

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes of General Management Committee Meeting held on Sunday 21st June 2009 in Stowupland Church Hall

Present: Philip Gorrod (Chairman), Richard Munnings (Ringing Master), Keith Ashton Jones (Treasurer), Trevor Hughes (NE Hoxne), Jonathan Stevens (NE Saxmundham), Peter Harper (SE Colneys), Robert Scase (SE Loes), John Smith (SW Sudbury), Sue Freeman (SW Hadleigh), Richard Knight (SW Clare), Bruce Wakefield (PRO), Christine Knight (taking Minutes)

Apologies: Mary Garner (Secretary), Jason Busby (NE Halesworth), David Mulrenan (NE Beccles), Brian Hale (NW Ixworth), Marion Turner (NW Mildenhall), David Steed (NW Stowmarket), Maurice Rose (NW Thingoe), Kate Eagle (SE Woodbridge)

1. Welcome

Philip Gorrod (PJG) extended a warm welcome to all present and thanked Christine Knight for taking the minutes.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held on 28th February 2009 were accepted unanimously, following the correction of minor spelling errors.

3. Sub-Committee Reports:

i. Belfry Advisory Committee

Jonathan Stevens (JJS) reported that the June BAC Meeting had been held at Chediston, where members looked at the installation before having a short ring. The Meeting was held at Bridge Farm, and members were grateful to Graham and Ronnie Downing for their excellent hospitality. Key events since the last GMC Meeting had been the satisfactory completion of remedial works to the striking at Ixworth and Chediston. Also, at Chediston, dB readings have been taken and advice given on sound control, following a complaint. A report has been prepared for Long Melford, outlining the Guild's recommended way forward. At Fressingfield, the treble has been moved to the upper tier and the final remedial works to the sixth have been completed. The external sound balance is still being worked on. The seventh at All Saints, Sudbury, has now been re-hung by a BAC team. At Brome, essential maintenance has been carried out, following an inspection at the invitation of the parish. Bardwell's restoration is well under way and Wissett's has started. The sound control at Felixstowe is now in place. Sound reduction measures have been designed for Stradbroke to reduce the volume of the tenors in the ringing chamber as they overpower the other bells at present.

The BAC is concerned that many Suffolk bell installations, including recently restored ones, get no regular maintenance. JJS hoped to put a maintenance checklist on the Website soon and also run a course on modern installations. This course will be advertised openly, but members from towers where restoration has taken place in recent years will be invited specifically. JJS also reminded all members that BAC members are on hand to help with maintenance work, but an invitation is always required first.

PJG thanked JJS for his report and invited questions. There being none, PJG applauded the idea of a course on new installations for new bands. Also, Richard Knight expressed thanks for the completion of the work on the seventh's headstock at All Saints, Sudbury.

ii. Recruitment and Training

Richard Munnings (RJM) reported that no meeting had been held since the last GMC Meeting. Alan McBurnie had not organised any further 'Teaching the Teachers' courses, but latest ideas being considered involved 'training on demand' – responding to members' requests for specific elements of training rather than using the medium of a traditional Guild Training Day. Questions were invited. PJG commented that 'Follow-Up Training' is a good idea and cited the example of two sessions after the Plain Bob Doubles Course at Wingfield (organised by TDH), and one member had subsequently rung their first peal.

4. Applications for Grants

There have been no new applications.

5. Ringing Master's Report

RJM was disappointed that the Guild had not been able to enter a team into the Ridgman Trophy competition held at Rickmansworth on the previous day, but there were several valid reasons. He was very pleased, however, with the success of the District Striking Competitions, all having had at least eight or nine teams. It was also pleasing that the Guild Six Bell Competition had received entries from every district. The Guild peal tally for 2009 is roughly on a par with this time last year, and it was good to see quarter peals as such a regular feature, especially in the NW District and at Hollesley, Ufford and Halesworth. The upward trend in attendance at the Guild AGM was another encouraging sign. RJM was also very pleased with the positive PR resulting from the ringing feature on BBC Radio Suffolk presenter Lesley Dolphin's afternoon show.

Questions were then invited. Robert Scase and Sue Freeman were disappointed that Exning church had been locked at the Guild Six Bell Striking Competition. RJM said that he would ensure that there was not a problem next year.

PJG raised the issue of the application of Guild Striking Competition rules. Concerns had been expressed about the principle of one ringer ringing for several teams. PJG had heard two 'schools of thought', which involved the possibly conflicting aims of involving as many ringers as possible, and getting as many teams as possible. RJM was reluctant to see a tightening of the rules as members across the county ring at several towers as a regular commitment. People ringing for multiple teams did enable more teams to take part.

Discussion ensued on towers used for Guild Striking Competitions. JJS made a plea for the Competitions to be held at towers where the bells are evenly struck and easy to handle. Trevor Hughes felt that a tower with odd-struck bells could discourage less experienced ringers. RJM commented that, although the choice of tower is the responsibility of the host district, perhaps advice is needed. KAJ suggested incorporating a maintenance check by BAC members into the procedure of selecting towers for Guild Striking Competitions. This idea was enthusiastically approved.

Action: MSG to write to District Secretaries

6. Financial Report

KAJ reported that the Guild finances are very much where he would expect them to be at this mid-year point. **The General Fund** income is £250 up on the June 08 figure thanks to the increase in the subs collected to date. All other income streams are broadly similar to June 08 figures. A tentative forecast suggests that General Fund income for 2009 will be similar to that of 2008. However, expenditure to date is up by £825 (30%) on June 07 figures. A purchase of lapel badges accounts for £413 of this. The Annual Report cost £317 more and admin expenses are up £120. A provisional forecast for the full year is that General Fund expenditure will be some £350 higher than that of 2008. Much will depend on the level of expenses, and on any requirement for funds for training purposes. Overall, the anticipated income should just about cover the forecast level of expenditure.

Bell Restoration Fund: Restoration income is similar to June 08 figures, except for the drop in interest received (£856 v £2356 = £1500 down).

Balance on BRF unallocated £22750

Balance on BRF allocated £42000

Grants paid out in 09 = £8350

Expenses for District Meetings: suggested procedures - PJG emphasised that KAJ had produced a policy note to act as guidance. This was not a change in the Rules. Comments were invited:

JJS felt that the guidance to be circulated was very clear and approved of the desire not to inhibit people's participation. KAJ explained that the shift of emphasis in the policy note put the onus on District Committees to approve re-imburement rather than the process being one of automatic claiming.

Action: KAJ to circulate policy note to District Secretaries

7. Ratification of NRLM

There were no new members to ratify.

8. Guild Social (27th June 09)

Richard Knight reported that approx 40 tickets had been sold so far, a rather disappointing total, but he still anticipated a good day. PJG made a plea for last-minute sales before the Tuesday 23rd June deadline.

9. Mini Ring

PJG reported that he was very pleased with the Guild's 'temporary' mini ring, which had its first official outing at the Campsea Ashe Ringing Festival. 20-25 minutes was required to assemble; 14-15 minutes to take down. MSG has obtained insurance cover for £2million anywhere in the UK. A separate policy, but under the umbrella of the CCCBR has been set up for insurance against physical damage, fire and theft anywhere in the UK at a cost of £50 per annum + tax. Stephen Pettman is taking it to Italy in October and has agreed to pay the extra insurance cost.

Mini Ring Trustee: PJG said that a trustee who lives centrally is required. He had approached Brian Whiting, who was willing to combine this role with that of Handbells Trustee.

PJG proposed that Brian Whiting (BEW) be appointed, and be responsible for bookings and the collection of donations. This was agreed unanimously. (12 bookings have been made already).

Bruce Wakefield wondered if it could appear at the Suffolk Show as Ralph Earey's Model Bell had in the Diocesan Tent. PJG listed other possible uses – PR functions, tower fundraising events, peals and weddings. The example was given of taking the Mini Ring to Linstead Magna to ring for an annual service at a non-existent church!

Considerable discussion then followed on **levels of charge:**

- PJG envisaged 3 different scenarios:
 1. Tower fundraising – no charge
 2. Members 'for fun' / local fete etc.
 3. Out of county / a 'commercial event' (e.g. a wedding)
- Peal fees for the Mini Ring – it was questioned whether we could rely on members' discretion for donations?
- Should PJG's 1st category be changed to 'Restoration Projects'? It was felt that there should be no charge for restoration projects or Guild events.
- £2 per ringer peal fees and 50p per ringer for quarters was suggested. There is a need to cover maintenance and insurance costs.
- Donations guidelines were needed. KAJ felt that it was important not to be too prescriptive as many different scenarios were possible. He suggested leaving BEW some discretion. A minimum donation of £20 was suggested (more (?£50) for category 3. above), but BEW is to be asked to trial and report back.

New Mini Ring: PJG reported that an order had been placed with Matthew Higby and a deposit paid. The total cost would be c. £4,500 on a 6-9 months timescale. The new mini ring will be dedicated by the Bishop in the Cathedral.

PJG proposed that the new ring be named 'The Vestey Ring', and this was agreed unanimously.

A canopy will provide rain protection and it will have a sign giving Suffolk Guild contact details. PJG has produced a manual with instructions for erection and a parts list.

10. Child Protection – new legislation (October 2009)

PJG apologised for the lack of hand-out, but outlined how the new legislation will be more straightforward than the current 'Safeguarding Vulnerable People' (2006):

- one registration will cover all activities
- there will be no requirement for periodic renewal
- registration of volunteers will be free of charge
- responsibility lies with PCC's / tower captains to CRB check all persons undertaking 'regulated work' teaching children ('regulated work' is defined as teaching on a regular basis, 3+ out of 30 days)
- stand-ins (e.g. if someone is ill) need not be registered if it is a 'one-off' situation
- a new, Independent Safeguarding Authority will come into being in July 2010

PJG explained that the Central Council recommends that each Guild /Association appoints a Child Protection Officer, mainly to be the focal point for queries about suitability. After brief discussion, PJG explained that the Guild needs to appoint someone before the AGM and asked for volunteers / suggestions. A number of names were put forward and PJG agreed to approach one or more of these.

Action: PJG to approach potential Child Protection Officer candidates

11. Constitution Change from AGM

“B4: add ‘of an amount at least equal to an Associate (Senior) change member’s subscription.’ ”

To read:

B4: add “of an amount at least equal to a Senior member’s subscription.”

PJG proposed that this was accepted; agreed unanimously.

12. Vice Presidents and Life Honorary Members

PJG opened discussion by stating that he felt there was only a tenuous distinction between the two categories. Vice Presidency was usually granted for past services as an Officer and, historically, Vice Presidents sat automatically on the GMC. Rule changes had ended this.

PJG went through the list of VPs and LHMs, trying to ascertain criteria for their election and / or anomalies. Several members are on both lists. There seemed to be a randomness in the two definitions. PJG wanted a clearer understanding of roles to emerge and questioned whether we need the category of ‘Vice President’. Should they all become LHMs?

KAJ suggested a policy statement - to make it known that the GMC does not support the election of any further Vice Presidents as they no longer have a defined role; those currently Vice Presidents would hold it as an honorary title and in future only LHMs would be elected.

Richard Knight suggested transferring current Vice Presidents into Life Honorary Membership, if this is not held already.

A proposal is to be formulated for the next AGM and Vice Presidents are to be consulted.

**Action: PJG to write to Districts
Article in Newsletter**

13. Officers and Delegated Tasks

PJG opened discussion on how the work of some officers could be supported and their jobs made less burdensome. Discussion covered the following points:

Treasurer: A Gift Aid Secretary (which could possibly be combined with the role of Membership Secretary) to aid the Treasurer. Gordon Slack had come forward and met with KAJ and PJG.

Secretary: it was suggested that a Minute Secretary could be a ‘delegated task’, not only reducing a very substantial work load, but also freeing up the Guild Secretary to take part in GMC discussions.

All of the above suggestions received the widespread approval of the meeting.

Librarian: PJG informed the meeting that Gillian Wakefield is standing down at the next AGM. The difficult issue of housing the Guild Library needs to be considered as a priority. Various possible venues were discussed, but all had problems. It was agreed to enquire whether the Diocese could provide suitable accommodation.

Action: MSG to write to the Diocese

14. Matters Arising from those Minutes not itemised in the Agenda

a. The dedication has taken place at Chediston.

b. **Guild Report and Handbook:** MSG has 76 Reports left at £3.50 each.

c. **AGM:** a much improved attendance; 89 + 4 visitors.

d. **AGM 2010:** as Easter is early, a later date, Saturday 17th April (Guild Saturday), has been suggested, mainly to allow more time to finalise the Report. The AGM will be in the NW District.

e. **Membership Certificates and New Member Pack:** have been well received. Several people who joined in the past have requested certificates. MSG is producing these at £2 each, proceeds to the BRF. Badges are also available for sale from MSG (free to new members as are certificates) at £2 each.

f. **GMC Meeting Dates:** it was suggested that GMC Meetings change to 3rd Saturday in February, July and November at 9.30a.m. KAJ suggested a 10 a.m. start. Richard Knight favoured Saturday evenings. Voting was inconclusive and a decision deferred until the next meeting.

Action: MSG to write to the all GMC members to ask for preferences

15. Correspondence

a. **Wissett:** scaffolding is up; start date was 8th June.

b. **Gislingham:** PJG reported that Brian Whiting had been refused a peal attempt, even after giving an alternative date (*and, it transpires, also Winston Girling and Mandy Shedden*). There is a wish that local

members ring the first peal on the bells, but no indication of timescale has been given. The updated terms and conditions for Guild grants state that having four attempts per year is reasonable. PJG has been in correspondence, but the tower has now indicated a desire to return the £6000 grant rather than adhere to the terms and conditions regarding access to peal attempts on the bells for Guild members. The tower wishes to restrict any future attempts to one per year, owing to a fear of complaints. In general discussion, a desire was expressed to avoid protracted correspondence, but also to try to avoid taking back the £6000, thereby setting a precedent and also ending Guild influence.

Action: PJG to write again, suggesting sound control, and attempting to reach a compromise, but failing which accept the return of the grant (without interest).

16. Any Other Business

a. **Web Master:** some members send event information only to John Taylor; could they please forward this to Chris Garner as well.

342 e-mail addresses have been received by the Web Master. Members are reminded that it is possible to select a certain district, deanery, or, indeed, other groupings for mailings.

b. **Recent Newsletter:** some members were unhappy with the quality of recent issues. It was agreed that consideration would be given at the next meeting to the future of the newsletter generally, including the possibility of an electronic format.

17. Date of Next Meeting, Saturday 17th October at 6p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.45p.m.