

Dear Members

I am writing to you to explain the reason why we need to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) prior to the AGM at Wrotham on the 10th April.

Some organisations and individuals who may otherwise wish to support the Bell Restoration Fund are deterred by the fact that this may directly support the Christian religion. Unfortunately, the age that we live in has become more secular and, since the inception of these rules, multi-faith communities are more prevalent. The General Committee has, therefore, taken the difficult decision to remove reference to religion in the fund's rules.

The Bell Restoration Fund Rules that we feel are restricting this external support are Rule 2;

"The object of the fund shall be to advance the Christian religion by providing financial assistance to churches in the county of Kent or that part of London formerly in the county of Kent for the purposes of maintaining and improving their bell installations by the making of grants from the fund."

and rule 6;

"In the event of the dissolution of the fund the assets of the fund shall be distributed equally among those churches which at the time of dissolution were in union with the Association for the charitable and religious purposes of the said churches."

In order to attract this external support of some of our projects, the General Committee wish to propose the following changes, which still reference assisting churches and towers within the boundaries of the Association. This will also make it easier for us to support secular towers and towers at churches which have subsequently become redundant or re-purposed.

The proposed changes are:

Rule 2

– To remove the words "to advance the Christian religion by" and add "towers and" before churches to read: *The object of the fund shall be providing financial assistance to towers and churches in the county of Kent or that part of London formerly in the county of Kent for the purpose of maintaining and improving their bell installations by the making of grants from the fund.*

Rule 6

– To remove the words “and religious” and add “towers and” before churches to read: *In the event of the dissolution of the fund the assets of the fund shall be distributed equally among those towers and churches which at the time of dissolution were in union with the Association for the charitable purposes of the said towers and churches.*

These alterations were agreed by the General Committee in November and, according to the Association rules, any proposed rule change should be brought before Districts at the Annual District Meetings prior to the Association AGM. This would mean that the earliest that this change could take effect is April 2024. Consequently, we have decided to call an Extraordinary General Meeting prior to the AGM in order to seek the agreement of the membership that these changes can take effect at the soonest opportunity.

Neil Jones

Chairman, KCACR.