

# THE KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS



## MINUTES OF THE 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Easter Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019  
2.30pm at Chilham Village Hall CT4 8DB

- Welcome by the Chairman** Phillip Barnes, who commented that it had been a good year for the Association. One hundred and nine members signed the Attendance book. He was delighted that gloomy messages from Districts years ago had been replaced with lots of joy in members' ringing. A quarter peal rung this morning at Selling had included the interesting footnote "Rung by representatives of the six Kent County Association Districts in the hope that goodwill and wise counsel will prevail at the Annual General Meeting this afternoon." The Chairman expressed hope that debate would be polite, succinct and non-repetitive whilst respecting one another's views.
- Apologies for Absence** – Doug Davies, Richard Dyson, Sue Atkinson, David Robinson, Sian Robinson, Isabel Pearce, Andrew Gunstone, Andrew Corby, Mal Williams, Michael Wilkinson, Richard Bourne, John & Isabel Legg, Clare Larter, Tim, Dee & Sven Wraight.
- Minutes of the 2018 AGM** at Willesborough, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018 had been circulated and were proposed for adoption by Susan Bassett, seconded by Cathy Cheeseman and approved with two abstentions. Jacqui Barlow expressed gratitude for the provision of the PA system as difficulties had been experienced in hearing the debate last year.
- Matters arising** from the Minutes – none.
- General Secretary's Report** was printed in the 2019 Handbook at page 21. In addition, Susan Bassett explained that the insurers had recently declined to renew the Public Liability Policy as the company no longer wished to provide cover for Bell Restoration work. Alternative policies were being explored and the General Committee would be making a decision on these at its meeting next week. The Personal Accident Policy was unaffected, the summary of which remains as printed in the 2019 Handbook.
- Treasurer's Report** was printed in the 2019 Handbook at pages 14-16. Margaret Funnell explained that the Accounts had now been audited with a very slight (non-material) amendment to a total. No queries were raised so Margaret Funnell proposed, seconded by Neil Jones that the Accounts be adopted. This was carried nem con. The allocation of Subscription Funds (Rule 4(c)) - Caroline Stockmann had expressed caution last year about transferring funds into restricted funds – there was no going back once done. The Chairman commented that monies in the Belfry Repair Fund (BRF) were restricted as it was a formal Charity but the Training Fund was not. Margaret Funnell proposed that as the General Fund was very low and expenditure high, 100% of Subscription income be transferred to the General Fund in 2019. The proposal was seconded by Caroline Stockmann and carried nem con. Brother Austin raised a query about the BRF and Training Fund commitments. The Treasurer responded that approximately £30,000 had been allocated to BRF projects but not yet spent. The Kent Young Ringers budget had expended £1,000 and had a budget of £2.5k within the £11k Training Fund.
- Peal Secretary's Report** – In addition to the report printed in the 2019 Handbook at pages 91-108, Phillip Barnes commented that a personal highlight had been when the Association rang on the new bells at St. George's, Ypres followed by a visit to the war cemeteries where veterans including Kent ringers were buried. On the question of Peal Fees, when the option of a free Handbook had been agreed last year, the Peal Fee was retained at 50p per ringer with anything above the print cost in the Handbook being assigned to the Training Fund and Kent Young Ringers. There were no queries or comments on the report so Phillip Barnes proposed adoption of the report, seconded by Andrew Hills and carried nem con.
- Quarter Peal Secretary's Report** – Anthony Leeves commented that two lines of analysis had been omitted from the 2019 Handbook at pages 77-90 inclusive but was available on the online version. He was very encouraged to see that first quarters were 60% up on the previous year. Notable achievements included Mike Little who had rung 2,000 quarters and David Manger and Neil Jones had each rung 1,000 quarter peals as conductor. Anthony Leeves proposed adoption of his report, seconded by Jacqueline Barlow and carried nem con.
- Librarian's Report** – Hazel Basford had nothing to report but commented that a number of books had been received into the Library from the Reverend David Cawley. The Chairman advised the meeting that Hazel Basford had expressed a wish to stand down as Librarian in 2020, so encouraged anyone with an interest in archival/historical reference material to take on the role as Librarian should step forward.

## 10. Officers' Reports

- 10.1 Bell Restoration – In addition to the report printed in the 2019 Handbook at page 24, Brian Butcher gave a verbal update that Milton Regis bells remained at the White's of Appleton and Penshurst No. 6 bell needed headstock repairs so the tower may be silent for a while. There were no questions and the report was accepted nem con.
- 10.2 Handbook – Doug Davis had not made a written report but the Chairman thanked him for stepping into the breach to produce the 2019 Handbook. Questions were asked as to why some towers had no members listed. The Chairman replied that the Handbook was populated from the Association Membership database as at the deadline given at the end of February. It was probably the case that not every district had updated the membership information. Each District Secretary and Treasurer has access to the Association Database. Cathryn Hills considered that those who had paid by 30<sup>th</sup> September should be included and was a contradiction of the rules. The Chairman replied that membership subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January annually and it's important that membership details are accurate. If a particular district had any issues then discussion should take place at the General Committee.
- 10.3 Health & Safety – In addition to the report printed in the 2019 Handbook at page 25, Peter Sims spoke about an ongoing situation regarding fitness to ring, that had been raised by some towers and was trying to come to some sensible guidance. With regard to insurance issues, there is a question over the need to have a Safety Policy. Peter Sims reminded all members that Risk Assessments are usually the responsibility of individual towers (see the template on the Association Website for assistance). He encouraged members to check with Church Wardens to ensure that Risk Assessments had been done. There had been questions raised about ground floor rings where people may walk through the rope circle whilst bells are ringing. If individual churches needed assistance, please contact him to discuss. The Health & Safety Officer's report was accepted nem con.
- 10.4 Publicity – In addition to the report printed in the 2019 Handbook at page 23, Caroline Stockmann highlighted special events such as the Blue Peter feature, publications reporting on the activities of the Kent Young Ringers and Dickon Love speaking on the radio. Christine King from Rainham had taken the initiative to make WW1 Ringing Remembers badges. Caroline Stockmann stressed the importance of individuals highlighting their own events and taking their own initiative to talk to others about ringing. There being no questions the Publicity report was accepted nem con.
- 10.5 Safeguarding – Nigel Spencer had nothing specific to add to his report printed in the 2019 Handbook at page 22 but commented that a review of safeguarding had been completed with Chris Mew. As a result the Church of England would be revising its training courses in May. Although he was standing down this year, an able candidate had been found to take on this role. He thanked all Association members who were committed to running safe towers. Safeguarding was sometimes viewed as an imposition but was absolutely key to what we do as ringers. There being no questions the Safeguarding report was accepted nem con. Members applauded Nigel Spencer for all his work in this area.
- 10.6 Training – David Grimwood referred to his report printed in the meeting pack which had, unfortunately, missed the 2019 Handbook. A number of courses had been run with ART facilitators and had been very worthwhile, including how to deal with emergencies such as a flying rope. Three more, free, courses were being planned and had available places on 25<sup>th</sup> May at Dover Introduction to Change Ringing, 22<sup>nd</sup> June at Higham Teach the Teachers and 24<sup>th</sup> August at Staplehurst, ART M2 course. The Chairman commented that one can always learn new things in ringing. Caroline Stockmann considered there was a need for mentors to enable progression. David Grimwood commented that students had up to two years from attending a course to develop skills before assessment to ensure competency. The more people who do these courses the more there will be to support others. The Chairman stressed the importance of training, and since it was one of the principal objects of the Association to establish, maintain and encourage service ringing, it follows we must have trained ringers. There being no further discussion the Training Report was accepted nem con.
- 10.7 Webmaster – No written report. The Chairman thanked Doug Davis for all he does in a highly speedy manner.
- 10.8 Youth Officer – In addition to the report printed in the 2019 Handbook at page 22, Jen Thomas highlighted how the Young Ringers were going from strength to strength. Three years ago there were 8 young people who went to the SEECON event, this year Kent hosted and 43 ringers attended at least one event in the year. Their training ground is their home towers but the Kent Young Ringers get together for outings, overnight stays/weekends away, ringing events. Already the report was out of date so Jen Thomas advised looking at the Website for up to date information. Some Young Ringers would soon be leaving us but a special event on 11<sup>th</sup> May for primary school ages is being planned. Jen Thomas thanked all Young People for enjoying ringing. Emma Jarvis (as a parent of a young ringer) gave a great big Thank You to Jen Thomas and her team for all their hard work to get young people to turn up for events. The Youth Officer's report was accepted nem con.

The Chairman thanked all officers for all their hard work on the Association's behalf during the last year.

**11. Rule Change Proposals from General Committee:-**

11.1 **Subscriptions** – The proposed rule changes were advised to Districts at their ADMs in October 2018. The Chairman outlined the importance of the Association running within its means using regular fixed income from subscriptions but it had “squeaked along” for at least two years. The BRF had received regular subscription income since the late 1960’s when there were some horrible rings of bells but had in several recent years received no transfers from the General Fund. The BRF is a valuable resource but not related to the overall expenditure by the Association which was just about breaking even. The membership profile and age demographic had changed significantly since 2013 in that adult members had reduced and seniors increased. All members regardless of status were entitled to attend training events, apply to the BRF, attend any district meeting or events at a subscription cost of 20p per week. Association expenses had increased, Central Council costs were sometimes large and other Association activities were getting expensive. The Association could just about get by with no activities but if it wished to provide training and investment in ringing, funds would be needed. After due consideration the General Committee felt that the Association should aspire to change the subscriptions structure to ensure a sound financial basis for the future.

Clarification was given by the Chairman that any agreed rule changes would come into effect immediately. To a question about the concession for over 65’s and 25 years’ membership; this would be withdrawn for all if the proposal 4.(f) is adopted. Barry Roberts spoke in favour of this. Chris Bassett gave a summary of subscriptions paid by other Associations for information. Discussion ensued about the proposed wording of rule 4.(f) then Leonard Huckstep proposed, seconded by Pam Manger to amend the General Committee proposal by deleting the wording “Members aged 75-79 years shall pay 75% of the annual subscription.” This amendment was agreed by a clear majority with 4 against and 3 abstentions.

Stuart Palin commented that Life Membership was a generous and unnecessary concession. He proposed an amendment to the General Committee proposal that the existing rule at 4.(h) be deleted entirely (with a recommendation that existing Life Members should retain their status but the Association should have only honorary life members in future). This proposal was seconded by Tom Barlow. This amendment was agreed by a clear majority with 2 against and 2 abstentions.

A substantive vote was then taken to amend the rules as shown below and carried by a large majority with 1 against and 1 abstention.

Existing Rule before AGM 2019		Agreed amendment by AGM 2019
4.(e)	Members aged 65 years or over, Members 18 years and below and those Members in full time education shall pay 50% of the annual subscription.	Members aged 18 years and below shall pay 50% of the annual subscription.
4.(f)	Members aged 65 years or more with 25 years unbroken practising membership shall be entitled to free membership.	Delete entirely and replace with; Members aged 80 years or over shall be entitled to free membership.
4.(h)	A member over the age of eighteen may at any time secure membership for life by paying a subscription equal to 15 times the current annual subscription. The proportion to be allocated to the Bell Restoration Fund shall be as prescribed by the General Committee in the year of payment.	Delete entirely.

11.2 **Quorum** – Susan Bassett explained that following a reduction in the size of the General Committee last year, a change in the quorum was considered necessary. The proposal to reduce the quorum from eight to six members at Rule 5 was proposed by Susan Bassett, seconded by Maureen Poole. Much discussion ensued and Ben Legg felt that at least 50% of a committee should be expected to attend a meeting and he therefore did not agree to this proposal. After a number of others commented both for and against, David Manger proposed, seconded by Chris Bassett and the meeting agreed that the question now be put (effectively truncating discussion and moving to a vote). The original proposal was put to the vote and defeated by a clear majority.

**12. Practising Members Subscription 2020** – It was proposed by Margaret Funnell, seconded by Phillip Barnes that the subscription from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 be £12. A counter proposal of £15 was made by Leonard Huckstep, seconded by Marilyn Barden. Long discussions and explanations ensued as to the effect of the increases; the logic behind the original proposal; when an increase was last made (thought to be 2005\*); and expressions of support for a subscription of £15. After Jacqui Barlow proposed, Dan Jarvis seconded and it was agreed that the question now be put a majority voted for this with 8 against. The Chairman then invited members to vote on the amended proposal of £15 and this was carried nem. con with one abstention.

\* subsequent checking shows the subscription was last raised on 1/1/2012

- 13. Election of Officers** - Vice President David Manger took the chair to oversee the election of the Chairman and Peal Secretary. During elections (with the exception of the 5 Central Council Representatives) only one nominee was proposed for each post and each nominee was therefore elected unopposed.
- 13.1 Chairman – Phillip Barnes was proposed by David Grimwood, seconded by Susan Bassett.
  - 13.2 General Secretary – Susan Bassett was proposed by Phillip Barnes, seconded by Doug Davis.
  - 13.3 Treasurer – Maureen Poole was proposed by Phillip Barnes, seconded by Stephen Davis.
  - 13.4 Peal Secretary – Phillip Barnes was proposed by Doug Davis, seconded by David Grimwood.
  - 13.5 Quarter Peal Secretary – Anthony Leeves was proposed by Janice Byrne, seconded by Eric Roughley.
  - 13.6 Handbook Editor – Doug Davis was proposed by Jen Thomas, seconded by David Grimwood.
  - 13.7 Librarian - Hazel Basford was proposed by Stephen Marsh, seconded by Ann Davies.
  - 13.8 5 Central Council Representatives – The Chairman sought the guidance of the meeting and explained that, normally, the AGM would elect representatives 13 months in advance. However due to changes in Central Council moving its meeting from May to September, we would be electing representatives now for September 2020. Central Council only required 6 weeks’ notice of new representatives. The existing five representatives would remain in place and attend the September 2019 meeting; Phillip Barnes, Doug Davis, David Grimwood, Caroline Stockmann and Catherine Lewis. As the triennial cycle of CC Reps had now gone, the Chairman explained that the Association rules no longer accorded with those of the Central Council. Next year a small rule change would be needed and suggested that Central Council Representatives for 2020 be elected at the 2020 AGM. This was noted and agreed by those present.
  - 13.9 Bell Restoration – Brian Butcher was proposed by Maureen Poole, seconded by Nigel Spencer.
  - 13.10 Health & Safety – Peter Sims was proposed by Sheila Phyll, seconded by Bob Barnes.
  - 13.11 Publicity – Caroline Stockmann was proposed by Thomas Barlow, seconded by Nicholas Wilkins.
  - 13.12 Safeguarding – Emma Jarvis was proposed by Nigel Spencer, seconded by Ann Jenner.
  - 13.13 Training – David Grimwood was proposed by Graham Heath, seconded by Mike Birkbeck.
  - 13.14 Webmaster – Doug Davis was proposed by David Grimwood, seconded by Jen Thomas.
  - 13.15 Youth Officer – Jen Thomas was proposed by Neil Jones, seconded by Phil Barnes.

- 14. KCACR Mobile Ring** – The Chairman thanked Catherine Lewis for the written report submitted with the AGM meeting papers. He expressed thanks also to David Cawley for the donation of the bells and to Doug Davis and Brian Butcher for their work on the project so far. The Chairman stated that important questions need to be discussed and answered. The Association needs to be behind the project full square and should not be the responsibility of one person. We need to make sure that members are willing to put shoulders to the grindstone both in fund-raising and running of the project thereafter.

Various concerns and questions were raised including: will the design be such that it can be stored in a normal garage? (yes); the lack of a firm business case – what is the compelling case for it? is it just looking for a use for the gift rather than there being a good primary case for having such a ring?; although a cost (£21K plus VAT) was quoted there were other undefined costs that made the proposal seem vague; there appears to be a risk of costs spiralling without a clear plan; what was the expected income and would it cover running costs? (not yet known); why don’t we just use one of the existing mobile rings? (ours will be better); would it require a separate driving licence to be able to tow it (yes for those who had licences gained since 1998) and how easy would this be to obtain? (an additional driving test would be needed but apparently not insurmountable according to Tim Ford); whose insurance would cover (a) towing (the driver’s – further concern was raised at this) and (b) storage when out being used (if at a members property – theirs)?; it seemed to have a complicated construction with hydraulics, maintenance would be heavy, awkward to move about and assemble; who would actually run it?; would it be useful to young ringers and would the bells be rung normally? (the bells are the right size to ring with two hands – better than existing mobile rings); the estimated gross weight of the trailer and fittings was not yet known. There was a concern that there were insufficient ringers willing and keen to support the mobile ring.

In terms of the case for having the mobile ring Jo Horton said it could be hired out to non-church wedding venues with local ringers being paid to ring; it could be used at Fetes, for Advertising, and at the County Show but needs someone who is keen to take it around.

Catherine Lewis agreed there was a lot yet to be considered but that detailed plans couldn’t be given and that, details would be sorted out as we go. Others felt that with lots of technical questions unanswered and without numbers on the table, the Association cannot go forward. The whole project needs to be fully-developed with grants agreed before proceeding. We need a firm quote not vague plans. Catherine Lewis said we haven’t had time to sort out the details.

David Manger suggested the issue be referred back to the General Committee as the proposals are too woolly. The Chairman stated that the AGM two years ago told the General Committee to get on with the project but that despite asking fundamental questions such as those raised at this meeting, no satisfactory and clear way forward had been agreed. The General Committee has been unable to take this any further forward without the guidance of the membership and he felt that referral back to the Committee would not take things forward.

In response to a question from the floor the Chairman assured the meeting that this would not use existing KCA funds – all funding to develop the ring would need to be raised as a separate project and that the General Committee would not place any order until all funds were in the bank or firmly committed. There would be no financial risk to the Association from the capital scheme. He agreed with Caroline Stockmann who said that monies would have to be given back if the project didn't proceed.

The proposal at the foot of the Report was in two parts proposed by Catherine Lewis, seconded by the Chairman on behalf of Doug Davis in his absence and voted upon as follows:-

1. That this meeting authorises fund raising for the Kent Mobile Ring. Carried by 31 votes to 24.
2. That this meeting authorises an order to be placed with Matthew Higby as soon as suitable funding is available or promised (as judged by the General Committee). Carried by 31 votes to 26.

It was requested that the General Committee takes note that around 50% of the people in the room had not voted (109 in attendance).

- 15. Election of Vice Presidents** – The Chairman explained that the rules require the approval of 2/3 of those present and voting to elect a Vice President.

Neil Jones proposed Margaret Funnell as a Vice President. She had been 10 years as General Secretary and Treasurer, an officer in the Rochester District, worked diligently in various roles in the Association and had done a great job. It was a pleasure to propose Margaret Funnell as a Vice President, seconded by Richard Bushell. A majority voted in favour with one against.

The Chairman proposed Stanley Jenner as a Vice President. He was first elected to the Association in 1953, learned to ring at Tunbridge Wells before becoming Tower Captain at Edenbridge and later at Tonbridge. Fulfilling various posts in the Tonbridge District: Ringing Master, District Representative and Chairman (twice); and at Association level: CC Rep for 12 years, Report Secretary and Auditor. His accomplishments as a ringer are a credit to the Association: one of the finest ringers produced by the Association, a prolific conductor, composer of elegant peals, etc. This proposal was seconded by Thomas Barlow and was elected unopposed.

- 16. Certificates of 50 years' membership** were presented (or later posted) to John Gander, Coral Fry, Alison Gerrish, Andrew Gunstone, David Levick, Barry Roberts and Susan Record.

**17. Forthcoming Events**

- 17.1 Association 8-bell competition at Tunstall – 29/06/2019 – Plain course of Turramurra Surprise Major.
- 17.2 Essex Trophy 2019 at Christchurch, Southgate – 14/09/2019 – Stedman Caters.
- 17.3 Association 6-bell competition at Seal – 28/09/2019.
- 17.4 Essex Trophy 2020 at Ashford – 12/09/2020.
- 17.5 Association 8-bell competition in Tonbridge District – 20/06/2020.
- 17.6 AGM 2021 in the Maidstone District date to be agreed.

**18. Any Other Business**

- 18.1 Neil Jones gave a “plug” for Rochester Cathedral restoration and maintenance project, raising £100k for a ring of 12 with light 8, training centre, etc. Information Leaflets are available for circulation and donations are welcome.
- 18.2 Mike Little gave a “plug” for the “finest and first” 12 in Kent celebrating its 200 years of bells this year. It's planned to ring 200 quarter peals during the year and available to Association bands at any time by arrangement. There will be a free barbecue on 3<sup>rd</sup> August (please advise numbers in advance).
- 18.3 David Manger announced that Frittenden would be practising at 7:30pm tonight.

- 19. Date of AGM 2020** – Easter Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in the Lewisham District.

- 20. Vote of Thanks** – The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to the Associate Priest and Churchwardens for the use of the church and bells, and to Sam Keeler-Walker for arranging and taking the service with the assistance of The Reverends David Grimwood, Stanley Evans and David Cawley. To Sue Record for playing the organ. To Jo Horton and David Sheekey for all the catering arrangements. To Brenda Davies for handling bookings and all the volunteer helpers from the Canterbury District. Terry Barnard proposed a vote of thanks to Christine King for taking initiative and providing badges for those existing ringers who qualify for a WW1 badge from the Ringing Remembers scheme. Both were met with warm applause.

The meeting closed at 5:10 p.m.

Signed: .....  
Phil Barnes (Chairman)

Date: .....