

# Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes of General Management Committee Meeting on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009  
at 6pm in Stowupland Church Hall.

**Present:** Philip Gorrod (Chairman), Richard Munnings (Ringing Master), Keith Ashton Jones (Treasurer), Mary Garner (Secretary), 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), Brian Hale (NW Ixworth), Marion Turner (NW Mildenhall), Maurice Rose (NW Thingoe), Kate Eagle (SE Woodbridge), Alan Stanley (Hartismere)

**Apologies:** Jason Busby (NE Halesworth), David Mulrenan (NE Beccles), Bruce Wakefield (PRO), Stefan Labedzki (SW Lavenham), Richard Hobson (SE Samford)

**1. Welcome:** PJG welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Marion Turner for sorting out the refreshments.

**2. The Minutes** of the meeting held on 21st June 2009, previously circulated, were signed with no amendments.

### **3. Sub-committee reports:**

#### **i. Belfry Advisory Committee**

JJS presented his report.

“Our October meeting was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> at Fressingfield when the members looked at the installation before having a ring. Those who had been at the dedication were impressed with the improvements made since then, not least to the sound in the ringing chamber. We were made most welcome and held the meeting in the church with ten members present.

During the last period twenty-nine towers have been inspected or had work done on their bells by BAC members, including advice on sound modulation or control at Chediston, Helmingham, Bardwell and Ixworth.

Key events have been the completion of the bell-hangers work at Bardwell and Ipswich St Lawrence and at Wissett, inspected this morning.

Following an advert in the Guild Newsletter the North West has asked for a belfry maintenance course, probably in May next year. The North East is planning one in August. We would welcome invitations from the other districts.

We are hoping to publish maintenance guidance notes, both on the net and in the newsletter.

We have purchased another reel of artificial hemp to use like pre-stretched terylene for top-ends which is for sale at £1.50 per metre. We are also resurrecting the “rope pool” only with a difference in that we are encouraging towers who have spare unwanted ropes with some wear left to list their details on the guild website.

The Diocesan Bell Advisor Alan Moulton and I went on the Central Council sound control seminar at Duffield in Derbyshire. Whilst we were familiar with much of the course content which covered internal as well as external sound management, the real eye-opener was when the sound shutters on Duffield church were demonstrated, showing not just how effective these can be, but how small a sound opening needs to be to give an adequate volume with the shutters open. This raised the issue of why so many of those projects where a new installation has been placed beneath the old frame should be disappointingly quiet, even when there are clear air-paths. The informed guess of those present, most of whom were diocesan bell advisors, was that it might be due to absorption, although there has been no study done to see if this is the case. Campsea Ashe is a good candidate for such a study and Glenys has agreed to give me access to do this.

Restoration fervour continues with Harkstead’s PCC now showing enthusiasm for their re-hang in a steel frame. I will be seeing John Malster on Monday to help plan their way forward.

I am delighted to announce that Taylors have been bought by a consortium with Andrew Wilby as their spokesman and they will be trading as John Taylor from the existing premises.

We hope to go to Hacheston for our next meeting; no doubt in the meantime the work to service and improve the bell installations in Suffolk will continue apace.”

PJG invited questions. MJR commented that the Bardwell installation was lower in the tower than previously, and they are quite quiet. JJS said that each parish is given information and they decide how they want to proceed. Bardwell wasn’t too concerned about sound but wanted to get a nice ring. He felt it is a good job of preservation. JJS and MJR agreed that a good balance has been achieved.

A question was asked about the future of Taylors Eayre and Smith. JJS explained that Andrew Wilby is the spokesperson for a group formed including Hayward Mills. They will be trading as John Taylor from Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, and will make all the historic records available.

## **ii. Recruitment and training**

RJM said that although there had not been a committee meeting he had spoken Alan McBurnie in order to set up something soon (A's currently in the middle of moving house). AJMcB had been to a seminar in Birmingham recently and was brimming with ideas, being particularly keen on training on demand rather than a Guild Training Day once a year. RJM reported that unfortunately the Training Day had been cancelled due to lack of support. He was unsure from the feedback whether it was the content or possibly the style of what was on offer. However he commented that it was noticeable that districts were doing a great deal themselves and maybe that the way forward was to help the districts.

Marion Turner asked how the large number of learners at Mildenhall and Lakenheath could best be catered for. Could there be an opportunity to come to somewhere like Ixworth for example?

RJM replied that Ruth Suggett is very keen for people to come along and to help people progress; also the simulator is a marvellous tool because it can be set up when people are able to come along. It's important not to lose sight of being together, a great deal of local help will be needed and in a specific way. PJG added that was a need for a combination of both, that is local help and using district practices where learners can come from various towers.

John Smith added that he had received an email from AJMcB about the Ringing Foundation and their seminars. He was interested to find out that an Olympic kayak coach had observed and compared the similarities of acquiring skills in various disciplines; also that men and women learn differently!

**4. Applications for grants.** None had been received.

## **5. Ringing Master's report**

RJM said that it was a pity that the Training Day had been cancelled. However he said that many quarters had been rung during the year, which helps people to cement their learning, also peals, although not quite as many as in 2008.

The restoration at St Lawrence has raised the awareness of ringing to a lot of people.

A peal in each district has been planned for St Edmund's Day (November 20<sup>th</sup>) (all scored. Ed). This coming Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct, RJM will be discussing the day on Radio Suffolk.

He asked that the districts do not forget Guild Peal week as part of their planning for 2010.

MJR thanked RJM for attending so many events during the year.

## **6. Financial Report**

KAJ presented the following to the meeting:

**General Fund.** The GF income shows an increase of £330, largely due to subscriptions. There has been a donation from Mr Vestey of £2300 towards the mini ring.

Expenditure is up by £1300, exceeding disposable income by £760. This does include badges and rope which are not purchased annually and £570 towards the mini ring, not yet received. He expects that the GF near this position at the end of the year.

**Restoration Fund.** The income received by the BRF is only 50% of last year, c £5000. This is because a great deal of our invested money has been spent and the interest rates have plummeted amounting only to about £3500 this year. Also, last year's transferred balance of the Jubilee Fund interest, £600, boosted income to the Restoration Fund. The Affiliation Scheme income is down £150 to date. There have been no grants awarded this year. Income is increased by adding in half the subs paid. The total income to the BRF is about £9000.

At the beginning of the year allocated grants stood at £51000, £20000 has since been paid out. £31000 is allocated but not yet paid out, i.e. Helmingham, Wissett, Dennington, Hopton, Elmsett. He added that there is always a slight concern with getting the balance right for the Charities Commission who likes to see the monies raised used rather than saved.

PJG added that he had spoken to Sal Burrows re Affiliation Scheme, and started looking at it. It is a donation, set at a minimum of £10, but contributions vary from £10 to £100. Jim Burrows, Sal's husband, administers the scheme.

There were no further questions. MJR thanked KAJ on behalf on the committee for all his work.

## **7. Ratification of NRLM**

The committee confirmed NRLM status for Andrew P Clark, David E Cloake and Diane J Reynolds.

## **8. Mini Ring Update**

PJG reported that the mini ring had proved popular. It had been to various types of event, including the Guild social, fetes, the NW ADM, Wetherden etc.

KAJ said that there was a satisfying trickle of money coming in from it, adding that the income will pay for a cover and repairs. Discussion followed concerning how best to utilise it for publicity and recruitment. JJS suggested that the Guild invest in a couple of pull up display boards to go with the mini ring to places where the general public go. Ixworth and Bardwell use boards of this type.

MJR proposed, seconded by RS, that the officers are authorised to negotiate the acquisition of two display boards, with a provisional budget of £400. It was passed unanimously.

PJG reported that he had invited a band to ring a peal on Handbells at Tower Ramparts in Ipswich as part of the centre's Christmas activities. Hopefully this will raise public awareness and bring a donation to the BRF. [Post meeting note – in the event the peal band were unable to ring that day and three members rang touches.]

## **9. Child Protection -new legislation October 2009**

PJG told the GMC that John Girt had agreed to take on the post of Child Protection Officer as an interim until the AGM. The question was asked about what the Guild needs to do to comply. PJG said that most needs to be done by PCCs. This information had not yet been forthcoming. It was suggested and agreed that PJG's resume of the legislation should be circulated more widely. Use the email correspondents list.

### **Action MSG**

Discussion followed regarding whether the Child protection officer should be elected or appointed by the GMC. It was the feeling of the meeting that a GMC appointment might be more appropriate. PJG said it would be taken to the AGM.

## **10. Vice Presidents and Life Honorary Members**

In explaining the background to this PJG said that the present situation was rather anomalous. He had put together and sent out a discussion paper to take to the AGM. Comments have been invited from the membership on the following proposals:

- “1. The Guild passes a resolution that no further VPs should be elected. The existing VPs will retain their honorary title while they remain members of the Guild, and eventually there will be just one left, viz. the Bishop of Dunwich, who automatically (“ex officio”) has this status (like the Diocesan Bishop as President).
2. The position of Vice President is abolished (except the Bishop of Dunwich again).”

This has been sent out to the Districts for discussion. To date he has received two responses by e-mail, one in support and one against the whole idea. PJG asked the GMC which is more important, someone who has given years to teaching, bell maintenance etc. or someone who has been a chairman for five years.

Much discussion followed. Representatives from the SE and SW said it would be discussed at their ADMs.

## **11. Potential Officers & Guild Library**

PJG told the GMC that there were firm candidates in place for Secretary and Treasurer. Gordon Slack is prepared to stand for Treasurer, KAJ has already met with him and PJG would like to adopt him as a treasurer in waiting.

Mandy Shedden is keen to stand for Secretary. PJG would like to adopt her as a secretary in waiting. MSG will talk to Mandy about the job.

### **Action MSG**

**Library** MSG was awaiting an answer from the Diocese. Discussion followed regarding a suitable location and Librarian. It was noted that Gillian had been very good in the job that will be difficult to follow.

## **12. GMC Meeting dates**

MSG proposed, seconded by RK, that GMC meetings should be held on the third Saturdays in July at 6pm, October at 6pm and February at 10am. This was carried by a large majority.

## **13. Guild Newsletter**

There was considerable discussion about the value and usefulness of the Guild Newsletter in its current form. There was some feeling that a paper newsletter was not needed because the website gave all the information about future events and contains news reports. However many felt that it was good to have something to read in the tower on practice nights and Sundays especially as there were opportunities for people to discuss items as they were read.

The general feeling was that whilst the current magazine isn't ideal there is a need for paper copy, whether it's sent to email correspondents or printed.

It was felt that two main issues need to be considered: contributors and a compiler/editor.

It was suggested that its name "Newsletter" implied up to date news, whereas it could be a useful tool for uniting the guild including for example:

Articles for beginners, articles to amuse old hands, articles which demonstrate the vigour and enthusiasm of the Guild, Voice of our Chairman, Around the Districts, Notes from our Hong Kong Correspondent, Restorations (Sources of funding, how to etc), Conducting, Touches, How and why you should make a legacy, Notes from a Steeplekeeper, A day in the life of . . . . ., Peals, Outings, Coaching notes, Letters, Adverts, History, Anecdotes etc. It should be possible to plan a year ahead.

In addition, distribution could be considered, perhaps broadening to Clergy as well as ringing towers. All this will need a pro-active editor/editorial team.

This contribution was greeted with great enthusiasm and it was decided that a small working party be set up, AS, SF, JJS together with the current editor and chaired initially by PJG.

It was noted that current costs are £90 for printing and £20 for postage for each issue.

#### **14. Heritage Lottery Fund**

JJS explained that the HLF had been used with considerable success with restoration and fund raising as a key part of the project rather than an add on, particularly at Ixworth and Bardwell. Ruth Suggett and JJS thought could that the AGM in 2010 could be started with an open session addressed to clergy and other interested parties as well as ringers. He suggested that Stuart Hobley (Dev Manager of HLF Eastern England) be invited to speak for about 30 minutes. It is hoped that this would help members to understand how the HLF works whilst showing others that we are a "go getting" organisation.

PJG asked MJR whether that would fit with the NW hosting the AGM and for the thoughts of the GMC. There was general agreement.

#### **15. Matters arising from the minutes not itemised on the agenda**

(i) **Guild Social.** PJG thanked RK and his team for organising a really good day. He thought that the numbers were just right in the event. It also raised £100 for BRF.

The NE are perhaps taking on the mantle. TH says it's under discussion and it will probably be in October

(ii) **Gislingham.** PJG said we had not received a cheque from Gillingham and that he had tried again, unsuccessfully, to draw up a compromise.

AS, Deanery rep, said he had no further information but would follow it up.

#### **16. Correspondence**

MSG spoke about correspondence with Mrs Turner about her father David Cracknell. The Guild library had provided a wealth of information and she was advised that Diana and George Pipe might be able to provide further information.

#### **17. Any other business.**

(i) RK reported that the SW committee felt that the post of Deanery rep should disappear and be amalgamated with Management reps.

In reply PJG said that he realises that there are a lot of posts, but that the skills aren't necessarily the same. Each district have seen people who will do one or the other and there is nothing to stop one person being both. It was the feeling of the meeting that leaving it as it is gives each district flexibility, and it is a real strength to have many people involved.

(ii) MJR told the meeting that Stephen Young has been diagnosed with a brain tumour. He is going to Addenbrookes on Sunday for tests on Monday. He asked that our thoughts should be with Stephen and Ruth at this time.

#### **18. Date of next meeting, Saturday 20th February 2010 at 10am.**

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.