure to-date is likewise in line with June 2007 figures. However, this obscures the fact that most expenditure items show increases, except for the Public Liability Insurance premium (where the Secretary achieved a saving of £260 –almost 50%- by shopping around) which redressed the balance. A provisional forecast for the full year is, therefore, that General Fund expenditure will slightly exceed that for 2007.

However, since the General Fund income-expenditure figures for 2007 resulted in a small surplus, the 2008 year-end figures fund might still break even.

Bell Restoration Fund

Balance on BRF unallocated £25,700

Balance on BRF already allocated £56,350

Grants to Stradishall and Stonham Aspel have recently been paid out.

Grants approved this year to date total £11,400

Income is £600 up on June 07 figures, and to date totals £8,300.

The BRF (unallocated), therefore, stands at £3,000 less than at the start of the year.

A further £3,750 income is provisionally forecast for the BRF this year.

Handbell Fund Balance; £464

Jubilee Fund (Interest Only) Balance; £588

Pipe Family Trust Fund Balance; £1,290

St Peter Sudbury Fund Balance; £1,804”

Some discussion followed regarding level of subscriptions. It was pointed out that 50 years ringing has amounted to about £250, not a significant amount.

District Meeting Dates

PJG explained that he had taken his suggestion from the Feb GMC to the NE, ie that NE would move their meeting to 4th Saturday. This was rejected, hence its place on the agenda.

There was much discussion, which included the following points:

NE and NW could use different months for meetings; SW meet formally once a year; some advantage to calling meetings at short notice; clear publication in advance;

It was decided the following procedure:

NW meetings 2nd Saturday in Jan, April, Jul, Oct
NE meetings 2nd Saturday in Feb, May, Aug, Nov
SE meetings 1st Saturday in Mar, June, Sep, Dec
SW 4th Saturday

It was decided that the following year's meeting programme to be submitted by the districts by the second Saturday in October, that is before the ADM for the NW.

Action: MSG to write to District secretaries to advise/remind them about the above.

Guild Library Insurance

It was reported that this was in hand with a quote being sought from Ecclesiastical. **Action MSG**

E-mail Communication

The idea was put forward that each tower should have an email correspondent, a person prepared to accept e-mails on behalf of their tower, who would print out and display items in their tower.

The GMC was told that a system could be set up so that e-mail addresses could only be used visually and not harvested automatically, leading to spam. This would cost \$99. A database would be created which could be used by the webmaster to send mass e-mails as required.

It was stressed that this would not replace paper communication but enhance it, and enable reminders or changes to be sent out quickly and efficiently.

Discussion included the possible creation of a directory; the suitability of this for general use on the website; eg might it include people available to ring in peal attempts or for weddings.

It was decided that Deanery Reps would be asked to collect an email correspondent for each of its towers.

Action: CRG & MSG to draft a letter for Deanery Reps to use to collect addresses.

Implementation date for Guild Rule Changes

At present Guild Rule changes take effect from 1st Jan in the following year.

The GMC agreed that AGM rule changes should be effective immediately.

Action: MSG to put on Agenda for 2009 AGM

Ratification of NRLM

There were no non resident life members to ratify.

Matters Arising

- (i) Guild Report and Handbook. PJG said that it had been produced and distributed very quickly, and congratulated the team for all their work.
- (ii) Guild Dinner. The secretary reported that the event had made £16.95 but that with the addition of the draw, £266.95 had been paid into the BRF.

Discussion followed during which it was felt that since the Guild Dinner was only held every five years, it would be good to have a social event each year, rotating around the districts for the intervening 4 years.

The GMC was urged to go away and think about it and e-mail PJG or MSG if your district could put together an event.

Action: GMC

Post-meeting note – SW District have volunteered to host the first of these in summer 2009

- (iii) Guild Obituary Coordinator. John Girt had been approached but felt unable to accept the position. After some discussion MR suggested that Paul Stannard be asked. **Action: MR**

Post-meeting note – Paul Stannard has agreed to take on this role.

Correspondence

MSG reported that she had sent out several reports and acceptance letters for grant offers had been received from St Lawrence Ipswich and Dennington.

MSG reported that the Insurance had been renewed: GPA with BSU through Howe Maxted, same cost as last year, £700. The Guild changed the Public Liability to Ecclesiastical, being approximately half the price, with an indemnity £2m instead of £1m, the cost £262.50 against more than £500.

PJG reported correspondence in RW from Jeremy Spiller and Colin Spreadbury, regarding , in their view, unfairly taxing Guild members to support the BRF. He reported considerable private correspondence since then with JS, which was amicable but disagreeing.

PJG believes that only a small number of members object to giving to the BRF. He invited comments. RK said that Kent take 50%, Gloucester and Bristol £7 from their sub of £10, the NDA only £1 from their sub of £10. One comment was made that perhaps the Guild should target a smaller number of projects rather than giving grants to all bell restorations and installations for full circle ringing. It was agreed that most members appeared happy with the status quo and that there was insufficient evidence to suggest the need for a review of current policy.

Any other business

- (i) Life Honorary Members. Peter Harper (PWH) asked whether 50 years continuous membership should qualify a person to be an LHM? There was some discussion and the meeting gave general support. It was felt that a proposal should be drafted for the next meeting, which could be taken to the AGM.

Action: PWH

- (ii) Bruce Wakefield drew the attention of the meeting to the June edition of "Suffolk and Norfolk Life" which contains an article on bells by Laurie Forsythe including East Bergholt and Hollesley.
- (iii) Bruce Wakefield asked whether sound control was being considered at Aldeburgh
- (iv) RJM told the meeting that Mary Dunbavin had rung her 1000th peal.
- (v) Richard Knight asked that future GMC meetings should be in the evening.

Date of next meeting; Saturday 18th October 2008 at 6pm.
Meeting closed at 5.35pm.

Mary Garner, Hon. Secretary