

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT CRANBROOK

Easter Monday 17th April 2017

(Subject to adoption by the AGM to be held in the Ashford District in 2018)

The meeting was hosted by the Tonbridge District. The service was held in the parish church of St Dunstan, Cranbrook and attended by members and friends. 6 towers were open before the service and 5 towers were open after the meeting. An excellent lunch was served in Vestry Hall before the General Meeting commenced.

1. Welcome. The Chairman welcomed 89 members and visitors and David Cawley opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Alex Britton (Unattached), Dickon Love (Bromley), Jo Horton (Sturry), Len Huckstep (Canterbury St Dunstan), Jim Rooke (Chelsfield), Philippa Rooke (Chelsfield), Hedley Basford (Canterbury Cathedral), Alex Fishburn (Sidcup), Chalk (Rochester District) ringers, Mark Chittenden-Pile (Ashford), Sandy Jeffries (Ashford), Richard Barclay (Staplehurst), Eric Roughley (Speldhurst).

18. Vote of Thanks

To ensure that everyone that needed to be thanked was in the room, the vote of thanks was brought forward in the agenda. Mike Bullett thanked everyone involved in the organisation and running of the AGM, and gave those that provided the meal as well as David & Janet Beeken a gift for all their hard work.

3. Minutes of the AGM held at Tunstall on Easter Monday, 28th March 2016

The minutes were taken as read being in the Handbook and displayed on the website. It was proposed and seconded that they be approved, all agreed and the Chairman signed them as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes. Helen Webb passed on a message of Thanks from Julie McDonnell for all the efforts that had been made in the County for the Strike Back Against Blood Cancer campaign.

5. General Secretary's report. The General Secretary's report was printed in the Handbook on Page 13. He commented that it had been a busy but good year.

6. Treasurer's report. The Treasurer advised that the accounts were in the handbook (pages 124-126) and all were currently with the Auditor. She also proposed to appoint an auditor, Aaron Jacobs, and all were in favour.

7. Division of Subscriptions Margaret proposed Division of Subscriptions to be 50% to the General Fund, 25% to the BRF and 25% to the Training Fund. The proposal was seconded by Daniel Brady, and all voted in favour. Caroline Stockmann commented after the vote that it would be good to have the accounts ahead of the AGM so there is time to look through them before a decision is made on them. The Treasurer and Chairman confirmed they were sent out to the General Committee by email, but it was agreed to ensure they are publicly available ahead of the AGM next year.

8. Peal Secretary's report. Dr Phillip Barnes advised his report was published in the Handbook from Page 86. He had nothing to add, except to say that he would no longer publish the peal compositions in the handbook due to the availability of these online. He would provide a printed copy for the General Secretary, but believed it was unnecessary to take up extra handbook pages for these going forward.

9. Quarter Peal Secretary's report. Mr Leeves advised his report was printed in the Handbook from Page 72. He commented that it had been a record year, and congratulated Darren Elphick on joining the ranks of those that have rung 3,000 quarter peals.

10. Librarian's report. Hazel Basford advised that there was nothing really to report for this year.

11. Officers' reports

a) Bell Restoration Brian Butcher had provided his report prior to the AGM, which he proposed for adoption.

b) Webmaster Doug Davis advised that the new website had been launched during the past year, and it was good to see that some of those that had access to update it themselves were doing so. He also mentioned that the handbook is now available online, details of which are printed in the cover of the handbook. Other than that, nothing to report.

c) Handbook Editor Tim Munt advised that his report was on Page 3 of the handbook. He thanked everyone for providing information to him when requested. He also advised that he would not be standing for re-election.

d) Health & Safety Peter Sims advised that his report was on Page 18 of the handbook. He mentioned that it was a legal requirement now for a risk assessment to be carried out and available at every tower. He also reminded people to ensure that there is always more than one person in the tower when work is being done in or around the bells.

e) Child Protection Nigel Spencer advised that his report was on Page 15 of the handbook with nothing more to add.

f) Training Tom Winter advised that his report was on Page 18 and only added that if people wanted anything specific in terms of training to please get in touch with him.

g) Publicity Caroline Stockmann advised her report was on Page 14/15 of the handbook. She commented that most of the work she had done recently had been at a National level, and would like more to be done at a local level going forward, encouraging everyone to do their part in promoting ringing where possible.

h) Youth Jen Thomas advised that the Youth Officer's report was on Page 13/14 of the handbook. She commented that they are such an exciting group of young ringers to be involved with. They are very proud, wearing their polo shirts wherever they go. If elected, Jen would like there to be a nominated contact in each District that can work with her to communicate to young ringers.

Daniel Brady proposed that we adopt all the reports en bloc, and all were in favour.

12. Election of officers. The following officers were elected:

<u>Nominations for Officers 2017 - 2018</u>			
<u>Post</u>	<u>Nominee(s)</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Chairman	Daniel Brady	Janet Bowden	Colin Bowden
General Secretary	Doug Davis	Sven Wraight	Diana Wraight
Treasurer	Margaret Funnell	Arthur Vidgeon	Brian Trill
Peal Secretary	Phil Barnes	Phil Larter	Jacqui Barlow
Quarter Peal Secretary	Anthony Leeves	Frances James	David James
Handbook Editor			
Librarian	Hazel Basford	Stephen Marsh	Ann Davies
<u>Sub-Committee Officers</u>			
Bell Restoration	Brian Butcher	Nigel Spencer	Maureen Poole
Training	Tom Winter	David Cawley	Jane Huxley
Publicity	Caroline	Doug Davis	Daniel Brady

		Stockmann		
Webmaster		Doug Davis	Diana Wraight	Sven Wraight
Health & Safety		Peter Sims	Sheila Phyll	Tim Munt
Child Protection		Nigel Spencer	Mark Chittenden-Pile	Maureen Poole
Youth		Jen Thomas	Catherine Lewis	Jamie Austin
Extra 3	1	David Cawley	Len Huckstep	John Haimes
	2	Peter Sims	Sheila Phyll	Tim Munt
	3			

Doug Davis proposed that the officers already nominated were elected en bloc, with all in favour.

The role of Handbook Editor was left vacant, and the General Committee would co-opt someone into the role when a suitable candidate was found. Allan Chandler volunteered to be one of the Extra 3, proposed by Mike Little and seconded by Tom Winter and all were in favour.

13. Proposed rule change Phil Barnes talked about the proposed change to Rule 1, the aims of the Association. The proposal was to change to one overarching aim:

“The aim of the Association is to foster ringing in the historic county of Kent by promoting and protecting the interests of ringing and ringers.”

He said that this proposal was about the future and not designed to loosen any connection to the church or deprecate the importance of service ringing in any way. He also said that anyone who thought that ringing could survive without strong links with the church was ‘living in cloud cuckoo land’. He then asked whether we are doing anything to meet the current aims as listed in the rules. Given that we haven’t actively worked towards meeting those aims, he suggested that we are unfocused as an Association. Looking at what happens at events within the Association, less people are attending and what is being rung is not as advanced as it once was – hence we do have a problem. He said he was not being elitist about change ringing in any way, but simply making an observation. He was pleased to see that we have an active youth group in the County, but ultimately, we need to focus on the recruitment and development of ringers to ensure the future and make ringing in this County great.

David Grimwood then spoke, and commented that we are not focussed as an organisation on a single primary aim that the General Committee and District Committees can really get behind and involved with. From a clergy point of view, he felt it is still very important to have a good relationship with the ringers and vice versa, but ultimately our responsibility was to foster ringing.

Sue Cameron of the Lewisham District then passed on the comments received from the Lewisham District ADM: there is no mention of ‘church’ in the new aim, there is no mention of the care of bells and belfries which it was felt was important.

Questions or comments were then invited from the floor. Richard Bourne confirmed that the Ashford District had discussed this at length at their ADM, and that they had strongly and vigorously rejected the proposal as not being a worthy alternative to the existing rule. The objections were that the new rule spoke nothing of the church or service. Nigel Spencer spoke and felt that the new proposed rule would offer more focus to the Association. Caroline Stockmann suggested we could look at having a mission and a vision rather than a single aim. Richard Bushell asked what measures were in mind to meet the new aim. Phil Barnes responded first to Caroline Stockmann, commenting that he was very much of the same mind and would be happy with an amendment where we had the single overarching aim and then objectives that would be used to meet it. He then responded to Richard Bushell by saying ‘what could we do that we aren’t currently doing’ – act as an Association.

We could not act like an affiliation of at least 6 increasingly autonomous Districts. We need to break down these barriers and act as a single Association, and then perhaps we could have a single strategy and common way of doing things. He felt we are accelerating downhill to a point where local Association will die, and the few that are vibrant are the ones who are starting to think about what they are doing.

Peter Sims spoke and said that there was nothing in the new aim to suggest we are going to do anything differently, all it does is say to the outside world that we have changed the ideas of why we are here – we've done away with the church, the vast majority of our members are interested in ringing on a Sunday morning and nothing else. Catherine Lewis then spoke and said she agreed that we need Sunday service ringing, and suggested that if we don't have this grass-roots type of ringing then ringing will come to an end. David Grimwood responded and said that clearly the main purpose for ringing was for church services and local or National celebrations and there was no intention to demean that with this new aim, but ultimately, we need ringers who can ring for these services and occasions. He also said that overall, we aren't achieving the current aims and seemingly have no plans to do so, hence it would be far better to have one overall aim that we can then strive to achieve.

The Chairman then spoke and said that, if we look after the ringing, the rest will just happen – get people ringing, and everything else will follow.

Chris Cooper suggested Phil Barnes was talking about future centralisation, and wondered if this rule change was the precursor to this. If so, he felt it sounded like management decline and didn't feel we wanted to go there.

A question was also raised as to whether young people had been consulted. The answer was that only as much as the proposal had gone round to District ADMs.

Stephen Davis and Helen Webb also spoke about the proposal, notably with Helen mentioning that in future we won't just be having to work with the church when it comes to access to bells, but potentially more with business who buy the churches from the Church of England as they are sold off.

With no further comments, the proposal as written was then put to a vote. 27 votes for, 43 against and 11 abstentions. Proposal defeated.

David Cawley commented that we should take what has been said during this discussion and consider this in future.

14. KCACR Mobile Ring The Secretary gave an outline of the project, stating that the General Committee had been discussing this for at least 3 years. A light ring of 6 bells had been donated to the Association by David Cawley, and since these were accepted we have been trying to work out what to do with them ultimately deciding that a mobile ring was the best way forward. Quotes had been received from Taylor's, Matthew Higby and Brian Butcher had also done a fair amount of research work into this. The ring would be built on a trailer and intended to be towed by a normal car, and no effort would be required to put it up as you would ring the bells from around the trailer. The survey done about the ring showed that over 75% of those who responded agreed a mobile ring was a good idea. We're now at the stage where we need to get the project off the ground and money is needed. He then introduced Phil Gay from the North Staffordshire Association who got the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry up and running, who proceeded to give his views about mobile rings and our proposal.

Following Phil's talk, the Secretary then formally proposed that the Association provide a maximum amount of £5,000 towards the cost of the project. After a couple of questions were answered, the proposal was put to a vote and with only 1 against the proposal was agreed.

15. Certificates for 50 years' membership. The Archbishop of Canterbury had not returned the certificates in time for the AGM. The following members were congratulated on their long membership by the Chairman with their certificates to follow in due course: Christopher Lawrance, Richard Bushell, Judith Bagshaw and John Cannell.

15a. Vice President and Honorary Life Member Proposals. Catherine Lewis was proposed as a Vice President and Stan Jenner was proposed as an Honorary Life Member. Mike Bullett spoke about these proposals which had already been agreed by the General Committee. All were in favour of both appointments and they were duly elected.

16. Forthcoming events.

1. The Secretary advised that there will be a County Surprise practice in a couple of weeks.
2. The County 8-bell competition is at Shoreham on 24th June, 9.45am draw.

17. Any other business.

1. Nick Wilkins commented about the date of the County 8-bell competition clashing with the National 12-bell competition. He also mentioned that there would be a practice at Chelsfield this evening.

The meeting closed at 4.36pm.