



## KCACR ROCHESTER DISTRICT

### Annual District Meeting

Saturday 21st October 2023 at Shorne

#### Attending

NJ (Chair), AP (secretary), KT, NW, CH, JP, RF, JF, MF, LAL, CB, LH, GA, ES, TF, JF, LFW, LC, TW, DW, DG, PH, RJ, AC, CMT, CJT, SD, AG, IW, JT, MH, TW, CLE, GLE, HC, PL

#### 1. Welcome and Minute's Silence

A minute's silence was held for RW who used to ring at Shorne and passed away in May.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

AD, SK, FH, VC, DR, KW, MR, GR, SF, AJ, ST

#### 3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. They were agreed to be correct. They were proposed by MF and seconded by CH.

#### 4. Matters arising

- a. Safeguarding. Comments from the county Safeguarding Officer have been circulated prior to the meeting.

“The majority of queries I receive are concerning Safeguarding Training. The KCACR website has a Safeguarding tab which contains current information regarding Safeguarding training plus contact details of the four Diocesan Safeguarding Teams. The accuracy of this information is regularly checked with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. All Safeguarding Training is online. However, some Incumbents and Parish Safeguarding Advisers are offering Basic Awareness training in person using the online course provided by the Diocese. Although this is an accepted form of training, attendees will not receive an individual certificate on completion of the course. Any ringers wishing to follow this form of training should make direct contact with the Parish Safeguarding Adviser and /or Incumbent.

“There is no plan to return to offering bespoke Leadership Training to Tower Captains or Ringing Masters. I was advised that the content of the Leadership Training had been revised in July 2023 and there would not be an expectation, for example, to reflect on a psalm, but I understand from those ringers who have recently completed the Leadership Training that this is not the case. Unfortunately, as many of you are already aware, ringers in different Dioceses are not necessarily expected to complete the same level of training and in some

Dioceses a bespoke Local Leadership Course is offered. Our four Dioceses are not willing to explore this option as it is not endorsed by the National Safeguarding Team, although they broadly agree that a more suitable Leadership Training Course needs to be devised. There will be no quick fix to this, but the CCCBR Safeguarding Team is working with the National Safeguarding Team to address this.

“Ringers who require a DBS certificate need to contact their Parish Safeguarding Adviser who will help them to apply for the relevant level of DBS according to the role they hold.

EJ

(KCACR Safeguarding Officer)”

Comments:

MF: In the Canterbury Diocese, visiting ringers are already being asked for evidence that they have completed safeguarding training. If they are unable to prove it, they are not allowed to ring.

CLE: It is possible to get an individual certificate on completion of face to face safeguarding training in the Rochester Diocese. Swanscombe are likely to be running more face to face training and would be willing to take trainees from the Rochester Diocese who can not access the online training.

b. Feedback on events:

Raising and lowering training (as requested in the training needs survey) was held with five of the new band at Swanscombe.

KCACR 6-bell striking competitions took place at Monkton on 30th September. In the 6 bell method competition Tunstall, representing the Rochester District, came fourth. In the 6-bell call change competition a band representing the Rochester District (from a variety of towers) came second.

c. CCCBR have issued a batch of new codes and policies. These will come into force at the beginning of 2024 and can be found on their website. The Code for Ringing has been circulated to tower contacts; some hard copies were available at the meeting for tower pin boards.

## **5. District officers' reports**

### **(a) Chair/ringing master**

It has been nice to end my tenure as District Master with a year that is, essentially, normal. We managed to hold a District Striking Competition, we entered the Association 8-Bell Competition, we enjoyed a wonderful District outing to St Albans and participated in both of the Association's 6-Bell competitions.

The District practices have had different focuses, some on more advanced methods, some on easier, and I think that the information about what would be rung has helped those attending with making sure that they knew the methods. Of course, external factors such as M2/A249 closures cannot be predicted and

it was a pity that this coincided with a practice at Sittingbourne. At least we did manage to ring one of the methods on the list.

I think that attendance still is an issue, however it looks as if quite a few towers have been represented at meetings over the year. However, the new band at Swanscombe is making good progress and there are also some very keen recruits at Gillingham. Sittingbourne has also re-established a regular practice night.

Sadly, there are still some towers that remain silent and some where there is a huge reliance on ringers from elsewhere to help keep the bells ringing but hopefully we can find ways to try to keep all the bells ringing in our District.

It has been an enjoyable few years being the District Master but I do feel that it is always good to keep this role fluid. New faces and new ideas can help to engage members and perhaps encourage some new faces at District events.

Thanks go to the Committee for their support over this year and especially to AP who has done absolutely sterling work as District Secretary.

NJ

### **(b) Secretary**

It has been easier to organise events this year with covid worries receding. A striking competition was held in the district for the first time since covid. Numbers attending events have also recovered somewhat. There were 17 ringers on the district outing to St Albans, an average of 14 at district practices and 18 at practices with quarterly meetings. More guidance on hosting district events may be required to help towers where entirely new bands are being trained and some towers who have not held district events in many years.

I now have contact emails for all active towers, although it is not always clear that all of them are being read. Responses to the training needs survey were received from 15 out of the 23 towers with at least two active members. Data gathered in the training needs survey should help us with planning training events for next year. A number of requests for assistance with membership renewal and handbook updates were received from other towers.

AP

### **(c) District representatives**

Safeguarding:

Safeguarding requirements continue to be one of the dominant topics. EJ, the Association Safeguarding Officer, and NJ have been working hard to clarify and improve the situation but it's a long process.

Currently there is a summary of requirements (April 2023) on the KCACR website under the resources tab.

Risk Assessments. 29/7/23:

There are moves afoot to include an improved assessment matrix as part of the Health and Safety Policy along with guidance notes. As of today it is not yet on the KCACR website.

Training:

The association is keen to promote the ART training scheme and is looking into organising M1 courses. The M1 course covers teaching basic handling from complete novice to competent bell handling. There are currently not many ART accredited teachers in Kent but the hope is that the situation will improve in the near future.

Competition Rules:

While the rules for competitions were relaxed for this year, there has been one permanent change to the rules.

“3) The ringers taking part shall be members of The Kent County Association of Change Ringers and ring regularly at the tower they represent.”

AG & SF

#### **(d) Treasurer/ Membership Secretary**

32 Towers with active members (out of 40) (27 in 2022, 31 in 2021)

12 new members elected, or applied for membership since the last ADM

202 members marked as ‘active’ as at 14 October 2023 (179 in 2022, 180 in 2021)

The annual subscription self-renewal continues to improve with only a handful of queries to resolve this year. The new membership application process is now in use and sends a notification to the County Membership Officer only. District Membership Secretaries are no longer notified when new members apply.

From a treasurer’s perspective, I have banked two cheques.

KT

Comments: (also see section 7 below)

CH: The database software now in use only notifies one person when new applications are made.

RF: The new application form does not require for there to be a proposer and seconder. This means that there is no local control over who can become a member of a tower. This is a retrograde step.

NJ: Verification is required for ringing down; the form asks for the name and email of a district officer.

GLE: The approval process should ideally involve a check with the verifier.

KT: At present, complete application forms are going through automatically.

**Action: NJ: Concerns will be taken back to the county committee.**

### **(e) Clothing Sales Rep**

Enamel badges, which were available a long time ago, have been brought back by request. VC has found a new supplier and has 50 badges. They will be priced at £3.50 including postage (£2.50 if collected from VC). These orders may have to wait as Val is sick; we wish her a speedy recovery.

Report received from VC in hospital just after the meeting:

This year I have taken over as clothing rep. for the County. Orders are still mainly from Rochester district.

There has been a slight increase in prices of some garments, mainly fleeces & hoodies. Most people are happy to collect their order from me either at home or in the Cathedral. Postage is expensive at £5.99 for one polo shirt! A revised price list is available.

It has been a difficult year for our supplier as his father, who was the owner of the business, has died his son has now taken over and is doing very well. We have a good rapport with the supplier and he has (for the time being) kept the prices of the polo shirts static, as they are the most popular garments. The long sleeve polo shirt is no longer available, but there is now a long sleeve tee shirt to replace this.

Several towers have chosen a single colour for all of their members and have had the name of that tower embroidered beneath the KCACR logo.

To date this year I have sold a total of 43 assorted KCACR garments. Total £786.92. One order alone was £475. No profit has been made from these garments, as agreed early this year.

### **f) District Youth Coordinator**

The Kent Young Ringers has had another busy year. Again, retirees from the main KYR squad in 2022 impacted the overall capability of the group but they are still able to ring Triples and Major methods, including Surprise Major (with a little help from the adults).

In the Rochester District, we have several towers who are lucky to have at least one active member who is a young ringer. Some of the District young ringers got together in February to take part in the KYR Striking Competition and attained 1<sup>st</sup> place.

Two of our young ringers travelled to York in July to participate in this year's Ringing World National Youth Contest and the Kent Young Ringers team were awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Call-Change section of the competition, competing against 18 other teams from other associations nationwide. We were particularly proud of this achievement as once again the team included members who had never before participated in the RWNYC.

Kent Young Ringers continue to have monthly practices at towers that are fairly central in Kent to enable easy access from across the county. All young ringers who are under 25 are welcome to come along. There is another practice for the Mini-Ringers, dedicated to ringers who are in either primary school or the early years of secondary school, which takes place on the same Saturday as the KYR. This is usually the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month.

If you have any young ringers who might be interested in coming along to these meetings, please do get in touch with me or with JT (contact details on the KCACR website and in the handbook) for more information.

NJ

## 6. Election of officers

The KCACR rules specify that each district must have a secretary and district representative, all other positions are a matter for the district to decide.

Should the Chair and Ringing Master jobs be separated?

RJ proposed that they should be separated, MF seconded this.

(a) Chair

TF was proposed by JF, seconded by ES and voted in unanimously.

(b) Ringing Master - job share (rather than master and deputy)

CH and RJ were proposed by CT, seconded by TF and voted in unanimously.

(c) Secretary

AP was proposed by KT, seconded by RJ and voted in unanimously.

(d) Do we need a Treasurer/Membership Secretary, as most of this job is being done at county level?

It is unclear what will happen with membership at the district level, so it is suggested that this question be reviewed again next year.

KT was proposed by CH, seconded by TF and voted in unanimously.

(e) Clothing Sales Rep - this is now a whole KCACR vote, so does not require a district election.

(f) District Representatives (job share)

SF and AG were proposed by CH, seconded by GLE and voted in unanimously.

(g) District Youth Coordinator

NJ was proposed by CT, seconded by AG and voted in unanimously.

## 7 . Election and welcoming of new members

There have been changes to the new membership application procedure (see treasurer/membership secretaries report and comments above).

On line applications are made through the Membership tab on the KCACR Website at Kent County Association of Change Ringers at membermojo (<https://membermojo.co.uk/kcacr/joinus>) where details of the new member and their home tower can be added. This form asks for the name and email of a district validating officer. There is an option to sign up to district news emails.

The KCACR (acting) membership secretary is currently DD.

The new membership platform automatically approves applications. Notifications are not being sent to the district membership secretary. Members joining at any point in the last 6 months of the year will need to pay half the annual subscription payment. You may wish to advise your new members to apply in January or July.

The following ringers have become new members and we would like to welcome them.

SD of Milton Regis was introduced by CT. He will be covering on the tenor for a quarter soon, and is ringing on Sundays.

GLE and PL of Swanscombe were introduced by RF. They were among a group of 11 learners that started to ring on 9th Jan. They have been ringing regularly and visiting neighbouring towers.

LFW and LC of Northfleet were introduced by KT. There are also 6 learners there, who are all making good progress.

They were all welcomed to the KCACR Rochester District.

## 8. Forthcoming events

- Saturday 18th November, 10:30 am at Cobham, district practice focused on doubles and minor (Plain Bob 5 & 6; Grandsire 5; plain hunting; St Martin's Doubles; Single Oxford Bob Minor)
- KCACR Memorial Service at Rochester Cathedral on Sunday 19th November at 3.15pm. **Please could we have the names and tower of any members who have passed away since the publication of the 2023 Handbook.**
  - RW (Shorne)
- ART M1 Course, 9th December at Staplehurst - is now fully booked
- KCACR AGM, 1st April 2024, will be held in the Rochester District at Rainham

## Vote of thanks

To Shorne for hosting this meeting and providing tea.

To NJ for his many years of service as ringing master and chair.

The meeting was closed at 18:04