

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Minutes of General Management Committee Meeting on Saturday 20th February 2010 at 10am in Stowupland Church Hall.

Present: Philip Gorrod (Chairman), Richard Munnings (Ringing Master), Keith Ashton Jones (Treasurer), Mary Garner (Secretary), Jonathan Stevens (BAC Chairman), Jason Busby (NE Halesworth), Trevor Hughes (NE Hoxne), Julie Rapior (NE Saxmundham), Alan Stanley (NW Hartismere), Brian Hale (NW Ixworth), Marion Turner (NW Mildenhall), David Steed (NW Stowmarket), Maurice Rose (NW Thingoe), Revd Brian Redgers (SE Bosmere), Peter Harper (SE Colneys), Kate Eagle (SE Woodbridge), Derek Rose (SW Sudbury), Sue Freeman (SW Hadleigh), Richard Knight (SW Clare), John Smith (For Stefan Labedzki SW Lavenham), Bruce Wakefield (PRO), Diane Pipe (for Sally Munnings SE Ipswich). in attendance Gillian Wakefield (Librarian.)

Apologies: Sally Munnings (Ipswich), Robert Scase (SE Loes),

1. Welcome

PJG gave a warm welcome to the new members, Julie Rapior and Brian Redgers.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 17th October 2009 – previously circulated.

Amendments discussed and the revised minutes accepted and signed.

3. Sub-committee reports:

i. Belfry Advisory Committee

Jonathan presented the BAC report below:

“The BAC team has been busy as usual. At our meeting at Hacheston on the 4th of this month, work at twenty or so towers was recorded. In addition as this meeting knows, we are running maintenance training sessions for both the North West and North East districts.

Correspondence with the Morton Partnership on how projects are managed and the Guild input was discussed; the problems at Fressingfield, where the Guild was held at arms length, being highlighted.

The BAC agreed that its minutes should be shared with James Halsall, Secretary to the DAC, so that he at least is aware of our work and of the problems that occur during and after the DAC’s involvement with bell and tower projects.

I’ve been invited to take a session on Bells, Towers and Ringing as part of a group of Norfolk Church Architects’ CPD, early in March.

We are planning a seminar for Suffolk Church Architects and the DAC on Bells, Frames and Tower Acoustics to be held in the Autumn.

I would remind everyone that the approved minutes of our meetings are posted on the Guild Website, so anyone can peruse them and that the grant conditions and grant protocol are there as well.”

There being no questions on his report, JJS announced that the next Maintenance Training session will be on 11th May at Rougham from 10am; theory in the morning, practical in the afternoon.

ii. Recruitment and training

RJM reported that he was in consultation with Alan McBurnie and said that a meeting should have taken place by the July GMC.

PJG stressed that he is very keen that this aspect progresses, and will be taking appropriate action if there is nothing to report in July.

4. Applications for grants. Norman Tower.

JJS told the meeting that the request from the Norman Tower arrived after the recent BAC. He has looked at the proposals which show a plan to augment to 12 with a sharp 2nd which result in a light eight as well as a twelve. They have three quotes and have decided to accept Hayward Mills, now John Taylor. The augmentation will not interfere with the existing ten. The budget for the project is £40 000.

JJS suggested a grant of £4000 should be offered, feeling that early support is important.

PJG explained that he had received a letter and that the initiative had come from the Cathedral Chapter. Neil Collings, the Dean recently retired through ill health, was keen that there should be a twelve.

Considerable discussion followed covering the following points:

- High profile project which should enable funds to be raised relatively easily.
- The situation should too many funds be raised
- Precedent set by awarding a grant for augmentation alone rather than restoration
- The Guild should support the mother Church of the Diocese
- Good PR for the Guild by supporting such a project.
- BAC had been approached individually due to timescale and only positive comments had been received.
- A light eight will be useful but it is often a struggle to meet enough to ring the ten.

Brian Redgers proposed, seconded by Richard Munnings that a grant of £4000 should be offered. This was carried with one against. **Action: MSG**

5. Ringing Master's report

RJM reported that Guild Peal Week had been very successful. 12 peals were scored with only 4 lost. There were 13 different conductors, 2 conducting their first. And they were rung in 15 towers

On St Edmunds Day, 20th November, 5 peals and 2 quarters were rung, and good coverage of the Guild activities from Radio Suffolk. He reported further publicity from a TV documentary about Brian Eno who grew up in Woodbridge. It featured the town and the bellringers.

He reported that 131 peals were rung last year and that 24 had already (by 20th Feb) been rung this year. A great many quarter peals were rung.

Since the October meeting there have been dedications at Dennington and Wissett.

Questions and comments were invited. Ringing for St George's Day was discussed and it was agreed that the mini ring should be used in a public place. **Action: RJM**

MJR added his congratulations to Louis Suggett for composing and conducting two peals recently.

6. Financial Report

The Treasurer reported that the accounts for 2009 were with the Examiner. He further reported that the running expenses for 2009 were comfortably within the General Fund income and that £32,000 was available in the Restoration Fund from which to make grants.

He proposed that there be no change to subscriptions for 2011, but that with potential increases in expenses an increase would need to be considered this time next year.

It was noted that the grant awarded to Gislingham had been returned following lengthy discussion and correspondence.

PJG thanked KAJ for his report.

7. Ratification of NRLM

The following were presented as NRLMs and duly ratified:

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|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Lesley A Knipe, | 2. Jeffrey Knipe | 3. Christopher R Field | 4. Elizabeth S Clarke |
| 5. Val A Andrews | 6. Dinah M Rhymer | 7. Emma Humphrey | 8. Richard L Taylor |
| 9. James E Andrews | 10. Victoria J M Wilby | 11. Elizabeth A Hibbert | 12. Philippa M Whittington |
| 13. Andrew V Brown | 14. William A Hibbert | 15. Judy A Howard | |

8. Report and Handbook 2010

It was reported that the Handbook was ready to go to the printers and just needed the GMC to accept the quotation from EAM, £1528.00 for 950 copies.

There was some discussion regarding the numbers for a membership of 760, but accepted when Affiliated Towers were considered and new members amounted to between 50 and 80 a year, not forgetting those sold following requests from outside the Guild. **Action: MSG**

9. Vice Presidents and Life Honorary Members

PJG explained that each ADM had discussed the position of Vice Presidents and Life Honorary Members and there had broad agreement across the districts. Some discussion followed including giving the same status to VPs as enjoyed by LHMs.

The following proposal was put from the chair:

“That the Constitution be changed to reflect that, in respect of clause 6.3, VPs elected before 2010 shall hold office for life and shall not be required to pay a subscription, and that no further VPs shall be elected.”

This was carried with 17 for and 1 abstention.

10. AGM (i) Arrangements

2.30-3.30 **Seminar** at Bardwell Village Hall Stuart Hobley from Heritage Lottery Fund, James Halsall from the DAC and Jonathan Stevens Guild Technical Officer

It was explained that this short seminar was aimed at anyone, clergy, churchwardens & PCC members, where the parish was remotely interested in doing up bells and/or the church. It has been advertised through Diocesan channels, possibly the East Anglican (article in April edition). Invitation to clergy churchwardens etc In addition is it's an opportunity for the Guild to be seen encouraging whole church restoration.

2.30-3.30 Towers en route open for ringing (Gislingham and Pakenham)

3-3.45 Bardwell Tower Open for Ringing

4.00 Service Ringing at Ixworth

4.30 Service at Ixworth

5pm Tea in Ixworth Village Hall

5.45 approx Meeting

Evening ringing at Ixworth until 9pm

(ii) Officers

Both the **Secretary** and the **Treasurer** have reached the end of their terms of office. PJG thanked them for the work they had done over the past years. PJG told the meeting that Gordon Slack was prepared to stand as Treasurer and Mandy Shedden as Secretary.

The **Librarian** too is not standing for re election.

The Chair said that he would approach members asking them to stand for the various officer posts prior to the AGM.

It was noted that a change to the constitution would be need to accommodate a Child Protection Officer and Mini Ring Trustee.

Action: PJG, MSG

Central Council Reps:

PJG explained that 2010 being the last year of the triennium for the CC reps, elections need to take place at this AGM to take effect from 2011.

Whilst RJM is happy to continue he is not able to contribute to committees where the most interesting work is done. The other reps have all served on committees in the past.

Whilst reports have been written for the website in the past, it was the feeling of the meeting that it did not have much understanding of the role of the reps and how the CC worked. It was good to meet ringers from around the country, but the AGM itself was a not very lively business meeting. The number of reps (currently 4) was discussed - perhaps we could be represented by just one at the CCCBR AGM, also considered was representation at the GMC.

It was decided to invite the CC reps to July GMC

Action MSG

PJG will contact current reps and ensure that there are members willing to stand for election at the AGM.

Action PJG

(iii) Library

The secretary reported that she had heard from the Canon Theologian about the Diocesan library and that it would not be possible to house the library at the Cathedral. However the Bury RO have expressed a positive interest in housing the library as a complement to Ranald Clouston's papers. A meeting will be set up with the Archivist, the Office Manager, GW and a representative of the GMC, (MSG).

Already discussed were the restrictions expressed about access before the collection was fully catalogued and it had been clarified that any papers were available for consultation by appointment even if uncatalogued.

GW reminded the GMC that The Bowell Papers are on long term long loan and housed at the Ipswich RO. She told the meeting that the collection had been valued at £11863 in 2008. She said that the most valuable items had been valued individually with some books worth several hundred pounds each, whilst the two handbells had been valued with the larger at £1250 and the smaller at £420. In addition to the books are papers from past ringers, photographs, 66 years of the Ringing World, and various media items.

She explained that during her 16 years the collection has grown. She has collected the What's On each month, the Guild Newsletters and the Reports for each year.

GW further informed the meeting that she received enquiries from home and abroad, averaging between 10 and 15 a year.

Discussion followed, including asking the Handbell Trustee if he could house the handbells and possible places for the Ringing Worlds.

The Librarian appointed at the AGM would ideally be someone with an interest in books who would be able to access the Bury RO quite easily. Abby Antrobus would be asked if she was interested.

Action: MJR

It was agreed to set up a meeting at the Bury RO.

Action: MSG

(Since the February meeting, GW and MSG have had a meeting at Bury RO, the media items have been deposited for conservation by the East Anglian Film Archive, the remainder will be deposited on long term loan by the AGM. Abby Antrobus has agreed to stand as Librarian)

(iv) Constitution and Rule Changes

Covered above

(v) Life Honorary Members for proposal by districts

None were brought to the meeting.

11. Guild Newsletter

PJG reminded the GMC that a working party was set up, following the last meeting, to investigate the way forward for a Guild Magazine. A very productive meeting took place with Carol Girling, Jonathan Stevens, Philip Gorrod, Alan Stanley and Sue Freeman. Bearing in mind that the feeling of the membership was that a hard copy was appreciated in towers the meeting was to address a change of emphasis from news towards a journal, to move away from any competition with the website, Campanophile or The Ringing World. It was felt unfair to have one person producing it and Sue, Alan and Carol co-opted Richard Gates to a committee. AS circulated a handout showing a new image, explaining the plan to include regular features and to commission articles. It will always be dependent on getting copy from the members. It is intended to have colour on every page. In the first edition a small prize will be offered for a new name.

The print run for the "Newsletter" is 350 at a cost £90 plus £20 for circulation. Various printers had been approached, the best value being Polstead Press in Stowmarket.

The committee was now looking for approval and an idea about circulation, also looking forward, someone to sell advertising. It was noted that advertising could be sold if the print run were at least 750. Until now there have been four copies a year and there is no problem in filling 16 pages.

Discussion followed indicating general approval of the new magazine, expressing thanks to the committee for their progress so far, considering the number of copies per year, size of the print run, people to whom it should be circulated. Should the copy be put on the website?

The Treasurer was also enthusiastic about the concept but warned that the additional cost would amount to about a 20% rise in administrative costs which next year would probably need to be passed to the membership, about £1 per head.

It was pointed out that ultimately it would add value to the membership so a subscription rise would be acceptable in the longer term.

It was decided that the first run would be 500 and would be circulated as widely as possible, to include members, clergy, churchwardens, the body of the church in addition to ringing chambers etc. The aim should be for three copies in the first year. The first edition will contain a competition for a snappy title. Feedback will be asked for at the AGM.

12. Guild Social

PJG announced that the next Guild Social would take place on 20th November in the NE District. It will start mid afternoon with ringing in four towers in the Beccles and Bungay area followed by a quiz evening at Ringsfield Village Hall, including a meal. Tickets from Julie Rapior, £7.50 each, to cover the cost of the meal, tower donations etc. nb There will be a ringing round!

13 Mini Ring update

It's has been well used. It is expected that the new one will be delivered by the end of April, Bishop Nigel will dedicate it in the Cathedral, hopefully towards the end of May or in June during a Sunday evensong. The ring put in place after the morning service.

14. Display boards

It was decided that two advertising banners (collapsible free standing “boards”) will be purchased to be used alongside the ring when it is used in public places. These will give information about the Suffolk Guild of Ringers, learning to ring and tower bell ringing. The boards will be similar to those in Bardwell and Chediston and a small group will be set up to facilitate this. **Action: MSG**

15. Any other matters arising

(i) JJS reminded the GMC of the project he was undertaking to test the effectiveness of sound control which involved taking readings before and after its fitting, the results to be shared with the CCCBR and the DAC. He reported in October that he was about to collect readings from Campsea Ashe, but was disappointed to report they had withdrawn their permission.

He added that nothing else suitable was available at present. (Hopton is about to start but is not suitable)

(ii) The handbell peal did not take place in Tower Ramparts but touches were rung and thanks were recorded to Brian Whiting, Adrian Knights and David Stanford.

16. Correspondence

The secretary reported that she had received 3 report requests since Christmas, a request for subs for our CCCBR delegates and an invitation to take part in Essex 10 Bell at Coggleshall on 11th Sept.

17. Any other business.

(i) It was noted that the Insurance summaries in towers showed a date of 2006. Please could they be updated. **Action:MSG**

(ii) The secretary apologised for the lack of diary inserts and said she would circulate them via email correspondents **Action:MSG**

(iii) Should the grant conditions reduce the number of peals from 3 monthly intervals? It was pointed out that this was a guide as to what was reasonable and not mandatory.

(iv) Concern was expressed about the election of new members, citing the occasion of a recent meeting where a newly elected member took part in a district practice and clearly was unable to handle a bell safely.

Discussion followed expressing particular concern about judgement for proposing learners for membership and the position with regard to Guild Insurance.

PJG said that he would write to District Chairmen, strongly suggesting that the district ringing master or somebody independent sees prospective new members ringing prior to their proposal. He would also stress membership forms should be completed before their election. **Action:PJG**

(v) MJR thanked GW MSG and KAJ for their service to the Guild over the past years.

18. Date of next meeting, Saturday 17th July at 6pm