

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes for General Management Committee

15th October 2005, Buxhall Village Hall

Present: Winston Girling (chairman), Mary Garner (secretary), Keith Ashton-Jones (treasurer), Ian Harris, Trevor Hughes, Jonathan Stevens, John Taylor, Richard Gates, Rolie Whiting, Richard Knight, Carl Melville, Carol Girling (observing)

Welcome:

Winston opened the meeting and welcomed Carl Melville as the representative for Stowmarket Deanery in the NW district.

1. **Apologies** were received from John Pereira, David Mulrenan, Robert Scase, Maurice Rose, David Salter (master),
2. **The minutes** of the GMC meeting held on 18th June 2005 were agreed and signed.

3. Matters arising from those minutes

- (i) **Badges** The secretary said that new badges had arrived and were available from her.
- (ii) **Venue** The Hall at the Chapel at Old Newton is booked for the coming three meetings. Not only will this be cheaper but there is good heating and facilities are available for making drinks.
- (iii) **Peal Fees** It was reported that the apparent discrepancy for the previous year had been sorted out and the situation clarified.

Considerable discussion followed regarding the collection of peal fees. At present most are sent in at the end of the calendar year, often making it difficult to attribute fees to particular peals. The meeting agreed that it would be beneficial to both the Guild and the Peal Secretary for fees to be submitted within a short time of the ringing. The Peal Secretary will be asked to draw up a proposal for the next meeting for possible submission to the AGM as a rule change.

Extended discussion about claiming expenses concluded that the guild executive should be asked to draw up clear guidelines for the reimbursement of expenses. The following proposal was made: "No expenses should be reimbursed without documentary evidence." Proposed James Smith, seconded by Jonathan Stevens and carried unanimously.

4. Correspondence

The Summer Newsletter from SAFE (Safer Activities For Everyone) had been received.

John Barnes (CCCBR Restoration Committee) had e-mailed to ensure that all those towers wishing to apply for grants would have done so by 5th October.

5. Financial Report

The Treasurer reported that income matches expenditure and that the balance in the General Fund is about £4500, as at January 1st. No major expense is foreseen before the end of December. Further, he reported that subscriptions stand at 95% of last year's level, Peal Fees at two thirds and advertising income at 75%. The balance in the Restoration Fund is £15000.

It was reported that Leonard Sidney Sharpe of Ixworth had left the residue of his estate to the Suffolk Guild and that this amounted to almost £33000. This had been placed in a high income account, awaiting a decision from the Guild as to how it should be administered.

A full discussion followed this announcement and the following ideas were put forward.

1. Invest the capital and live of the interest, c £1500, in future years, possibly splitting it between the Restoration and General Funds, the latter to cushion any increase in subscription rates for a while.
2. As above but reinvest 1-3% to aid growth.
3. Combine with the Jubilee Fund and use for Restoration.
4. Spend on a single project, since even with interest the money will lose its purchasing value.
5. Spend on a project in each district.

The Guild's position with regard to its Charity status was brought to the attention of the meeting; ie. the Guild is allowed to raise money and spend it, but not hold it. By keeping it we might jeopardise our Charity Status.

The meeting decided that the following course of action should be adopted:

- a) The Newsletter should publish the news of the bequest and invite any suggestions for projects from members,
- b) discussion should take place at the forthcoming ADMs (acknowledging that the NW had already passed).

A subcommittee will be formed at the February meeting to distil the feedback from the membership so that choices can be put to the AGM in April. The secretary will write to each district secretary and ask for returns to be made following the ADM.

6. Insurance A subcommittee chaired by the Treasurer was formed to investigate the various options available when the policy is due for renewal in May. James Smith agreed to serve and initially to seek advice from Kate Flavell at Central Council. David Salter will be invited to serve. (Action WG)

7. Subscriptions by Standing Order (see attached report)

The Treasurer was thanked by Richard Knight for producing such a comprehensive report regarding the possibility of paying subscriptions by standing order. The Treasurer's advice was that it would not be practical on a membership wide scale.

The discussion which followed concerned individual payments by standing order which the treasurer said were possible to deal with providing they could be easily identified. It was felt that collecting subscriptions from individual members was a valuable time to contact and talk to people. Richard Knight proposed that "the Guild does not go ahead with collecting subscriptions by standing order." This was seconded by Richard Gates and passed unanimously.

8. Guild Cheques

The Treasurer explained that the funds on deposit are held by the CCLA and that they require two signatures for every transaction. Most are for paying in but some are for transferring funds. The CCLA will only transfer funds to the Guild current account and then a cheque, needing two signatures, will be drawn on the account. This means collecting two signatures twice in order to pay a bill or grant usually towards restoration.

The ensuing discussion considered setting a limit to such transactions at £1000, although this would rarely be sufficient to pay a bell hanger say. Also the safety of the funds was discussed, but as the CCLA would only transfer to the current account this was considered a sufficient safeguard.

The Treasurer made the following proposal. "Unlimited funds should be transferable from the CCLA account to the designated current account with one signature." Seconded by James Smith and carried by the meeting.

It was suggested that an alternative deposit account might be considered if the CCLA still required two signatures.

9. Ringing Master's report

Training Day

Eight students took part in the Training Day and there had been the usual difficulty in getting helpers. However all seemed to go well, but the use of Harkstead proved trying for the poor handlers. David Salter said that we must try and have some kind of promotion to promote good handling. He thanked Winston for organising an Officers peal at Stowmarket on October 2nd.

10. Sub-committee reports: i. Belfry Advisory committee

Winston read the minutes on the meeting held at St Botolph, Iken on 7th October.

From the NE it was reported that Leiston is out of action for 6 months whilst work is carried out in the church, that Wingfield are considering installing a ringing gallery, that Barsham was experiencing difficulties exacerbated by the bells being hung in an old wooden frame at the top of a slender tower. Re-hanging in a steel frame lower in the tower was seen as the only solution.

In the NW Eayre and Smith have been back to Thurston with a view to curing the problems with 4 and 5 slipping the wheels. It is planned to install sound proofing on the bell chamber floor. At Ixworth the PCC have given permission for quotes to be sought for a re-hang in the old wooden frame.

At Framsdon and Stonham Aspal in the SE worrying movement in the wooden frames was reported. Work on the clappers at Stonham Aspal is to be carried out shortly, whilst at Framsdon there is decay to frame uprights adjacent to the tenor and the tenor headstock is badly decayed and the gudgeons on all the bells show signs of severe wear.

At Monks Eleigh in the SW it was reported that work needs to be done on the second.

Comments from the GMC supported the difficulties with the tenor in particular, at Barsham.

Winston said that he would arrange to check out Stonham Aspal and Framsdan with a band ringing. The bells at Parham were removed during the week prior to the meeting. The tenor for Rushmere is a new bell which has been cast and the dedication will hopefully take place in December. It was reported that nothing had happened at All Saints Sudbury, no site meeting had taken place. Richard Gates agreed to set up a site meeting. It was noted that the situation is not being helped by an interregnum.

ii. Recruitment and training

No further information was available following the Training Day in September.

11. Applications for grants.

Woolpit An application had been received for a grant towards the hanging of a newly cast chiming bell. It is hung above the others without a wheel. It is anticipated that the tower will be augmented to 8 in the future and that this bell will become the treble.

Discussion followed and the following proposal was tabled. "The GMC will give favourable consideration to a grant application for the augmentation, when this occurs." Proposed Richard Knight, seconded by Trevor Hughes and carried with the agreement of the meeting.

12. Ratification of NRLM

Pat Lubbock of Mandurah, Australia at a peal at St Mary-le-Tower in July. The ratification was proposed by James Smith and seconded by Jonathan Stevens.

13. Bowells of Ipswich A report from Guild Librarian

Following a considerable amount of work done by Chris Pickford on conserving the rescued records of Bowell of Ipswich he has put the material on to CD. The CDs are being sold at £25 each with 50% of the profits coming to the Suffolk Guild. Once his costs have been recovered the Guild will benefit from an increased percentage. Currently £116 has been raised for the Suffolk Guild. The Librarian has written and thanked him.

An advert has appeared in the Ringing World and one will be placed in the Newsletter.

14. Any other business

a) Guild 8 bell Striking Competition

It was suggested that the Guild might like to consider bringing the rules for the 8 bell striking competition in line with the six bell, so that it would be possible to ring in more than one band. It was felt that this would allow a greater number of people overall to take part.

Discussion followed which considered that the opposite might happen. A knockout competition was also mentioned. This took place in some Guilds at practices and was a way of generating more interest and enthusiasm.

Winston said that he would talk to David Salter and ask him to liaise with Jonathan Stevens to make a proposal at the February meeting which could be taken to the AGM.

b) Peal Fees and Donations. James Smith asked the Treasurer to look at the peal fees to see they are treated as donations and thus could be gift-aided.

c) Guild Songs of Praise. This idea was floated by the Chairman who asked whether it might be appropriate as a service at the AGM. Some discussion followed. Knowing that preparations are all ready under was it was felt that this could be considered later next year.

d) Disappointment was expressed that the Ringing Master was not present at the second meeting running.

e) It was felt that Alan Moulton, despite not being a committee member, should be invited to attend the GMC since much of the business related directly to maintenance and restoration. The secretary will write and issue an official invitation to the GMC meetings.

d) AGM Bury St Edmunds April 22nd 2006

The proposed format would allow for ringing until 5.25, followed by Evensong in the Cathedral, followed by tea and meeting in the room above the Refectory. Afterwards ringing could continue until 8.30pm.

15. Date of next meeting, 18th February 2006 at Methodist Chapel in Old Newton at 6pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

Please notify the secretary of any additional items for the agenda in writing by 18th January 2006.
Thanks