



MINUTES of the General Committee Meeting held at Harrietsham Village Hall. ME17 1AP  
Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 10:00-12:45

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT :- 15 (*including 3 online shown in italics*).

(Members shown in grey were either not present or attending but representing more than one post)

Chairman	NJ	Neil Jones	CC Rep.	NJ	Neil Jones
General Secretary	SB	Susan Bassett	CC Rep.	SR	Stephanie Runting
Treasurer	PJ	Peter Joyce	<u>District Reps.</u>		
Training Officer	RC	Rupert Cheeseman	Ashford	BB	Brian Butcher
Youth Officer	JT	Jen Thomas	Canterbury	MB	Malcolm Barden
Bell Restoration Officer	BB	Brian Butcher	Lewisham	SS	<i>Svetlana Sokolova</i>
CC Rep.	PB	Phil Barnes	Maidstone	DD	Doug Davis
CC Rep.	CS	<i>Caroline Stockmann</i>	Rochester	SF	Steve Fitton
CC Rep.	AR	Alexander Runting	Tonbridge	ER	Eric Roughley and
				TW	Tessa Worthington

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE :- 3 (*including 1 online shown in italics*)

Handbook Editor	DD	Doug Davis	Quarter Peal Secretary	AL	Anthony Leeves
Health & Safety Officer	<i>BW</i>	<i>Becky Winter</i>	Publicity Officer	TW	Tom Winter
Librarian	PR	Philippa Rooke	Safeguarding Officer	EJ	Emma Jarvis
Peal Secretary	PB	Phil Barnes	Webmaster	DD	Doug Davis

2023/11/1      **Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Substitutions** – Chairman NJ welcomed all to the meeting and thanked PJ for finding and booking the new venue at Harrietsham. Apologies were noted from Philippa Rooke (Librarian), Peter Norwood (Lewisham Rep.) and Tom Winter (Publicity Officer), There were no substitutions.

2023/11/2      **Minutes of meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2023** – The Minutes had been circulated and were agreed by those present. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

2023/11/3	<b>Matters arising</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
2023/11/3.1	2023/07/3.1 <u>eBells Loan Scheme Video</u> – No progress.	PB
2023/11/3.2	2023/07/12.1 <u>Mailchimp to Member Mojo</u> – DD reported that the new system had been set up and new recruits were now signing up to it. The email facility would enable District Mailing lists to use it. Members would be advised how to use it shortly to renew their subscriptions for 2024. ER asked if Tower Secretaries would be able to enter details on behalf of their members. It was thought that GDPR complications might arise as KCACR must get written permission annually to use a member’s data. ER considered that members could be lost but others reported that the mojo system was working for many other associations. DD would send out the information again with detailed instructions on the Website.	DD
2023/11/3.3	2023/07/6.3 <u>Succession Plan &amp; Business Recovery Plan</u> – DD reported that he had prepared secure digital document storage using the 365 Microsoft system, particularly for Kent Young Ringer’s (KYR) information. JT had spoken with PR about temporary storage of KYR’s (current) Parental Consent forms in a secure area. Considered that a secure metal lockable box (with code access) to put the folders in, might cost about £20. NJ considered if such a box were kept in a	

secure storage space with restrictions on unauthorised access, reasonable effort had been made to safeguard the personal information held in paper format. CS agreed to assist DD with the wording of a written agreement/protocols for the scanning for digital storage (and disposal) of paper forms for JT & DD to follow. Agreed that JT pass old forms to DD for digital retention with the current forms held in a lockable box. The proposal to have an assistant Youth Officer would create another layer of sharing personal information, so NJ withdrew this. As regards a Business Recovery Plan for the Treasurer, PJ confirmed that he was writing a document to explain how to run the accounting software, to enable someone else to take over.

CS & DD  
JT  
PJ

RC joined the meeting at this point.

2023/11/4

**Safeguarding Updates** – EJ reported that further meetings had been held with the Canterbury Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the parameters of the Safeguarding audit questions had been produced. It would be circulated via Incumbents to Parish Safeguarding Officers. It would be useful to see how much involvement towers have with incumbents. EJ & NJ will be involved with the discussions regarding the feedback received. MB commented that the Diocese might not like some of the answers that ringers may give to the questions put. EJ hoped that ringers would reply honestly to such questions and would give feedback to the February General Committee. District Secretaries had been provided with EJ’s update on Safeguarding Training information. Central Council is looking at the Leadership Training and GDPR issues nationwide. NJ commented that a relationship between KCACR and Diocesan Safeguarding Teams are being built. Safeguarding Officers were invited to visit during any ringing sessions. MB asked when learners should be encouraged to do safeguarding training. EJ replied that Parish Safeguarding Officers should advise on this and add them to the list.

2023/11/5

**Finance & Grant applications**

2023/11/5.1

Treasurer’s report – Circulated and noted.

2023/11/5.2

BRF Investment Account – PJ confirmed that the Skipton Investment account had been opened to reduce exposure to FSA limits. Reported that better rates of interest were not available to Clubs & Charities but would look again at CAFF.

2023/11/5.3

BRF Grant Applications – BB reported that Margate was preparing to submit an application to ask the BRF for a grant to cover a loan of £4k taken out by the church, which had enabled the cleaning up of years of bird infestation in the tower. BB proposed a grant of £4k but others raised questions and concern. SB expressed concern at being bounced into an immediate decision and requested full information. NJ asked what was the long-term prospect of the church and bells? BB understood there to be 43 on the electoral role and the church parish share was £80k in deficit. The bells had been unringable for a long time but ringing had begun again since the cleaning works. MB did not consider this to be a good use of KCACR funds, particularly if the long-term future of the church was not assured. If a church is likely to be closed, KCACR should not invest in the short-term life of a building. MB agreed to explore the situation further. CS asked what the church’s role was. Not solely the ringers’ responsibility so asking for the full amount was not right. NJ proposed that a grant of £2K be offered subject to assurances on the long-term viability of the church and bells. If no assurances are given then the BRF Trustees would need to reconsider.

MB then  
BRF  
Trustees

- ER asked whether the BRF was able to contribute to the refurbishment of an Ellacombe chiming frame. NJ checked the BRF rules and considered that it could. An application from St. Peter's, Southborough could be made.
- 2023/11/5.4 NatWest – Subscriptions Bank Account – PJ explained that now DD had improved the subscriptions payment process through bank transfer, it would be simpler if DD had online access to view the Subscriptions Bank Account for audit purposes. PJ proposed, seconded by NJ and carried nem con that Doug Davis (KACR Webmaster and Handbook Editor) be given permission to have online access to view the Natwest Bank Accounts. CS commented that in terms of normal governance the focus needs to be on PJ doing regular bank reconciliations. PJ confirmed that any unusual transactions would be noted and picked up quickly as he checked the accounts daily. PJ & DD
- 2023/11/6 **Feedback from Events**
- 2023/11/6.1 Central Council AGM & Events 2023 – NJ commented that CCCBR had decided not to reduce the size of its committee. There was lots of talk about the state of ringing by Simon Lindford and what “we” need to do to improve recruitment. 65% of ringers are now 50+ so in 20-30 years’ time we won’t be here. If nothing is done the currently estimated 30k ringers will be reduced by half. Work is being done towards Ringing 2030 with a marketing company, Yellowyoyo to “brand” ringing nationally and in a way that all towers can easily engage with. See details on the Central Council Website, Ringing World articles and Simon Lindford’s full presentation at <https://youtu.be/DPLjCZ6VgEc?si=HCl3cgWPCDa1FH1M> It was well understood by ringers that as ringing is free it is not prioritised over paid training, sports or activities such as dancing. Young people have many clashes of events. Central Council is also identifying future problems with churches likely to close and the impact on ringing activities. Various suggestions were made including charging for training otherwise it’s not valued so much. EJ warned not to price ourselves out of the market when commitment is difficult to nurture amongst competition from other events. SB commented that new learners needed to be taught well and separately from practice nights until they were able to handle a bell competently in rounds. MB advised that energy was needed in recruitment but teaching lots of recruits was hard work on the teachers. DD considered that the Ringing 2030 rebranding would give a positive image to ringing. A good start had been made on ringing hubs to encourage more quality teaching. Towers like Speldhurst with a ringing simulator holds two practices a week. Lots of solutions need to be considered. A structured programme across Kent with regular workshops needs to be considered. Learners need to be encouraged to visit other towers. SB recommended that learners need to be able to progress through each level of ringing from basic handling (ART M1) to M2 (call changes/plain hunt then onto methods) with courses for teachers to attend. NJ agreed to put a general message out in collaboration with RC.
- 2023/11/6.2 Essex Trophy 2023 – DD commented that the competition had been a good day with Kent coming 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 6 teams, which was an improvement on 2022. DD is going to try to keep the band practising together ready for 2024. NJ thanked DD for organising this. Little Bob Royal at St Martin’s Epsom might be next year’s competition. DD
- 2023/11/6.3 Association 6-bell competitions – NJ reported that 4 teams entered into each competition. Neither Maidstone nor Ashford Districts were able to raise teams. NJ commented that the competition pieces were a joy to listen to. Canterbury District won by one point. It had also been a good experience for KYR to enter the call change competition. Thanks were recorded to Monckton for excellent refreshments.

2023/11/6.4	<p><u>Annual District Meetings</u> – DD reported that Maidstone District had struggled to form a committee with himself and Tom &amp; Becky Winter finding it hard to maintain enthusiasm. BB commented that Ashford District had many double-hatters and no Youth Co-ordinator. TW stated that Tonbridge District was running without a Chairman. NJ commented that technically Districts only needed a Secretary and a District Representative but acknowledged that it was hard to find willing and committed volunteers for posts. SF commented that Rochester District had lots of members but people didn't want to sit on committees and do paperwork. SB considered that complicated restrictions and regulations had put many people off. ER mused that dedicated enthusiasts only want to ring and many only ring at their own church but all are needed.</p>	MB
2023/11/6.5	<p><u>Choral Evensong</u> – NJ commented that attendance was down on the previous year but nonetheless enjoyable. PJ was thanked for organising the handbell ringing during the service. PJ enjoyed it but attendance was disappointing, particularly as Rochester Cathedral had put in a huge effort to make the service ringing-related. EJ commented that people vote with their feet and the first event was post-covid when people hadn't been able to attend the funerals of fellow ringers. She asked what the purpose of the service was now? Have we moved on? It's not a social event so needs looking at. Ringers like ringing not going to services. MB said that Ben Legg had raised similar points and suggested holding a jolly, social event instead. CS supported the Choral Evensong idea but couldn't get there due to a clash with her home church's Evensong. JT considered that a Cathedral Evensong is not necessarily what ringers want. DD stated that no-one was interested in an annual dinner. MB commented that the Canterbury Cathedral ringers attended two services a year. Perhaps alternate this service between Rochester and Canterbury? The Dean of Rochester is more than happy to accommodate KCACR but NJ asked MB to approach Canterbury about a Ringers' Evensong in 2024.</p>	MB
2023/11/7	<p><b>Association Archive</b> – No report.</p>	PR
2023/11/8	<p><b>Training</b></p>	
2023/11/8.1	<p><u>Training Plans</u> – RC had nothing to report as Districts were organising their own activities. DD suggested that BB run regular Bell Maintenance Courses at least twice a year. Such courses had been run for KYR and were much enjoyed. Loose tower is keen to do some such training. SB suggested at least one be run per District per annum to include rope splicing. BB agreed to set some up.</p>	BB
2023/11/8.2	<p><u>Training Teachers of new ringers</u> – SB had circulated a written progress report. She added that a group of towers would be hosting at least a weekly hub session amongst them, at various venues in the County, from January to March 2024. These would be advertised shortly.</p>	SB
2023/11/9	<p><b>Annual Reviews</b> of policies, rules and guidelines</p>	
2023/11/9.1	<p><u>Volunteer Complaint and Grievance procedure and Code of Conduct</u> – NJ commented that these documents needed serious re-writing to accord with the new Mojo member "election" process together with the next Agenda item, the Association Rules needed a root and branch review. With the assistance of DD and PB, NJ hoped to have this prepared for the February General Committee meeting. After which, it could then go out to Districts for comment ready for formal notification to ADM's then ratification at AGM 2025.</p>	NJ, DD & PB
2023/11/9.2	<p><u>Amendment of Association Rules</u> – Due to much consternation over the proposals by some Districts, DD had withdrawn his proposals to amend the rules.</p>	
2023/11/9.3	<p><u>Risk Assessment &amp; H&amp;S issues</u> – BW would shortly be making the necessary amendments for circulation with examples for assistance with a flow chart for</p>	

	submitting and holding completed forms. DD & BW were writing a RA for Boxley which they would share as guidance. DD could store completed RA's digitally. BW confirmed that no Health & Safety issues had been raised in the past quarter.	DD & BW
2023/11/9.4	<u>Expenses Policy</u> – CS asked if the Training Fund was for <u>any</u> member and if it made this clear enough. DD would add a link to the Training Fund Guidelines. CS considered it needed to be made clear how to apply. PJ agreed to look at the forms and guidelines. CS suggested mentioning it at AGMs. DD agreed to add a bullet point about it on the Home Page of the Mojo Member login.	DD
2023/11/9.5	<u>Data Protection and Privacy Policy</u> – DD commented that it should still be valid for the Mojo system. There were no dissenters to readoption.	
2023/11/9.6	<u>Fund-raising Guidance</u> – All agreed that the guidelines were still valid.	
2023/11/10	<b>Forthcoming Events</b>	
2023/11/10.1	<u>KYR Striking Competition</u> – 17/02/2024 at Chalk and Shorne. Rochester District were organising food, refreshments and a judge.	NJ
2023/11/10.2	<u>AGM 2024</u> – 01/04/2024 at Rainham. Rochester District was sorting out ringing routes. The church was booked and ringers would organise light refreshments. Attendees to bring their own lunch or use local food outlets.	
2023/11/10.3	<u>8-bell Striking Competition &amp; Ringing Festival</u> – 22/06/2024 Quex Park with BBQ. Method to be Canterbury Pleasure Bob Triples. NJ agreed to do the composition.	NJ
2023/11/10.4	<u>6-bell Striking Competitions</u> – 28/09/2024 Lewisham District for both method and call change competitions. RC to progress arrangements.	
2023/11/10.5	<u>Choral Evensong</u> – As previously discussed at 2023/11/6.5, MB to approach Canterbury about a Ringers' Evensong in 2024.	MB
2023/11/11	<b>Reports</b>	
2023/11/11.1	<u>Youth Officer</u> – A written report had been circulated in advance and was noted. JT added that next year's KYR Budget would be prepared for the February General Committee meeting. It was likely to be £2k less than 2023 as there would be no need to stay in hotels for the RWNYP which is to be held in London.	
2023/11/11.2	<u>Bell Restoration Officer</u> – BB had submitted his report online. He added that work to return the Marden bells had been delayed due to Nicholson's being very busy.	
2023/11/12	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
2023/11/12.1	<u>Charity Objects amendment</u> – PJ reported that the Charity Commission had refused to accept the proposed amendments to remove reference to Christian Religion. CS commented that this would be a block to obtaining funds from certain places (e.g., corporate giving). She considered the Charity Commission needed to explain why it had rejected the amendment and agreed to look into this on PJ's behalf. ER asked why the BRF was a charity in the first place. Trustees can change objects from time to time so why did the Charity Commission object? NJ commented that the amendments were needed as there existed several non-Christian buildings with bells in Kent, supported by KCACR, such as Quex Park and Chatham.	CS
2023/11/12.2	<u>KCACR Display Panels</u> – On behalf of Stuart Palin, MB commented that the KCACR Display Panels are damaged, needed updating and replacement. The contact address doesn't work and there's no reference to KYR and ART Training opportunities. CS says that Central Council Resources are available. She advised checking what's already there to give prompts and ideas to help consider the new content. Short-term a link to the Central Council equipment could be added from KCACR Website.	
2023/11/12.3	<u>KCACR Banner</u> – BB commented that he holds a KCACR banner with two Logos on it, which could be useful at publicity events. Agreed to hand this to TW.	

- 2023/11/12.4 Revd. David Cawley – BB reported that David was seriously ill and at Canterbury Pilgrim’s Hospice. Agreed that SB should send a card as soon as possible on behalf of friends at KCACR. BB commented that some of David’s records and those of Peter Romney were currently stored in Milton Regis belfry. They needed more suitable storage. DD also commented that there was an urgent need to digitise such records. SB  
DD
- 2023/11/12.5 General Committee Meeting Venue – PJ had received suggestions that St. Michael’s Maidstone Hall be considered as a venue for the next meeting. Concern was expressed at the limited parking. Recommended that the Grange Moor Hotel near to St. Michael’s be explored to hire a small meeting room. PJ
- 2023/11/12.6 Printing of KCACR Certificates – SB asked if a new stock of Membership Certificates needed to be printed now membership is online and members can print their own. Agreed this was no longer necessary. DD offered to print the 50 and 75-year Anniversary Certificates. DD & SB  
**Post-meeting note:** District Secretaries are asked to advise SB in January of the names of those reaching these milestones, so that Certificates can be signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in time for presentation at the AGM.
- 2023/11/13 **Date of next meeting** – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 in person, online and recorded. Future meetings 27/04/2024, 27/07/2024, 23/11/2024, 22/02/2025

The meeting closed at 12:45

SIGNED as a true record by .....on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Neil Jones, Chairman to KCACR