



## KCACR ROCHESTER DISTRICT

**Annual District Meeting - Sat 19th October 2024, Tunstall**

### **Draft Minutes**

#### **Attending:**

Tim Ford (chair), Anita Perryman (secretary), Cathy Hall, Rona Joiner, Neil Jones, Steve Fitton, Keith Tolputt, Margaret Philpott, Mike Rannard, Val Reckless, Nicola Prior, Helen Handy, Kevin Handy, Matthew Cockell, Florence Hamp, Hazel Clarke, Diana Wraight, Tim Wraight, Caroline Marks, George Marks, Richard Bushell, Jennifer Thomas (and Theo), Oscar Brooks-Wilkins, Gill Rapley, Chris Rapley, John Breeze, Stuart Cox

#### **1. Welcome & Minute's Silence**

A minute's silence was held for Martin Rushton who rang for many years at Frindsbury, including as their ringing master.

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

Alison Gerrish, Margaret Funnell, Alan Driver, Nick Wheeler, Chris M Trafford, Chris J Trafford, Stephen Trafford, Louise Manuell, Richard Farmer, Val Cooper, Annette Jacobs, Jay Ford, Gill Rannard

#### **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last Quarterly Meeting, held at Northfleet on 20th July 2024, were circulated prior to the meeting. They were agreed to be correct and were proposed by CH and seconded by KT.

#### **4. Matters arising**

##### **a. KCACR Rule Changes**

NJ: The proposed revised rules of the Association and a commentary on the changes were circulated. Rules 7(iv) and 16(ii) state that these changes should be read out for consideration at the Annual District Meetings. These are also available on the KCACR website at:

<https://kcacr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Redrafted-Rules-of-the-Association-for-Consultation.pdf> and

<https://kcacr.org.uk/kcacr-rules-proposed-amendments-for-consultation-2025/>

These rule changes will be formally proposed for incorporation at the KCACR AGM on 21st April 2025 which will be held in the Tonbridge district (maybe at Sevenoaks). They are raised now so that they can be discussed by members in the districts. If members have any issues with these proposals they should raise them with Neil Jones at [chair@kcacr.org.uk](mailto:chair@kcacr.org.uk) (please put 'Rules Review' in the subject line).

##### **b. KCACR Training Officers Report to ADMs**

Sue Bassett, KCACR Training Officer [training@kcacr.org.uk](mailto:training@kcacr.org.uk) – 25/09/2024

Please contact Sue if you have any training and ART requests.

Since taking on the role of Training Officer at this year's AGM, my mission has been to gain a full understanding of the training work being done by Districts and to be a conduit for learners needing extra help or information. I have invited all members (who opted in, to receive KCACR emails) to tell me where they need additional help to improve their ringing journeys. To date, I have received 12 requests and I'm working to generate focussed hub sessions for these ringers, as well as to point them in the direction of learning materials that would benefit them. The hub sessions need to be booked by learners, to ensure sufficient experienced teachers are made available to support them. Details are on the Training Page of

the KCACR Website.

I am a convert to the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) methods for teaching ringing. I hope that many more experienced teachers will embrace and, learners will benefit from, the ART suggestions. If you have yet to engage with ART, please let me know if you wish to attend a day-course, as more can be arranged over the coming winter months. KCACR will even reimburse you the £30 course fee if you wish.

In the past year, there have been at least 30 attendances by KCACR Ringers at the M1 and M2F level ART courses held around the county. Four ringers have been Assessed by me and Accredited by ART for their hard work and practise of ART teaching methods. This boosts the total to 10 ART Accredited teachers in the whole of Kent (that I am aware of). Well done to them all, you are helping to support the future of bell-ringing - provided you practise your skills regularly by training learners of course!

The Central Council research towards Bellringing in 2030 (with its controversial new logo) could be seen as a gloomy forecast. If existing ringers do nothing positive to teach new people to learn and enjoy the art of bellringing, that forecast may well become reality. Ringing as we know it today, could then become a shadow of its former self. It's down to each and every one of us to help bring in and teach new learners well and to ensure that they don't give up when it becomes difficult.

As we know, it is hard and dedicated work to ensure that new learners receive good and frequent practical teaching sessions. All too often learners give up after learning to handle a bell, if proper bell-control is not taught or practised sufficiently well, before introducing call changes or change ringing. Many then give up, finding the next stage too hard, without the necessary ongoing support. Experienced ringers and officers can all do their bit by giving signposts to useful articles in the Ringing World, or websites such as ART, Central Council and The Whiting Society. They all provide useful publications to provide step-by-step support to make a learner's ringing journey fun with simple exercises to hone bell control, a sense of place amongst others and to gain the elusive "ropesight". If you're unsure where to start in your own ringing teaching journey, then make contact with me!

c. **ART**

SF: The Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) KCACR ringing hubs have restarted after taking a summer break. These hubs will benefit both learners and teachers seeking to complete ART accreditation. The Rochester District hubs are running at Milton Regis, details on website. <https://kcacr.org.uk/learning-hubs-update-october-to-december-2024/> Hubs are also running at Lamberhurst and Brasted. Module 1 covers teaching bell handling from absolute beginners to ringing up and down. It breaks down handling into component parts and then puts them together. ART has introduced adaptation in approach and more flexibility in teaching. They also cover what to do when things go wrong. There are no M1 courses scheduled to run in Kent at the moment, but these could be arranged if there is enough demand.

d. **Feedback on Association 6-bell Striking Competitions**

Bredgar represented the Rochester District at the Association 6-bell method striking competition in the morning of 28th September at Beckenham. Three other districts were represented: Tonbridge, Canterbury and Lewisham. This competition was won by Canterbury again.

In the afternoon bands from Bredgar and Rochester Cathedral entered the Association 6-bell call change striking competition. There were five teams including a Kent Young Ringers band (a sixth dropped out at the last minute). The striking was judged by Cathy and Simon Dixon. Bredgar won this competition with Rochester Cathedral second.

TF said well done to all who entered these competitions. He is proud of the Bredgar band.

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

### **a. Chair**

I would like to start by thanking the committee members for their hard work over the past year, which has allowed me to settle into the Chairman's role without any trauma. I think it has been a successful year, with a 'Quarter Peal month' in November, a new initiative of 'Firsts month' in April/May and a District outing to Hastings in June. The District also entered the Association's Eight Bell striking competition and both of the Six Bell competitions. The District hosted the KCACR AGM at Rainham.

District practices/meetings have shown a slight tendency for increased numbers, and it is hoped that this trend can be continued.

As ever, new ideas are needed in order to keep our hobby alive – please do say something if you have any comment to make along this line.

As far as training goes, it is encouraging to see that interest in the ART initiative seems to be growing – an M2 (call changes and plain hunting) was held recently at Rochester Cathedral, and it is to be hoped that this will have helped those that attended to develop ringing in their own localities.

To finish, please encourage your local ringers to be involved with the Association and to make the most of opportunities offered.

### **b. Ringing Masters**

It's been a busy year in the Rochester district during our first term in office. We have held training, developmental and competitive events, not to mention a firsts month, and are looking forward to seeing many of you at the Christmas Social in December.

Training wise, we took our lead from last year's training need analysis survey, which called for ringing up and down in peal, and early method ringing, as well as first steps into surprise minor. In February we held a surprise minor practice at Minster in Sheppey, where a variety of methods were rung, from Kent to Beverley. In March, we held a district training event teaching ringing up and down in peal, ably led by Neil Jones and Cathy Hall, and later in the year, a practice at Swanscombe focussed on ringing rounds, called changes and first steps in method ringing. We will be planning the branch training events and practices for next year shortly, so do get in touch if there is something you'd like to request.

District practices have been well attended, allowing attendees to practise and develop their skills, and we held a surprise major practice at Milton Regis in September, where participants got the opportunity to consolidate and develop their Cambridge and Yorkshire experience. A fabulous district outing to Hastings also allowed for development and consolidation of skills.

It was great to see so many entries to the six bell striking competition held at Bredgar in April, and that there was competition both for the method ringing and the call change trophies. The Rochester district also fielded a band in the county eight bell competition, who did well, coming third out of five teams, and Rochester district was represented in the Kent band for the Essex trophy, a competition between ten bell bands in the South East. If your band didn't enter the six bell competition in 2024, we do urge you to enter in 2025: targeted striking competition practices can improve ringing and teamwork like no other form of ringing.

Lastly, we held the Firsts Month in April and May, which has been previously reported on, but with the district achieving 54 firsts by 36 individuals, this needs celebrating! A great innovation which we will certainly be doing again in 2025.

Looking forward, we have had requests for more surprise major, so we will be looking to accommodate this, as well as anything else that towers or bands might need. We would like to thank every single person who has attended a practice, or a branch outing, or made a cake for a meeting, or put something on BellBoard, or contributed in any other way: all of the above activity wouldn't be possible without people showing up, so thank you so much for your support, and we look forward to a busy 2025!

Rona and Cathy

**c. Secretary**

Numbers attending events have mostly increased since last year. There were 16 ringers on the district outing to Hastings and an average of 32 at district practices with quarterly meetings. There were on average 16 attendees at district practices without meetings; these each had a learning focus based on the results of the training needs survey of last year and some required organisation such as signing up learners and recruiting helpers. We visited some towers that have not held district events in a while.

The Association AGM was held in the district, at Rainham, this year. The program for the day (other than the AGM itself) and open towers were organised by the Rainham ringers and the district committee.

Keeping the contact details for all towers up to date is still problematic. Certain of the generic tower emails are not being read very often. I have passed on a few enquiries from outside the district who have been unable to contact towers directly. Some of the inactive towers have churchwardens listed on the KCACR website as the tower contact; my emails have been blocked by one of these! Please could you let me know if your contact details change.

Anita

**d. Treasurer/Membership Secretary**

33 Towers with active members (out of 40) (32 in 2023, 27 in 2022)

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

191 members marked as 'active' as at 13 October 2024 (202 in 2023, 179 in 2022)

The centrally managed annual subscription self-renewal continues to improve with minimal queries to resolve this year.

From a treasurer's perspective, I have had no transactions to process.

KT

**e. District Representatives**

**Safeguarding:** As with last year, safeguarding has been a subject for much discussion. A significant issue is the apparent inability of the Rochester and Canterbury diocese to agree on a unified approach to safeguarding policies and training requirements. The association's Safeguarding Officer, Emma Jarvis, has been working hard, liaising with both dioceses to try to resolve the issue, but it seems akin to moving the Pillars of Hercules. However, progress is slowly being made.

**BRF Grant Applications:** So far this year grants totalling £28,000 have been approved. The recipient towers are: Margate £2,000; Tonbridge £10,000; Loose £1,000; Penshurst, £10,000; Boxley £3,000 and Ash £2,000. It's good to see towers in need being looked after.

**Training:** Sue Bassett has continued working on the ART learning Hubs Project, and these seem to be well received. The hubs support not only learners but also teachers who are working towards accreditation with the Association of Ringing Teachers. The accreditation is at two levels, M1 for teaching from scratch to rounds, and M2 for teaching from rounds through call changes to plain hunt. The KCACR is keen to

encourage the adoption of ART teaching methods and principles, and it was noted that anyone attending an ART M1 or M2 day course can claim the attendance fee back from the association. It was also noted that there is a shortage of accredited teachers, particularly at M2 level. Anyone interested in becoming accredited at either level can contact Sue Basset for more information.

Competitions: There were discussions around the rules for competitions in an attempt to encourage more teams to enter. As a result it was decided to suspend rules 1 to 4 for this year, for the 6 bell call change competition, in the hope that more teams would enter. This meant the competition was an open competition, although an entry limit of 10 teams was imposed.

Discussions took place surrounding certificates to new members, specifically whether this should be continued. It was decided that certificates should still be issued, and in paper format, rather than electronically. The best way to implement this is currently under consideration.

The committee discussed updating the rules of the association, see above.

SF/AG

**f. Youth Coordinator**

The Kent Young Ringers continue to flourish and we believe that there are 10 young ringers who will be aged under 18 on 31st August 2025 in the District of whom 4 are active KCACR members. Additionally, there are 7 more who are in the 18-25 age bracket who are active in the KCACR, some who have been KYR members in the past.

The active KYR group is slightly less experienced than in some previous years, however, their average age is also lower so there is a degree of potential with the cohort that we hope to realise over the next few months.

The Rochester District hosted the KYR Annual 6-Bell Striking Competition at Chalk in February. Although we were unable to field a complete team, the team in which our Young Ringers competed came 3rd. The Ashford District team were presented the winner's trophy by Margaret Funnell, who also happens to be one of the KCACR Vice-Presidents.

This contest was an opportunity for some of the District Young Ringers to experience their first ringing competition and a few weeks later the KYR squad assembled together with 7 other teams of Young Ringers from Associations and Guilds in the South East at Bushey in Hertfordshire for this year's SEECON (South East England Striking Contest).

The team rang well and were awarded 3rd place, beaten only by the W & P and the Young at Herts teams. It is worth mentioning that this was the first time that we have fielded an 8 bell team at this event since returning to ringing after lockdown.

Our monthly schedule of practices continued together with some focused practices for our Ringing World National Youth Contest team who were preparing for this year's contest in London. The event was based at St Mary-le-Bow although the final presentations were made in the awe-inspiring space of the nave at St Paul's Cathedral. To add to the sense of occasion, Great Paul was rung prior to the ceremony and the St Paul's Cathedral Guild rang us out with a touch of Stedman Cinques.

A record 36 teams entered, some ringing on 6 and others, like the KYR, ringing on 8. Of the 13 teams in the 8-bell call-change category, KYR were awarded 3rd place with a very commendable performance.

Six KYR members also took part in the KCACR call-change competition at Beckenham.

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 4th 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 Jen Thomas (contact details on the KCACR website and in the handbook) for more information.

Neil Jones

## 6. Election of officers

Keith Tolputt has stood down from the Treasurer and Membership Secretary positions. These posts are considered to be no longer necessary as the banking is all done at Association level. Membership is also handled directly through the database, with Doug Davies dealing with membership for the whole of KCACR. Enquiries should be directed to [treasurer@kcacr.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@kcacr.org.uk) or [membership@kcacr.org.uk](mailto:membership@kcacr.org.uk) as appropriate. We thank Keith for efforts on behalf of the Rochester District.

The rest of the current committee were all prepared to stand again. No other candidates were proposed. The following were proposed en bloc by Mike Rannard and seconded by Chris Rapley. They were all reelected unanimously.

- (a) Chair - Tim Ford
- (b) Ringing Masters - Rona Joiner & Cathy Hall
- (c) Secretary - Anita Perryman
- (d) District Representatives - Steve Fitton & Alison Gerrish
- (e) Youth Coordinator - Neil Jones

## 7. Election/welcome of new members

The KCACR website at: <https://kcacr.org.uk/kcacr-membership/> gives the current process for someone to become a new member of the Association is as follows:



Hard copies of certificates are probably making a reappearance; however we don't have any at the moment!

- **Gill Clark** of Newington, verified by Tim Ford (Mike Rannard)
- **Katina Fairlie** of Newington, verified by Tim Ford (Mike Rannard)  
Both Gill and Katina have been taught and completed their assessment through the ART programme. They started ringing last summer, are making good progress and can maintain good rounds.
- **John Breeze** of Rainham, verified by Neil Jones (D Wraight)  
He has been ringing at Rainham for some years now. A retired gentleman who is a loyal member of the band. He is ringing plain hunt and call changes on 7 & 8 and rings regularly for Sunday service.
- **George Marks** of Rainham (Junior), verified by Neil Jones (D Wraight)  
A keen, young ringer. He visits other towers regularly such as Rochester Cathedral and

Maidstone All Saints. He rings with the Kent Young Ringers. He was in the Kent 8-bell call change band that came 3rd this year in the National Youth Striking Competition in London.

- **John Kyle** of Stone-next-Dartford, verified by Keith Tolputt  
John has been a member of the Stone band for a couple of years now and is a regular Sunday Service ringer. He is capable of ringing rounds, call changes and down.

All were proposed by Neil Jones and seconded by Rona Joiner. They were elected unanimously and all were welcomed to the association.

**Action: New members to complete the online application (if they haven't already done so).**

**Action: AP: Pass newly elected members details to Doug. Inquire about when paper certificates will be available again (and whether we can get back dated ones for members who did not receive them when they were elected in January).**

## 8. Forthcoming events

- November: **Quarter Peal Month**  
RJ: We would like to encourage ringers to have a go at ringing quarters, in particular to try something new or a bit different. NJ will create an event on Bellboard, details will be circulated and your quarters should be linked to the Bellboard event.
- Sat 16th November 3 pm: **District Practice** at Cuxton, focusing on Plain bob doubles and minor and Grandsire doubles
- Sun 17th November 5:30 pm, **KCACR evensong**, Canterbury Cathedral
- Sat 14th December 7 pm, **Christmas Social** at All Saints Parish Hall, Frindsbury Hall (tickets are now available). Flyers for your tower notice board have been circulated. Sign up sheet will be circulated soon.  
**Action: All to encourage your ringers to purchase tickets**
- Sat 18th January 2025 3 pm: **District Practice and Quarterly Meeting** at Bobbing

## 9. AOB

- NJ: **Ringling in 2030**. It is thought that the Church of England may need to close between 10 and 15% of churches that contain bells due to dwindling numbers. Some churches can be repurposed in a way that keeps the bells accessible however this will not always be the case. Who will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of these towers? Such threats of closure/repurposing of buildings will have an effect on how we support some churches. The ringing population is declining and the Central Council is spearheading a campaign to promote ringing and recruit more people into ringing. Approximately 65% of ringers are over 60 (about 19500 of 30000 ringers); 20% are aged between 40 and 60. Only 15% of ringers are under 40, which is a worrying demographic. Although the campaign will be aimed at all ages, a greater emphasis will be placed on younger ringers as they are more likely to have time to progress as the ringing leaders of the future. The Central Council will need to raise funds to help manage this campaign, in particular looking towards paying some staff to undertake administrative roles linked to the organisation and management of this campaign. This is in line with other national 'voluntary' bodies, e.g. Scouts, National Trust. Funding will be from an increase in the CCCBR affiliation fee to £1 per member per association. This will cost the KCACR in the region of £1100, an increase of 500% from the current fee, and was agreed at the Central Council meeting. KCACR is in a fortunate position, as our fees were already raised to £15 which can accommodate this increase. A failure to invest in ringing, developing the marketing, recruitment, training and perception of ringing in the public eye is likely to result in fewer active bands and consequently fewer opportunities to progress in ringing. With the right investment, ringing can turn a corner. In a branding exercise, ringing was identified as being: adventurous, traditional, dynamic, logical, friendly and unique; it can

appeal to many more people, especially the younger generation, if we can enthuse them.  
KCACR aims to be able to hit the ground running in 2030.

- KCACR will be in need of a new chairman in April when Neil's 3 year term comes to an end. If anybody wants to know more about the work, please ask.
- FH asked whether there has been any progress on KCACR getting charity status. NJ reports that the charities commission has an issue with religion but KCACR are still working on this.

Vote of thanks goes to Tunstall for hosting and providing a great ringing tea.

The meeting closed at 17:44.