

Minutes for GMC Meeting Sunday 17th June 2012 at 2.15pm Stowupland

Present: Philip Gorrod (Chair), Jed Flatters (Master), Gordon Slack (Treasurer), Jonathan Stevens (Technical Advisor), Jason Busby (NE Halesworth), Trevor Hughes (NE Hoxne), Julie Rapior (NE Saxmundham), Alan Stanley (NW Hartismere), Brian Hale (NW Ixworth), Marion Turner (NW Mildenhall), Maurice Rose (NW Thingoe), Peter Harper (SE Colneys), Robert Scase (SE Loes), Sally Munnings (SE Ipswich), Mary Garner (SE Samford), Sue Freeman (SW Hadleigh), Richard Knight (SW Clare)

Apologies: Mandy Shedden (Secretary), David Steed (NW Stowmarket), Derek Rose (SW Sudbury).

1. Welcome

Philip Gorrod (PJG) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes

The acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2012 was proposed by Peter Harper and seconded by Alan Stanley. It was carried unanimously following the correction of an initial.

3. Belfry Advisory Committee Report

Jonathan Stevens (JJS) presented the following report: "Our most recent meeting was at Woolpit on 24 May with eight members present. We shared our current jobs such as fitting new pulleys at Euston, replacing the clapper bushes at Rickinghall, setting the striking at Blythburgh and the pre-striking competition work at Leiston.

Prospective re-hangs at Harkstead, Horringer and Thorndon were welcomed.

Your Technical Advisor was at the Church Building Council Bell Advisor's conference this last week at Worcester. This was well worth the time and journey. A personal highlight, away from the technicalities, was a guided visit to the Cathedral Library. The main purpose of going though was to hear the speakers and to catch up with those also advising on bells and their problems.

Points raised, worth sharing here, were that DAC Architect CPD days should include bells and bell projects and we should make sure they do; foundation beams should be securely fixed to the tower walls; vertical frame movement is as significant as horizontal frame movement; faculty application Statements of Significance should be accurate and specific to the project concerned; the Heritage Lottery Fund has a new range of funding now offering between £3k and £100k and finally, Graham Pledger of English Heritage retired this last Friday.

The next BAC meeting will be on 27 September."

4. Applications for grants

JJS reported that **Clopton** had presented a revised application and that the BAC recommends an award towards costs estimated at £60,000. The proposed work includes a new frame which is to be installed lower, and the provision that the windows in the existing ringing chamber can be taken out to become sound windows.

Gordon Slack (GS) proposed a grant of £6000, which was seconded by Robert Scase and carried unanimously.

Much work has been carried out at **All Saints' Sudbury** with the cost of materials, estimated at £1,225, met by the church. The BAC recommends a grant being made. Richard Knight (RK) explained to the GMC that the work has been done very well and that the church is always welcoming. It was noted that the grant

condition for availability of ringing could not be met since ringing time was restricted to 45 minutes at present.

GS proposed a grant £600. It was seconded by Alan Stanley and carried unanimously.

5. Recruitment and Training Committee Report

Jed Flatters (JF) reported that several meetings of the R & T committee had been held since the last GMC but solely concerned with training.

JF reported that the first ITT course for Suffolk had been held at BSE, attended by new tutors and senior mentors. Documentation for the course is expected shortly. JF said it was an interesting day, that Graham Nabb was easy to listen to.

Three members of the GMC had attended, one as a trainee and two as mentors. All said that it had been a good day. The trainee tutor said she was very impressed and learned a great deal. One mentor said that it was a system close to what he uses anyway, although he was able to pick up some tips, the other felt reassured that what "we" have been doing is deemed appropriate, again picking up useful hints. The second's trainee had had a great day with her "brain on overload" by the end of it. It was felt that supervision would be challenging, as would internal verification whilst also answering to external assessors

Discussion followed. The general feeling of the meeting was that it sounded a very good way forward, although some concern was expressed that in the future PCCs might state that only accredited teachers would be able to teach on their bells, (as reported in RW recently). PJG reassured the committee that the situation would be watched carefully so that any problems could be dealt with quickly by the GMC.

Further comment was made that all people should be welcomed and valued at every practice.

JF concluded by saying that a 2nd date for trainers, or module 2, would be discussed with the committee and arranged shortly.

6. Ringing Master's report

JF reported that he has continued to visit the four districts for their practices and meetings as much as possible. He had heard concerns about the attendance at the AGM. This had been in the high 90s and compared very favourably with several others he had heard about with 30 and 35 respectively. He expressed his thanks to Peter & Jane Harper for organising the monthly Tuesday ringing. He has started a Surprise Minor practice entitled "beyond Cambridge" on the last Thursday of each month.

He apologised for not organising peals during peal week, which he would rectify next year. Peal week will revert to February.

Easter Sunday saw the dedication of the two new bells at the Cathedral. They were removed immediately, put in the tower and were rung on the Tuesday of Easter week. Although there is work still to be done, the Norman Tower ringers are very pleased.

JF expressed his appreciation that all the towers for the Guild Striking competitions at Blythburgh and Leiston had entered in advance. He commented that more time was needed for tea and results between the competitions, which he planned to address next year.

The Ridgman Trophy had been competed for at Kempston on June 16th. Eight teams from the Eastern counties had entered this 10 bell striking competition. Suffolk came fifth and one team had withdrawn. Next year's competition will be held at Surfleet and JF hoped that a peal attempt or extended practice for the Suffolk team could be arranged on the bells in advance of the competition.

7. Treasurer's report

GS presented the following report:

"General Fund

Income - Subscription income has held up well – it is very similar to last year's income at this stage of the year.

Expenditure – Other than the one-off expenditure previously agreed for the publicity banners and the Vestey canopy there has been no unusual expenditure.

Restoration Fund

Restoration Fund income was boosted by donations from Harold Rogers' funeral of over £350.

The sum now available for allocation to new projects stands at £51,000. The amount reserved for grants allocated to projects still in progress stands at £5,200.

Strategy

I've mentioned before the significant decrease in our Restoration Fund income as a result of the reduction in interest rates. Traditionally we have invested our surplus cash with the CBF Church of England funds which are currently paying us only 0.8% interest.

I am investigating other possibilities. Unfortunately some banks have withdrawn their community accounts or only offer them to groups with a current account. I was told that our bankers – Barclays – were paying 2.2% on a one-year bond but, when I spoke with our Business Manager this week, he said this bond was paying 1.6% and had been withdrawn. A new bond will be issued next week and he will provide details. I am continuing to investigate offerings from other banks.

I would like the approval of the GMC to invest a maximum of £50,000 in a fixed term bond paying a higher rate of interest than the Church of England Funds. I propose that the term will be a maximum of two years and will be seeking to at least double the rate of interest we currently obtain. Normal signing arrangements (two from Treasurer/ Chairman/ Secretary) will be put in place."

PJG thanked GS for his report. Discussion followed regarding maximising return on investment. Various ideas were put forward and GS explained that as a charity options were restricted. He sought approval to move up to £40,000 in order to possibly double the rate of interest. The meeting expressed approval for this to happen but said that independent advice should be sought.

8. Ratification of NRLMs

Ian J Culham from Mistley and Dawn Pullan from Brooke were ratified as NRLMs of the Guild.

9. AGM feedback

PJG invited the members of the committee to comment, there was much discussion and the following points were raised:

- General feeling was that it was a successful occasion, well attended.
- The fringe meeting was important and good.
- Although good publicity it was questioned whether the presence of the mini ring was worthwhile bearing in mind there was little time to ring it. PJG commented that it provided an ideal opportunity to show the new canopy to the members.
- It was felt by many that the AGM wasn't the forum for finding typos in the Report (especially since it was the result of much hard work) although pointing out incorrect telephone numbers etc was useful because it reached so many people. (PJG explained that he proof read most of the report but neither he nor the Report Editor were able to identify incorrect information)
- It would be useful to publish the Agenda in advance, using the website, What's On and the email system possibly.

Action PJG

PJG said that it was unfortunate that the advert for the meeting went to RW without the constitution change proposed by the GMC. Since the required notice could not be given it would be left for the 2013 AGM.

The NE had wished to propose Helen Price for Life Honorary Membership, but since she was unable to be there it had been agreed to defer it to 2013.

10. Succession planning

PJG reminded the GMC that he had been in post for nearly five years and a new chairman would need to be elected at the next AGM. He has received one suggestion so far and urged the GMC to pass more names to him. **Action: All**

PJG reported that Mandy (MS) had felt that she could not continue as Secretary and that a replacement would be needed, ideally before the next AGM. (Post meeting note: Mandy had phoned to apologise for causing alarm and to say she WAS happy to continue as Secretary.)

There was considerable discussion about thinking ahead to find suitable successors for the various posts as the five year terms expired. The idea of deputies was considered, albeit as unofficial posts. It was noted that whilst a good idea in principle it would be challenging to have someone "peering over one's shoulder" even were it possible given the geographical distances to be covered.

11. Banners

There was general agreement that the banners are very good. PJG encouraged people to borrow and use them. They are stored by Brian Whiting. Although independent from the mini ring they will often be used in conjunction with it. PJG is working on a fourth banner which will be specifically about the Vestey Ring.

12. Districts Committee

GS apologised that there was nothing to report at this time, but expects to report at the October meeting.

13. Guild Dinner (16.3.13)

PJG reported that MS had booked the hall at Woolpit and that she & Maurice Rose are in discussion with the caterers. MS will produce the tickets and menus. Marion Turner will be available on the day to help set up the hall and MSG volunteered to sell tickets. Posters will be needed once the details are finalised. A local personality has been approached by the PRO to be guest speaker. The Bishop has the date in his diary and it is hoped that will attend. George Vestey, Guild President, will be invited.

Discussion followed with regard to a speaker if the outstanding invitation is declined. It was felt that a lively and entertaining speaker with a bell ringing background would be ideal. PJG said that he had an alternative in mind should those asked be unable to attend.

14. Mini Ring

PJG reported that there were insufficient volunteers for the Henham Steam Rally, but that it was called off anyway due to the weather. The Diocese had cancelled the mini ring for the Suffolk Show because they had allowed insufficient space and height! However the Weston Country Fair (near Ringsfield, 10.30am-6pm) takes place on Sunday 29th July. The guild has been offered 6 pairs of tickets and twelve volunteers are needed please. (Post meeting note – this was cancelled as well due to waterlogged grounds!)

15. Annual Report (content)

It was felt to be a very good publication, but three main issues were raised.

- Is there any way of avoiding repeats of frequently used peal compositions? Discussion centred around approaching Brian Whiting (who makes a large contribution to the peals section of the report) to see what might be workable, possibly starting a database?
- Should the report/handbook be a little more personalised with a line or two contributed from each ringing tower. In principle this was felt to be a good idea. In the discussion followed it was pointed out that the SE do this for their ADM, also that the information might be out of date by the time the report was published and circulated.
- Should there be some content specifically for new ringers, because it is not only a Report for the previous year, but a Handbook for the current one?

The meeting agreed that it would be good to invite the Report Editor to the next GMC meeting.

Action PJG

16. Any other matters arising

Striking Competition Rules: PJG commented that it was probably not the rules which presented difficulties, but their interpretation. Everyone needed to know what was meant by the Ringing Master's discretion. It seemed clear this year.

JF did wonder whether all the teams should ring the same method and touch, but it was pointed out that this might preclude a team from entering.

Guild Clothing: JF reported that sales were steady, £570 had been spent on clothing making a profit of £27. The clothing was sold with a view to promoting the Guild and not designed to be profit making.

17. Correspondence:

PJG had received an email from the Report Editor expressing concern and frustration about not receiving appropriate and correct information for printing.

RK added that there were sometimes problems with peal information.

PJG said that this highlights the importance of each district doing the same, including informing the treasurer when a member dies. It was felt that a checklist particularly for those submitting information for the report would be useful.

More discussion followed, raising the question of job descriptions for Guild Treasurer, Guild Secretary, Peal Secretary and Report Editor. It was felt that this was particularly important when considering succession planning for these posts. Similarly for Chairman and Master. Should each post holder produce a checklist to pass to their successor?

Action: GS/MS/CK/RS

18. Any Other Business

1. District Rules:

PJG said that when the constitution was changed to accommodate the Magazine similar changes were not highlighted in the all the district rules.

The following proposal was made from the chair:

In rules L20 and L22 the word "newsletter" should be replaced by "magazine".

This was passed unanimously and will be taken to the AGM in April 2013.

Action: Secretary

2. Guild Social: Barn Dance at Sproughton Tithe Barn, 16th September

The SE District Chairman reported that ticket sales were going as expected. PH will ask the webmaster to circulate the details through the email list.

Action: PWH

It was noted that whilst the Tithe Barn has no dedicated car park, there is plenty on parking on the street in the village.

3. PJG thanked MSG for minuting the meeting.

19. Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 20th October 2012 at 2.30pm
The meeting closed at 4.31.