

Minutes of GMC Meeting, 10.00am Saturday 18th October 2014 at Stowupland Church Hall

Present: Alan Stanley (Chairman), Ruth Munnings (Minute Taker), Winston Girling (Chairman, BAC), Ralph Earey, Tom Scase, Robert Scase, Sally Munnings, Peter Harper, Brian Hale, Derek Rose, David Smith, Philip Gorrod, Trevor Hughes, Jason Busby, Neal Dodge and David Steed.

1. Welcome: The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and with the Secretary absent requested someone to take the minutes. Ruth Munnings volunteered to take the minutes for this meeting.

2. Apologies: Apologies were received from Mandy Shedden (Secretary), Gordon Slack (Treasurer), Jed Flatters (Ringing Master) and Jonathan Stevens.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15th June 2014, had been circulated prior to the meeting. The meeting agreed these to be a true record subject to the following corrections.

- i) In regards to the subject of Little Cornard, Neil Dodge had not sent an email on this subject.
- ii) The final sentence of the AGM Review, DG has been changed to PG, and RE has been omitted.
- iii) MJ changed to MS in final sentence of Restoration Fund report.
- iv) Date of February 2015 meeting should read Saturday 14th, not 16th.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes: The Technical Advisor addressed the meeting with regards to work done at Little Cornard. The Technical Advisor, John Taylor and Derek Rose have done work making a pulley so that a bell could be used for chiming at a commemoration service for the First World War. It is hoped that the bells may be restored in the future.

5. Sub-Committee Reports:

- i) **Belfry Advisory Committee:** The Technical Advisor had previously circulated his report for members to read. In addition to this, the Technical Advisor told the meeting that reports done by Ranald Clouston had now been digitised at a cost of £411, whereby copies can now be made. The Technical Advisor suggested that these should not be published on the Guild website due to recent theft of bells from Little Saxham, and a break in at Dalham Church. The Chairman suggested that one of the two pen drives that contains the reports should be put in the Guild Library. The meeting agreed with this proposal, and the Technical Advisor will see that the Guild Librarian has a pen drive for the Library. Ralph Earey stated that work at St Nicholas, Ipswich, had been done by Neville Whittell many years ago, and that the report seemed to suggest this work was done recently. The Technical Advisor agreed with this, and the wording will be amended.

The Technical Advisor said that as there has been no request for an inspection at St Nicholas from the Church, it would not be possible to proceed with advice or suggestions for improvements here. Ralph Earey said that he had been in contact with Stephen Pettman, and that he would go and look at the bells to see if any work is required. Ralph said that he would contact Stephen to see when this might be done. Philip Gorrod put it to the meeting that there are several towers across the Guild that were rung regularly for peals and quarter peals, but did not have a regular band of its own to assist in maintaining the ropes and bells at these towers. He wondered if the Guild thought that it would be advantageous to help with maintaining these bells. The Chairman agreed that this was a good idea in theory, and perhaps the Technical Advisor could ask District Technical Advisors to identify specific towers who meet this criteria. The Technical Advisor agreed, and would take this proposal back to the Committee for discussion.

- ii) **Recruitment and Training:** Tom Scase stated that there had been one meeting since the last GMC meeting, and given only a few R&T committee members were able/prepared to meet up, a second meeting had been cancelled. Communication was being conducted for the time being, at least, via email.

6. Ringing Master's Report: The Ringing Master's report, previously circulated, was read in his absence by the Chairman, as below:

We again entered a guild team in the Ridgman Trophy held at Coggeshall where we placed a decent 5th place ringing an interesting touch of Stedman caters. Next years competition is likely to be at Wisbeach with Cambridge Royal the test piece.

I helped to judge the Essex assn. six bell comp. with David Potts, a hard afternoon with some 12 teams ringing 240 changes, then after a quick tea and results judged 6 teams ringing a course of Cambridge SM. Both of us were absolutely shattered after so much intense concentration. Happily we agreed on the result and were not chased away so I know we picked the right teams as winners.

I have spoken to people about the format of our striking competitions and suggest a slightly altered formula for 2015 with the 6 bell comp. taking place in the morning and early afternoon followed by a late lunch and results with a break before the 8 bell comp. at about 4 pm to allow for overruns.

I went over to Rattlesden to see work in progress and ended up spending several days with the labour gang, seeing the grouting done to specification and helping get the bells rigged out. I also attended test ring with Winston where we checked over everything and agreed to sign the job off for our guild grant. I was really surprised with how good these bells now sound after limited tuning. I also gave a talk to villagers on bells and bellfounding as part of their Heritage Lottery grant requirement, Ruth Suggett of Bardwell assisted giving feed back to HLF as required in their paperwork.

In August Abby Antrobus (Guild Librarian) Rowan my wife and I set out on our Centenary Celebration to cycle and ring around the Diocesan border, we were well supported at most towers with good turnouts of ringers from Hollesley and the SW district at St. Peter's Sudbury and with good help throughout the week from Ipswich ringers. Statistics are given on the web site and an article will I hope appear in our next guild magazine. Thanks to all tower captains and ringers for your help.

The Guild social held at Hadleigh looked for a while that it might be a non event but in the end Richard Finch managed to drum up fair support and we enjoyed a good evening in the fantastic Guild Hall tucking in to a barbeque and good beer then wracking our brains on a bell related quiz set by Richard Gates.

The District general meetings are now upon us and I hope to attend the NW district meeting on Saturday at Stowmarket , I hope to attend those of the other three districts as they fall.

7. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer had previously circulated his report for the meeting, reproduced below There were no matters arising from the report.

General Fund

As in my last report for the June meeting, subscription income is still noticeably down on this time last year, especially in the SE District, although I know the SE Treasurer has been sending specific reminders to relevant towers, so the position may improve. There has been no unusual General Fund expenditure.

Restoration Fund

The sum now available for allocation to new projects stands at £43,100. Since the last meeting, grants have been paid to Thelnetham (£185), Thurston (£500) and Rattlesden (£6,000). The amount reserved for grants allocated to projects still in progress stands at just under £18,750.

The Guild Social organized by the SW district made a profit of £157.50 on ticket sales which has gone to the Bell Restoration Fund. In addition, the raffle and further donations raised a sum of £169 which is being donated to the Christchurch Cathedral Transitional Ringing Facility in New Zealand. This was a tremendous achievement by the District as the event appeared to be heading for a loss at one time. I would like to thank publicly the Hadleigh ringers and the District for their hard work in making this such a successful event, both financially and socially.

As discussed at the last meeting, I have signed up to register the Guild for the "Give as You Live" charitable scheme. They are currently going through the formalities of registration and I hope to publicise the initiative in the near future.

8. Applications for Grants: There was only one grant application, from Stowmarket seeking approval from the meeting. The BAC proposed that the grant previously approved for £500 be

increased to £700 to offset additional expenditure on the back four bells. This was proposed by David Steed, and carried by the meeting.

9. Ratification of Non Resident Life Members: Christine Knight has put forward two non resident life members for ratification; Laura Davies and George Vant. These members were proposed by Derek Rose and Seconded by David Smith. This was carried by the meeting.

10. Succession Planning: The Chairman reminded the meeting that at the next AGM the posts of Secretary and Treasurer would need to be filled. Philip Gorrod will be speaking to a possible candidate for the role of Treasurer, and will report back to the meeting with the outcome. The Chairman has been speaking to possible candidates for the position of Secretary, but without any definite progress. The Chairman is intending to attend the annual District meetings to remind Guild members to think about successors for these jobs.

11. Porch Notices: Ralph Earey contacted the Chairman with regards to out of date contact information for tower correspondents displayed in churches. Ralph wondered whether it would be advantageous to send an email to Guild members to check this information with a view to update or remove incorrect information. The Technical Advisor suggested that perhaps the current outdated information could be replaced by the Central Council posters available from their website. Ralph Earey will send an email to the Guild Webmaster to distribute to all Guild members advising to remove outdated information and replace it with the Central Council's coloured poster.

12. AGM Planning: The AGM in 2015 is to be held in the South East District. Plans so far have been looking into holding the meeting at Felixstowe, and will include displaying George Pipe's ringing memorabilia instead of holding a 'fringe' meeting. It has become apparent that it may not be practical to hold the meeting there, and the District is looking into finding an alternative location for the meeting. Ralph Earey will report back to the Chairman following the South East District committee meeting on Sunday 26th October.

13(a). Youth Ringing: Neal Dodge reported that there were young ringers practices arranged up until March, with Sunday afternoons being the most preferable time for practices. It is probable that the Guild will be able to enter a team in the Ringing World National Youth Competition next year. All details of practices and upcoming events can be found on the Guild website.

Philip Gorrod asked how we could encourage young ringers who did not yet attend the young ringers practices. Ralph Earey referred to feedback from the previous GMC, and that practices would aim to go to areas where young ringers are, and encourage them to join in with the hope that they feel confident to attend regular events. Neal Dodge confirmed that selection of venue to encourage wider participation will continue. The Technical Advisor praised all that the young ringers had done, and said it was wonderful to have so many enthusiastic and talented ringers being encouraged by others. The Chairman reiterated this, but also reminded the meeting not to become complacent about this current situation, and must continue with this ongoing support.

13(b). Funding Ringing Training: Following the AGM review at the previous GMC, Philip Gorrod, Ralph Earey and The Treasurer would look at how the Guild might fund training now and in the future. A resulting discussion document was distributed by Philip and presented by Ralph Eary. It is reproduced as Attachment A to these minutes. Discussions started with regards to how funds would be distributed, who would be eligible and how would we gain extra revenue to continue to fund training. Ideas put forward included raising peal fees, raising subscription rates and to encourage Guild members to use gift aid where possible. Members of the meeting should contact Philip Gorrod, Ralph Earey or the Treasurer with possible suggestions of what may constitute suitable criteria for Guild funding for training purposes, and comments on other aspects. This should be done by the next meeting in February So that it can be finalised ahead of the Guild AGM in April .

14. AOB

14(a). Fifty Year Membership Peter Harper has had a good response from members with over fifty years Guild membership. Thanks must also go to Neal Dodge for submitting past Annual Reports for the Guild website, and to David Salter for his assistance in this research. At present, the information is almost up to date. Peter has also approached Mary Garner to produce certificates for these members, which would be presented at the Guild AGM. The Chairman thanked Peter for all his hard work, and will be a positive addition to the AGM.

14(b). Restoration Projects Delays The Chairman, BAC reported that he had a letter published in The Ringing World this week (17th October 2014) with regards to heritage organisations restricting restoration projects. He advised that St Mary at Quay, Ipswich and Redgrave have come across these problems with having to retain their existing frames.

14(c). NDA Commemoration Service The Chairman has been contacted by The Norwich Diocesan Association about an upcoming service to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of The First World War. This will take place at Watton Church on Sunday 2nd November at 3.30pm. Members from the Guild have been invited to attend the service if they wish, and should contact Bridget Yates (01362 860835 or bridget.yates@tiscali.co.uk) if you will be at the service. The Chairman will send the details to the Webmaster to circulate, and to put on the website.

14(d). Vulnerable Bells Neal Dodge enquired whether the Guild should contact churches with vulnerable bells to make them aware of recent thefts in the County. There were discussions amongst the meeting whether it was within the remit of the Guild to make churches aware of this, or should we as a Guild raise awareness of how valuable the bells really are. Derek Rose stated that crime prevention schemes typically make churches aware of thefts in the local area.

14(e). Publication of Minutes Neal Dodge asked if minutes from all meetings could be made available as soon as possible, so that Guild members are fully aware of what is being discussed at meetings, and that information can become outdated easily, in particular the conditions of bells in the Guild. The Technical Advisor stated that there had been no amendments to the conditions of bells in the past year, but would look at updating these records. The Chairman

agreed that with respect to minutes and other records it was important we maintain full transparency and openness within the Guild, and the website is an excellent platform for maintaining this.

14(f). AGM Photograph Neal Dodge suggested having a group photo taken at the next Guild AGM. Ralph Earey agreed that this would be an excellent idea, and suggested Peter Davies (ringer at St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich) to take the photo, having taken a very successful photo of the St Mary-le-Tower band recently. Ralph agreed to approach Peter Davies. Trevor Hughes suggested that the photo should have all of the names of members on the photo as a record of the day. The Chairman agreed that this would be a good motivation for members to attend the meeting.

15. Date of Next Meeting: February 2015 Stowupland Church Hall 2pm date to be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked Ruth Munnings for her help in taking the minutes.

The meeting closed at 12pm.

Attachment A

The 'Funding Ringing Training' discussion document presented to the meeting

Funding Ringing Training

Introduction

At the June 2014 meeting of the GMC, Gordon Slack, Philip Gorrod and Ralph Earey agreed to consider the position the Guild was in with regard to funding the training of ringers. For example, what resources were needed and what were available? Should we have a separate fund and would this need a change to the Constitution?

Broad Conclusions

Requests for assistance might include some of the following

- Help with costs to attend a ringing school or course
- Financing a prize for a competition to encourage Young Ringers (Suffolk Young Ringer of the Year competition?)
- Training days - venue, provision of professional equipment, training materials, travelling expenses for a guest speaker, etc.
- Subsidising attendance and entrance to the RWNYC
- Supporting a national/regional ringing school/scheme (ITTS, etc.)
- Sponsoring tutors and mentors through an accredited training scheme (e.g. ITTS)
- Simulators

How might requests be funded?

The General Fund has a current balance of around £5,500 and current policies and subscriptions will maintain this balance, other than for items of one-off expenditure. We could afford to use perhaps half this money from the General Fund (directly or through transfer to a different fund) before we would need to consider an increase in subscriptions.

The Pipe Fund was largely dormant for a few years, but has recently been invaluable in helping fund our Youth Team. The Fund had a balance of £200 at the beginning of this year until a generous top-up was received. The current balance is around £650. One option which might be considered is to use the Pipe Fund to support ringing training and (subject to permission from the Pipe family) to support the fund from the Guild in addition to relying on donations from the family.

The unallocated portion of the Bell Restoration Fund (BRF) stands at around £43,000. Requests to the BRF have been very low recently although this year has bucked the trend with requests for nearly £24,000 being approved. There is a feeling amongst some Guild members that the balance of expenditure could shift a little from restoration to training.

The Guild Constitution allows the GMC to alter the proportion of subscriptions and peal fees which are transferred to the BRF (currently 50%) and to set up and transfer money to further funds, provided these funds meet the objects of the Guild (which a Training Fund would do).

It is questionable whether simulators should be funded from the BRF. Certainly grant conditions and rules are likely to be different from those for restoration and with the relatively low cost, a higher proportion of this cost (e.g. 25%) might be offered.

Recommendations

In the short term, we are unsure of the likely demand for funding for training and we do have existing resources in the General Fund and the Pipe Fund to meet reasonable requests.

We should publish more broadly the availability of this funding to counteract the notion that the Guild is prepared to fund restoration but not training. This could be done through the website, the magazine and social media linked with the Guild. There may be a case for drawing up guidelines about what we would fund. This would encourage suitable requests and ensure that ringers aren't just given a "free lunch" but are expected to make a commitment of their own in addition.

In the longer term, we may need to set up a specific fund for training or extend the Pipe Fund. This would not require a change to the constitution but could result in an increase in subscriptions if demand is sufficiently great.

The success of training days in years gone by was noted and perhaps the Recruitment and Training Committee might review the usefulness of such training for the future.

October 2014