

THE KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS - LEWISHAM DISTRICT

Minutes of the Annual District Meeting held at St Alfege, Greenwich on Saturday 12th October 2024

29 attendees signed the register of attendance, representing 10 different towers

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Alison Jones (Sidcup), Ruth Pointer (Beckenham), Margaret Heald (Erith, St John), Nick Wilkins (Farnborough), Bernadette Katchoff (Chislehurst, St Nicholas), Tom Hinks, Helena Mattingley and Rufus Mattingley-Hinks (Ss. Peter and Paul, Bromley), Sue Cameron (unattached), Chris Lawrance (Bromley Common), Natalie Slator (Erith, Christ Church), Lizzie and Becca Hardy (Beckenham), Andrée Jordan (Eltham), Edward Gormley (Lewisham).
2. There were no reports of **members lost** since the last meeting.
3. The **minutes** of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.
4. Twelve **new members** were elected unopposed and welcomed into the Association:
 - Bromley, Ss. Peter and Paul: **Patrizia Svaragato**, who has been ringing at Bromley this year having originally learned at Pimlico, witnessed ringing down by Tom Hinks;
 - Chislehurst, St Nicholas: **Stephanie Chan** witnessed ringing down by Alexander Runting;
 - Dartford, Holy Trinity: **Jackie Mac** and **Mark Doyle** witnessed ringing down by Rupert Cheeseman;
 - Sidcup, St John: **Paul Perrin, Edmund Barns, Ronnie Banks, Mathew Skipper-Banks, Anna Cox** and **Rachel Kerridge** witnessed ringing down by Alexander Runting;
 - Greenwich, St Alfege: **Shana Vijayan** witnessed ringing down by Rupert Cheeseman;
 - Beckenham, St George: **Jackie Downing** witnessed ringing down by Tom Hinks.
5. The 2023-24 **officer reports** had been circulated by email in advance, printed copies were available at the meeting. They are appended to these minutes. There were no comments or questions on the reports and they were accepted nem con.
6. A **County Rep update** was provided by Peter Norwood:

On the last Committee Meeting it was reported that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of one parish is requesting bellringers sign an agreement to hire the bells, for practices and ringing, in order to limit the liability or risk of insurance claims. The PCC was told that, bellringers are voluntary employees of the church and have their own insurance. This had been accepted by the PCC.

A discussion on GDPR, WhatsApp groups and social media use for the Association took place, and the need for reasonability in expectations on members. Webmaster agreed to investigate implications of GDPR for the Association's social media usage.

ART and The Mobile Belfries Trust (MBT) were inviting donations/funding to assist with developing and improving training in bellringing (through ART) and increasing recruitment (through MBT).

Feedback from Events:

The 8-bell Striking Competition & BBQ took place on 22/06/2024 at Quex. Five teams took part in the striking competition, won by Canterbury. Lewisham District came 2nd.

Ringling World National Youth Contest (RWNYC) took place on 06/07/2024 in London. Kent was represented by a team of eight for call changes.

The 6-bell Striking Competition was on 28/09/2024 at Beckenham, St George. St Stephen's, Canterbury, is the winner. Lewisham District came 4th, represented by Crayford band.

Essex 10-Bell Trophy Competition happened on 14/09/2024 at St Martin of Tours, Epsom, won by Essex Association. Kent Association came 5th out of six bands.

Forthcoming events:

Choral Evensong – 17/11/2024 at Canterbury.

Date of next meeting – 30/11/2024.

7. Advance Nominations had been received for the **Election of Officers** & circulated by email. There were no further nominations from the floor. Jim Hardy proposed and Rhiannon Meredith seconded to ratify the elections en bloc.

Role	Nominee
Chairman	David Holdridge
Secretary	Svetlana Sokolova
Ringling Masters	Ruth & Nigel Pointer
Youth Officer	Becca Hardy
Training Officer	Tom Hinks
District Reps	Peter Norwood & Svetlana Sokolova
Membership Secretary	Rupert Cheeseman
120 Club Administrator	Liz Morris

8. The **120 club draw** was held by Liz and Peter Morris:

Number	Prize, £	Name	Tower
55	20	Ruth Pointer	Beckenham
26	10	Dave Gyles	Asy-by-Wrotham
12	10	Liz Morris	Crayford
28	5	Rhiannon Meredith	Unattached

Liz notified that the final share for the current year has now been sold.

9. **Any Other Business**

- Neil Jones said a few words about the future of ringing. Every district has to start thinking about it now. Lots of churches are closing down and we simply losing places to ring. Even if the bells are accessible, there's a question of who'll be responsible for the work on the bells, if they are owned not by CoE. Number of active bell ringers dropped a lot. Lots of them over 60 years old. We need more young recruits who can support bellringing in the future. Central council had a few successful initiatives to get recruits, for example Ring For Millenium and Ring For The King. We need young people to come and learn now. Central council will raise funds for this. We have to invest more into the future of ringing. The feeling about it is very mixed in the ringing world, but we can't leave it the way it is.

With the right investment ringing will turn the corner. Lewisham District has an advantage of being close to London. There's association video equipment and display panels available to borrow for publicity purposes.

- Peter Norwood proposed a vote of thanks to Graham Long and local ringers for making service arrangements at Greenwich and for the use of their bells, church, kitchen and meeting room.
- Nigel Pointer passed a 'thank you' message from Ruth Pointer who couldn't attend the meeting, but ran District Practice that morning at St Magnus the Martyr. Ruth appreciated very much the help from experienced ringers who could fill in around those who are less confident. Some of them never rang on 12 bells before and wouldn't be able to without a strong band to support them.

There was no further business, the Charman declared the meeting closed and the ringers returned to the tower for further ringing.

Appendix: District Officers Reports for 2023-24

Masters' Report for 2023-24

When we look back at the report we gave at the last AGM, it seems strange that we were still talking then about ringing under COVID restrictions – how long ago that all seems now!

The changes that we made to the calendar of District events appear to have settled down very quickly, and it's been fantastic to see such a good turnout at so many of the events this year. We invariably have at least 20 people even at an "ordinary" District practice, with some of the "specials" attracting 30 or even more.

We promised last year that we'd keep the monthly practices at the very heart of the role of the District, focused on basic and intermediate method ringing, but with as many other activities "bolted on" as we could. We said we'd try to go to some more adventurous venues – we've really appreciated the positive feedback on the trips to Spitalfields and Sevenoaks, and hope that as many as possible will join us at St Magnus on the morning of the AGM. It's been a long time since there's been a District 12-bell practice – so if you can confidently ring rounds unaided then we'd love to see you there.

It's been great to see the more advanced ringers in the District pushing on during the year – the "months" quarter peal series at Crayford; the monthly Surprise Major quarter peals at Bromley; the near-weekly peal or quarter peal attempts at Farnborough and the efforts at the College Road Handbell Emporium, among others. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the tireless work of the organisers of these – we know it can be a pretty thankless task, but it's the one that keeps our bells ringing more than any other!

It's also been very encouraging to see some brand-new learners coming through and taking their first steps into change ringing. We're aware of various bell-handling training days that have been held during the year involving new ringers from Sidcup, Beckenham, St Mary Cray, Chislehurst, Eltham and more – a big thank you to the teachers who give so much of their time, for free. And to the newbies – stick at it, even if it seems daunting at times – it will get easier, we promise!

We also want to say a heartfelt thank you to the more experienced ringers who continue to come along and support the District practices – we couldn't do it without you and it does make all the difference to us all being able to help the next generation. Thank you. To the less experienced attendees, we repeat our request from last year - please, let us know what you'd like to ring, look it up beforehand and come prepared so that we can try to arrange a band to give you as much support as we can. The more you help yourself, the more we can help you!

The current calendar of events seems to be proving popular, so, if you choose to re-elect us for another year, then broadly you can expect more of the same, with a continued focus on providing opportunities for as many people as possible to visit towers or have ringing experiences they may not easily be able to get elsewhere. But if there's something you want to have a go at and aren't sure where to start, please do get in touch - we can only organise things in the way that we think you want us to, unless you tell us otherwise!

Looking further ahead – it's great to see the District events being so well supported at the moment. But we are very aware that we've arrived at the current situation as the result of a vote for change, and even the most radical of shake-ups can quickly become stale. No organisation can flourish if it stands still, and that includes those who are asked

to lead it. If you'd like us to, then we'd be pleased to continue for 2024-5. But after that we'll have done three whole years, and by then it will be time for a change – you'll need new ideas, new opportunities, renewed leadership. Please start to think now about the future direction you'd like the District to take, and who you'd like to see lead it into the next phase. Could that be you? Thank you for trusting us to look after your Lewisham District this year.

Best wishes
Ruth & Nigel

120 Club Administrator's Report for 2023-24

For the year 2023-2024 all shares were sold by October 2023.
Accounts for 2023-2024:

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
120 shares @ £10.00	£1200.00	Prizes	£540.00
Unclaimed prizes	£15.00	Council fee	£20.00
		Expenses	£9.99
TOTAL	£1215.00	TOTAL	£569.99
		To BRF	£645.01

The sum of £645.01 has been paid to the BRF.
Thank you to everyone for your support.

Liz Morris

Training Officer's Report for 2023-24

The district continues to have wide range of online resources on the district YouTube channel (Lewisham District Training). Lots of good work is going on across the district on recruitment and training of new ringers - the Association sponsors ART courses for those who are looking to learn how to teach new recruits. If you have specific requests for training over the coming year, please let me know.

Tom Hinks

Youth Officer's Report for 2023-24

The youth ringers have continued to make good progress this year across the district and have been involved in several Kent youth ringer events. Many thanks to Jen Thomas for continuing to organise these! The young ringers in the district continue to flourish with 5 new young members of the guild being elected this year.

No safeguarding matters of concern about behaviour were drawn to my attention.

Becca Hardy

Membership Officer's Report 2023-24

162 members renewed their membership at the beginning of the year and we've had 18 new members join since the last AGM. The new membership system seemed to work OK.

Rupert Cheeseman