



**MINUTES of the General Committee Meeting held in the Lounge Room at  
Downswood Community Centre, Chiltern Close, Maidstone, ME15 8XG on Saturday  
27<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 10:00-11:52**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: 11 (*including 1 online shown in italics*).

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

Chairman	NJ	Neil Jones	<u>District Reps.</u>		
General Secretary	JP	Joanne Pohl	Ashford	BB	Edward Neate (substituting for Brian Butcher)
Treasurer	PJ	Peter Joyce	Canterbury	MB	Malcolm Barden
Training Officer	SB	Susan Bassett	Lewisham	PN	Peter Norwood or Svetlana Sokolova
<i>Youth Officer</i>	<i>JT</i>	<i>Jen Thomas</i>	Maidstone	DD	Doug Davis
Bell Restoration Officer	BB	Brian Butcher	Rochester	AG	Steve Fitton
CC Rep.	CS	Alexander Runting	Tonbridge	TW1	Tessa Worthington
CC Rep.	AR	Stephanie Runting			
CC Rep.	NJ	Neil Jones			

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:- 1**

Handbook Editor	DD	Doug Davis	Quarter Peal Secretary	AL	Anthony Leeves
Health & Safety Officer	BW	Becky Winter	Publicity Officer	TW2	Tom Winter
Librarian	PR	Philippa Rooke	Safeguarding Officer	EJ	Emma Jarvis
Peal Secretary	PB	Phil Barnes	Webmaster	DD	Doug Davis

- 1 Welcome, Apologies for Absence and any substitutions** – Chairman NJ welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted from Brian Butcher (Bell Restoration and Ashford Rep; Ed Neate, Ashford District Secretary, attended in his place as Ashford Rep), Peter Joyce (Treasurer), Sue Bassett (Training Officer), Tom Winter (Publicity Officer), Becky Winter (Health & Safety Officer), Philippa Rooke (Librarian). **ACTION**
  
- 2 Minutes of meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024** – The [draft Minutes](#) had been circulated and were agreed by those present. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.
  
- 3 Matters arising**
  - 3.1 2024/02/3.5 Charity Objects
    - a) Chairman NJ raised the proposed change in wording surrounding the Bell Restoration Fund (BRF) Charity Objects, as The Charity Commission is averse to the mention of specific religious activities. The Charity Commission has accepted our change of wording (related to our charity objects) but we can't change the wording on our objects until agreed by

membership, as they form part of the BRF rules. Therefore, such a change has to be agreed at an AGM or EGM.

CC Reps AR and SR joined the meeting at this point.

- b) NJ explained we can either wait for the rule changes next Easter, or we have an EGM to change the BRF charity objects, ideally at the 8-bell competition in July where a lot of members will be present.
- c) The General Committee was in favour of an EGM to change the BRF charity objects. JP to take the necessary actions to call an EGM. JP

#### 4 **Safeguarding Updates & GDPR** – EJ updated the committee on a few items arising from the last General Committee meeting.

- a) In response to a query from Speldhurst, EJ has been advised by Rochester Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors that PSOs are not requested to gather any specific information regarding details of ringers - this is down to the individual Incumbents and PCCs. However, it is considered not unreasonable for the parish to hold some basic information purely from a health and safety point of view. It was acknowledged that the type and amount of information gathered and stored is inconsistent between parishes. EJ did reiterate the advice for towers to keep an attendance register. EJ reported back to Speldhurst and will continue to liaise with both Rochester and Canterbury Safeguarding Teams to move towards a consistent approach, reporting back to the General Committee at its next meeting. EJ
- b) MB asked about consistency in the request for safeguarding documentation regarding visiting ringers and ringers visiting other towers, for example on outings. Canterbury Diocesan Safeguarding Team have been requesting that PSOs require ringers to produce up to date safeguarding documentation before ringing. This, however, is inconsistent throughout the Diocese. EJ to contact the DSA and report back to General Committee at its next meeting. EJ
- c) No further progress has been made with Canterbury DSAs regarding the Audit despite EJ's repeated requests for a meeting and update. EJ to update the General Committee next meeting. EJ
- d) EJ queried whether the CCCBR Code of Ringing has been pushed out to District Secretaries for dissemination. NJ confirmed it has; in Rochester District it is already on display in some towers.

#### 5 **Finance & Grant applications**

5.1 Treasurer's report from PJ was noted. NJ said funds are quite healthy at the moment.

##### 5.2 Permission to set up 'sister' savings accounts

- e) Treasurer PJ proposed this in his Treasurer's report that for each of the 4 main bank accounts that we have, we set up separate 'sister' accounts to ensure that the funds in any one account do not exceed the FSA guarantee of £85,000. It was felt by those present to be a prudent move.
- f) PJ proposes using Skipton, CAF or some other suitable 'secure' bank with a reasonable interest rate, and to keep each savings pot separate. JP interpreted this is one other institution (not 4 different institutions). The General Committee agreed with this proposal. PJ

5.3 Marden – completed and cheque drawn – noted.

- 5.4 BRF Grant Application – Peshurst (£10,000)
- a) Peshurst are looking to do a major overhaul, and BB recommended (in absentia, via documents circulated in advance) this is kept at £10,000. Chairman NJ said he was content with the proposal, there were no objections and all present were in agreement in the use of the funds as applied for by Peshurst.
- 5.5 BRF Grant Application – Boxley (£3,000 in total, £2,000 towards fittings and £1,000 for rope guides).
- a) DD explained the work taking part in 2 parts: primarily clapper work, and new sliders and runnerboards to be refurbished; and then installation of rope guides in the ringing chamber which has a 20-foot draft, for ease of ringing.
  - b) First part of work has started, and they are awaiting final faculty approval from the Diocese.
  - c) All present were in agreement in the use of the funds as applied for by Boxley.

## 6 Feedback from Events and AGM

6.1 AGM 2024 – 01/04/2024 at Rainham.

[Draft Minutes](#) were noted.

6.1.1 Tom Winter has expressed interest in being co-opted as CCCBR rep.

All agreed.

JP to advise CCCBR secretary, Ernie DeLeigh Runciman.

JP

6.1.2 Certificates – next steps

- a) Membership Secretary DD had planned on sending out a poll to members about membership certificates. Tonbridge District Rep TW raised the point that according to KCACR Rules, a vote should have been allowed to have taken at the AGM on this, even though it was a new matter arising.
- b) General Secretary JP suggested the committee take a decision on the certificates, given the feedback at the AGM. NJ asked whether, and DD confirmed, that we've never officially ceased issuing certificates; we had run out of stock. It had become inconsistent in Districts, so it seemed to slide into an 'online download' approach. Response at the AGM was that this was not an acceptable option, and so the General Committee agreed to go ahead with certificates.
- c) DD indicated we will need to get a quantity printed to be cost-effective. DD does have some of the artwork, and can check with the printer who did the last batch.
- d) NJ suggested, and JP seconded, that certificates are signed by the Chairman (instead of General Secretary): Historically, General Secretaries would run the County Association before the role of Chairman existed – all agreed that signatories would now be Chairman and vice president.
- e) Committee is happy with the certificate design as is.
- f) DD confirmed it was Hayward Design and Print that we last used. In 2015, the cost to print 250 copies was £149 +VAT.
- g) DD agreed to produce a small number of certificates using a laser printer (to test the viability of on demand printing rather than getting them printed externally in bulk) for the committee to look at at the next meeting.

DD

- 6.2 SEECON – South East England Striking Contest – 13/04/2024 – JT
- a) JT shared an update on the contest: a very good day, and Kent Young Ringers (KYR) were placed third.
  - b) NJ had heard a sound clip of the test piece, which sounded very good, and sounded like the band had jelled quite well, which bodes very well for the RWNYC in July.

**7 Association Archive** – Librarian PR shared two updates via email to General Committee.

- a) PR has received one enquiry since the last General Committee meeting, from a gentleman researching and writing about 78rpm recordings of church bells. He knows the standard HMV & Columbia catalogue but is interested in any EMI recordings. He also has information on a couple of rarer items and was hoping we might have a copy that he could view. One is from 1952 featuring the bells at Canterbury Cathedral, and celebrating the Festival of Britain, which we do hold although our copy has lost its sleeve.
- b) We've also been asked if we know of an LP possibly titled 'Ringing on a Peal Tour organised by Thomas Cullingworth in Sussex & Surrey July-August 1957'. PR had asked Hazel Basford but she hadn't heard of it. A quick internet search shows that the Southwell & Nottingham Diocesan Guild hold two copies of a Microgroove 12" Disc of this recording, with an information sheet. PR will point the researcher in that direction but will also share a message to members, via website/social media, in case anyone in our County has a copy. PR
- c) PR has been in touch with Stuart Palin regarding digitisation, and will take this further. PR
- d) In his notes on the agenda, Treasurer PJ indicated he was content to continue paying for storage of items in the archive.

**8 Training**

- 8.1 Training Plans – Training Officer SB is consulting with the six District Ringing Masters/Training Officers to assess what training and good practises are already going on within the Districts; details of this were in the Training Officer's report.
- 8.2 ART Learning Hubs Project – from SB's Training Officer's report.
- a) The General Committee had a brief discussion on Learning Hubs, which are showing great promise: Milton, Staplehurst, Lamberhurst, Harrietsham. AR said it would be good to make Sidcup an M1 training hub.
  - b) From SB's Training Officer's report, the General Committee noted the ART Trustees have taken the decision to increase the cost of ART Day Courses from £25 to £30 per delegate. This is applicable to both Module 1 and Module 2F/2C courses. This change will be applied to all courses which are added to the Events website on or after July 1 2024. Any Day Courses already live on the Events website prior to that date will be maintained at the existing price of £25. NJ said KCACR does cover the costs of ART day courses, so this will come out of our training budget.
  - c) There is currently no Association Training Officer Job Description, so SB asked the General Committee to please share their thoughts with her as to what is felt the role should encompass. Rochester District Rep SF

suggested the role of the Training Officer might be best described as identifying what training is required and desired.

- d) The General Committee were very satisfied with the inroads being made by the Training Officer SB so far and to keep up the good work.

## **9 Annual Reviews & Insurance Renewals – Policies, Rules and Guidelines**

- 9.1 Association Rules amendment proposals – Fifth draft for discussion, plus explanatory notes, had been circulated on 25 April 2024 via email from the Chairman, who thanked Chris Bassett and Stuart Palin, who had been very helpful, particularly with language in the Association Rules.
  - a) Chairman NJ suggested these proposed Rules be sent out to members in May, before the EGM in July (27/07/2024), so we have final version ready for September for District ADMs.
  - b) Chairman NJ went over the narrative accompanying the proposed rule changes:
  - c) While there are differing views on how we use Member Mojo, once Rule changes are made, we can fine-tune the process for proposing members.
  - d) Subscription deadline change to 1 March will ensure membership details are up to date for the handbook.
  - e) The need for the Safeguarding Officer to be on General Committee was felt to be very important.
  - f) The proposal for the General Committee membership is 17 (11 General Committee Officers, plus 6 District Reps) and a quorum of 8.
  - g) The proposed Rules will clarify that the General Committee meet a minimum of twice a year, which gives more flexibility.
  - h) Current Rules require reports in November, but given officers share reports throughout the year, this is excessive and the removal of this will be reflected in the proposed Rules.
  - i) In order to have accountability for the Treasurer, we will need one of the 2 other trustees to agree (over email) large expenditure, to maintain a paper trail of authorisation of spend.
  - j) Rule amendments also include regular sharing of bank statements with the other Trustees (the Chairman and General Secretary).
  - k) The Rules for the dispersal of Assets mentioned in the Rules don't match BRF rules. The Charity Commission is averse to the mention specific religious activities. It was agreed a sensible amendment, to bring these in line, and would be reflected in proposed Rule changes too.
  - l) Negligence is now included as grounds for suspension, in the new/proposed Rules.
  - m) MB indicated a couple of words missing from Rule 12.5 – NJ to adjust.
  - n) Following these changes, an EGM can be called to change Rules.
  - o) If we want a rule change at the AGM, requests must be received no less than 8 weeks before the AGM – less time may mean the Committee will be unable to discuss at a meeting.
  - p) Proposed rule change around publishing notices of EGMs in the Ringing World – DD felt this had been done in the past as a means of communication; we can now communicate with members much more quickly. Agreed by Committee to remove the Ringing World notice requirement for EGMs, from the Rules.
  - q) SF queried how many District Officers should represent a District. It was discussed that it ought to be just one District Officer, but some Districts have two (as a job share). Agreed not to change the Rules about this, because only one is needed to attend the General Committee Meetings.

- r) MB suggested that for Rule 6.4, while co-option is usually a temporary measure, the proposed new Rules can state that such an appointment shall remain effective until the next AGM.
  - s) Chairman NJ to circulate updated version of Rules.
  - t) DD and MB thanked everyone who had been involved in the development of the new Rules / Rule changes, for the effort put into these documents. NJ
- 9.2 Volunteer Complaint and Grievance procedure – c/fwd to post AGM 2025 when proposed Rules amendments are adopted/rejected. See Mins 2024/02/9.1
- a) Chairman NJ proposed this is addressed at a future meeting, to tie the [Code for Ringing](#) in with the [Volunteer Complaint & Grievance Procedure](#). NJ to table this for the next meeting of the General Committee. NJ
- 9.3 Risk Assessment & H&S issues – b/fwd from 2023/11/9.3 & 2024/02/9.2 DD & BW amendments with flow chart for circulation.
- a) No update from DD – not yet had a chance to catch up with BW on this. DD & BW
- 9.4 Expenses Policy – b/fwd from 2023/11/9.4 & 2024/02/9.3  
The General Committee discussed the [KCACR Expenses Policy – which had been ADOPTED in Nov 2022](#).
- a) Treasurer PJ had suggested an update to the hotel accommodation rates. NJ suggested increasing the limit of £100 (to cover accommodation and breakfast) to £120, on ‘budget’ accommodation.
  - b) Refreshments limit is £30 a day: Committee discussed whether this is still feasible. Youth Officer JT shared with the meeting that £30 a day covers costs but does get tight. A debate about whether a stated monetary limit is used, or simply saying ‘reasonable’ expenses would be reimbursed, led those present to agree that a specific number would be less subject to interpretation and all agreed to Refreshments limit increasing to £40 per person per day. PJ to update expenses claim forms. PJ
  - c) Feedback from PJ stated the mileage rate still seemed reasonable, and all were in agreement.
  - d) A discussion was had on what other national conferences might be taking place, where Association will pay travel and other expenses for attendance. Is it appropriate to pay for overnight accommodation at ART conference, for example, when travel is already paid for? NJ to share suggested amendments to the policy for consideration. NJ
- 10 Forthcoming Events**
- 10.1 8-bell Striking Competition & BBQ – 22/06/2024 at Quex, Canterbury District.
- a) The mobile belfry is booked, and MB awaiting teams’ confirmation of entry.
  - b) MB and Mike Little will operate ‘front of house’.
  - c) Paul and Kate Flavell will be doing the judging.
- 10.2 RWNYC – National Youth Contest – 06/07/2024 London  
Noted.

- 10.3 6-bell Striking Competitions – 28/09/2024 in Lewisham District  
 a) SR updated that a tower for this competition is being identified.
- 10.4 Essex 10-Bell Trophy Competition – 14/09/2024 St Martin of Tours, Epsom (KT17 4PX).  
 a) The test piece is Spliced Plain and Little Bob Royal.  
 b) DD has a few volunteers.
- 10.5 District ADMs – October 2024  
 Noted.
- 10.6 Choral Evensong – 17/11/2024 Canterbury cathedral.  
 a) MB has approached a chaplain at Canterbury Cathedral, and the cathedral is on board. MB to pass on details to JP, and JP to write to Canon Emma, on behalf of the Association, to ask if we may join their choral evensong. MB  
 JP  
 b) The General Committee had a brief discussion on whether it is an event to remember members who've passed, or a wider focus. NJ suggested we do the remembrance of members who've passed, at AGM, rather. To this point, MB shared the Cathedral is less keen on us asking for changes to a service, but happy for us to join a choral evensong service.  
 c) We can provide some refreshments before, though not a full tea as the service is at 5:30pm.

## 11 Reports

### 11.1 Youth Officer

- a) Youth Officer's report from JT noted.  
 b) Fun with Bells podcast: JT contacted Cathy Booth a few months ago, about KYR Striking competitions. Cathy Booth will be interviewing a number of KYRs, JT and a parent, about ringing in Kent and what it's done for the youngsters, including from the parent's perspective (ideally non-ringing parent). There will be technical checks in the next few weeks, then the interview in June, and catch up at RWNYP in July.

### 11.2 Training officer

- a) Training Officer's report from SB noted.  
 b) SB is consulting with the six District Ringing Masters/Training Officers to assess what training and good practises are already going on within the Districts; details in the report.

## 12 Any Other Business

- 12.1 There have been queries about Sandhurst in Tonbridge (District) possibly moving to Ashford District. Neither Ashford District nor Tonbridge District seem keen on this move.  
 a) EJ and MB queried why this is being proposed; NJ confirmed no formal proposal has been made.  
 b) NJ said it may not be viable / have benefits, and Ashford District rep (substitute for BB) EN and Tonbridge District Rep TW agree. NJ reminded that we are allowed to visit and ring in other Districts.

JT shared her thanks to the committee for her nomination to Vice President.

**13 Date of next meeting – 27/07/2024**

- a) The next meeting will take place in Downswood.
- b) It was agreed to move the November meeting from 23/11/2024 to 30/11/2024.
- c) JP to check with PJ re where subsequent meetings will take place.
- d) Dates of next meetings: 27/07/2024, 30/11/2024, 22/02/2025, 26/04/2025, 26/07/2025

JP/PJ

The meeting closed at 11:52

SIGNED as a true record by .....on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Neil Jones, Chairman to KCACR