



## MINUTES of the General Committee Meeting

Held in Lounge Room at Downswood Community Centre, Chiltern Close, Maidstone, ME15 8XG  
on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025, 10:05-12:43

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: 9 (*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	JP	Joanne Pohl	Ashford	BB	Brian Butcher
Secretary					
Treasurer	PJ	Peter Joyce	Canterbury	MB	Adam Moore (substitute for Malcolm Barden)
Training Officer	SB	Susan Bassett	<i>Lewisham</i>	<i>PN</i>	<i>Peter Norwood</i> Svetlana Sokolova
Youth Officer	JT	Jen Thomas	Maidstone	DD	Doug Davis
Bell Restoration Officer	BB	Brian Butcher	Rochester	SF / AG	Steve Fitton Alison Gerrish
CC Rep.	CS	Alexander Runting	Tonbridge	TW1	Caroline Levy Cooper Hamilton Woods (substitute for 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

### Item

### Action

- 1 Welcome, Apologies for Absence and any substitutions** – Chairman NJ welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted from:
- Sue Bassett (Training Officer)
  - Doug Davis (Maidstone Rep, Membership Secretary Handbook Editor and Webmaster)
  - Steve Fitton
  - Tessa Worthington (Hamilton Woods substituting)
  - Malcolm Barden (Adam Moore substituting)

- 2 Minutes of meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024** – The [draft Minutes](#) had been circulated and were agreed by those present. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

JP

### 3 Matters arising

#### 3.1 2024/02/3.5 Charity Objects

- a) Following the EGM in 2024, PJ had sent the two changes to our Objects to Charity Commission. Charity Commission system only allows one change at a time, so one change was submitted.
- b) We finally heard back from the Commission in late 2024 that our current application to change the objects of the BRF had been rejected and the suggested wording offered by the Commission was that which we had previously had as our objects.
- c) Charity Commission has informed us that 'religion' must be substituted with other words (eg 'education' or 'social welfare').
- d) PJ had done some research and found that three bellringing associations don't mention 'religion', in favour of references to education and wellbeing: Essex County Association, the Hertfordshire County Association and the Mobile Belfries Trust. These are recognised by the Commission as valid criteria for a charity. These organisations do have charitable status based on these objects.
- e) Our BRF Objects currently read:

To advance the Christian religion by providing financial assistance to churches in the county of Kent or that part of London formerly in the county of Kent for the purposes of maintaining and improving their bell installations by the making of grants from the fund.
- f) Possible new wording for Objects could read:

To advance the art of bellringing by providing financial assistance to Churches and bell towers in the County of Kent or that part of London formerly in the County of Kent for the purposes of maintaining and improving their bell installations in order that the Churches and belltowers can provide facilities for furthering the public education in bellringing and for the benefit of the welfare of people by improving their condition of life through mental and physical exercise.
- g) It was agreed that the General Committee would requisition the General Secretary to call an EGM on the day of the AGM, and to publish a Notice of the EGM in The Ringing World, for the KCACR membership to vote on this proposed change in wording.

JP

#### 3.2 Membership statistics – request from Tonbridge District – CLC

- a) Hamilton Woods (HW) stated that the page on "District Analysis for the year", which was omitted in the 2023 Handbook, gives an indication and recognition of what the Districts are doing in the way of the make-up of membership in districts and the contribution each district is making to the Association funds, and asked whether it could be re-introduced.
- b) PJ responded that to compile these membership statistics involves quite a lot of hard work on Handbook Editor DD's part, to get the information, and appears to not be required.
- c) PJ added that he'd had brief conversations with others and the general view had been to exclude these details, so for the 2023 Annual Report it was omitted. No one else has questioned it.
- d) HW and the General Committee were satisfied that these district membership statistics would not be required.

#### 3.3 District Funds – request from Tonbridge District – CLC

- a) HW queried that the Treasurer has proposed to run down the float of Association money that each District holds.
- b) PJ clarified that some Districts do not hold Association money, and for some, the amounts are small. In the first two years as Treasurer the amounts did not change so PJ questioned their purpose. Most Districts

manage their own money for District events such as for striking competition prizes, meeting costs etc, and claim off the Association as appropriate. In consultation with other Association Officers, it was agreed to suggest to Districts that they ran down these funds if they are no longer needed.

- c) PJ agreed that money from Districts can be included in the Annual report / Handbook. NJ queried the relevance of this, when the funds are shared for all districts; but if this is requested by the Districts, this can be done.
- d) PJ reiterated that if a District has a purpose for funds/float, they are welcome to keep their floats.
- e) NJ confirmed that HW is happy with this position; HW confirmed yes.

## 4 Safeguarding Updates & GDPR

### 4.1 KYR Membership

- a) Under the previous membership system, JT would be notified of new members under 18 joining the Association.
- b) Our new membership system doesn't automatically ask new members under 18 years of age to permit their details to be passed on to the Youth Officer. EJ
- c) We want them to opt in to send this notification to Youth officer – EJ to ask DD to change that on the system. It was agreed that this would be set for anyone aged 25 or under.

### 4.2 Adoption of Social Media Policy

- a) The policy was adopted by the General Committee. EJ/DD
- b) EJ to send to DD to add to website.
- c) HW queried how this policy would affect District Facebook pages – the Policy would be for Districts to adopt.

### 4.3 Discuss Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Documents

- a) Central Council Safeguarding team (which EJ is part of) has come up with these documents, which EJ has tailored for the KCACR.
- b) Safeguarding Policy and Statement:
  - i. PJ queried what training will be needed "as appropriate" to role – document doesn't specify what training is needed. EJ will add a link to KCACR website page which specifies the training requirements for all members according to their role, and also remind members to check these requirements with their Parish Safeguarding Officer. EJ
  - ii. JP to include it in the agenda for the next General Committee meeting. JP
- c) Safeguarding Rules and Procedures:
  - iii. JT queried Safeguarding Notice on page 8.
  - iv. To go up at all events? Yes.
  - v. JP queried whether phone numbers need to be included (currently not) – EJ said would prefer to not have phone numbers included; will change it to email.
  - vi. NJ highlighted the first port of call should be PSO, if venue is a church, or safeguarding manager at non-religious venues.
  - vii. EJ to amend Safeguarding Notice order: Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), then Diocesan Safeguarding Office (DSO), then Safeguarding Officer, and remove General Secretary.
  - viii. JT queried page 3 – Training and Driving (2am – 6pm, or 2am – 6am) – EJ will look at the timing. EJ

- 4.4 Approach to confidential items discussed at Gen Committee meetings.
- a) Proposal from EJ: Any items agreed at the end of the General Committee Meeting to be confidential should not be included in the public minutes
  - b) NJ agreed this is a reasonable proposition.
  - c) The Committee was in agreement with this approach.
- 4.5 Feedback from Basic Awareness and Foundation face-to-face training on 18 January 2025.
- a) NJ, Ruth Campbell (DSO) and EJ delivered courses in basic awareness and foundation. Two pieces of feedback were received, both positive.
  - b) NJ and EJ to consider offering additional face-to-face training in another part of the County if requested.
  - c) JT asked if we can ask Rochester Diocese to host the leadership safeguarding training, in person. EJ says Rochester are offering this as a trial – three possible dates this year.

## 5 **Finance & Grant applications**

### 5.1 Treasurer's report was noted. PJ highlighted:

- a) We've recently moved the following to interest-bearing accounts:
  - £15,000 (BRF)
  - £10,000 (Training)
  - £35,000 (Subs)
- b) We've received the bulk of 2025 subscriptions.
- c) £3000 cheque for grant for Boxley is still awaiting to leave the account.

### 5.2 Audited 2024 Accounts

- a) The audited accounts had been shared with the committee.
- b) These have been sent to be published in the annual report.
- c) PJ confirmed that the accounting approach has stuck to income and expenditure, rather than accrual.
- d) PJ spelled out more clearly the outstanding grants yet to be made.
- e) The accounts, to be published in the Handbook, also separate the 2024 subscriptions and 2025 subscriptions, as previously requested.
- f) At the AGM, the Association will need to appoint an independent financial examiner – PJ has asked the current auditor, Steven Marsh, if he would be willing, which he has confirmed he is.
- g) PJ recommended we re-engage Steven Marsh for the next financial year.

## 6 **Ringling 2030**

### 6.1 Ringling Discovery Day

- a) NJ updated on the project under development with Central Council, looking at ways of bringing people into ringling. KCACR is working with Central Council to hold a Ringling Discovery Day.
- b) Possible dates: 26<sup>th</sup> July or 2<sup>nd</sup> August
- c) Venue: St Margaret's Rochester. This venue was chosen because:
  - a. It has a ground floor ring
  - b. The Medway area has fewer ringers per capita than the national average: 0.04%
- d) The Ringling Discovery Day is to be followed by intensive training course (possible summer school, or other bellringing school), to get people to ART level 1 standard at least.
- e) JP queried if we can offer travel reimbursement for members to travel to support this Ringling Day. PJ confirmed we have paid parking and

PJ

ART fees, but not travel / mileage (apart from travel for KYR). PJ to bring up at future meeting the reimbursement of travel expenses.

## 7 Feedback from Events

None

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

### 8.1 Association Rules amendment proposals

- a) Final proposal went to Districts for District ADMs in October.

### 8.2 H&S

- a) BW will be preparing risk assessment document for next meeting (if she is re-elected).
- b) If someone else is elected – won't be agreed by next meeting. JP / BW
- c) There have been no H&S incidents or concerns.

### 8.3 Annual insurances

- a) These will be due in March and April.
- b) No changes anticipated to insurance covers. JP to advise PJ and NJ on quotes for premiums, and if large increase, look at other cover options. JP

## 9 Publicity

### 9.1 Update on display boards / pull-up banners

- a) No update had been received from SR.
- b) NJ confirmed Central Council do have some publicity material, which we can amend for local (KCACR) use.

## 10 Forthcoming Events

### 10.1 2025 and 2026 events – JP/DD

The Committee confirmed the dates and venues for the Handbook:

- a) 26 April – General Committee meeting. Venue – Downswood Community Centre.
- b) 21 June – Association 8-bell Competition & Festival of Ringing. Venue: Lewisham, St Peter & St Paul Bromley. Method: Double Norwich Court Bob Major. Judges: Stu Aitken + one other from Guildford Guild.
- c) 26 July – General Committee meeting. Venue – Downswood Community Centre.
- d) 2 August – Ringing Discovery Day –10am-4pm, St Margaret's Rochester. All confident ringers encouraged to help teach / assist.
- e) 27 September – Association 6-Bell Competitions (Call Change & Striking), Maidstone District (Barming), 9.45am draw
- f) 22 November – General Committee meeting. Venue – Downswood Community Centre.
- g) 28 February 2026 – General Committee meeting. Venue – Downswood Community Centre.
- h) 7 March 2026 – KYR Inter-District Striking Competition. Venue: Ashford district; Tower TBC

### 16 November – Choral Evensong

- a) This usually takes place on the Sunday after Remembrance Sunday, so this year it will provisionally take place on 16 November.
- b) Venue TBC: Feedback from Canterbury event last November was very positive, and the timing at Canterbury (5:30pm) suits better than at Rochester (3:15pm). MB
- c) MB to check with Canterbury District Company, if OK to host again. JP
- d) Then, JP to approach Canterbury to ask if they would host us again, CC MB.

- 10.2 Young Ringers Inter-district Striking Contest (01/03/2025) – Otford and towers around. Tonbridge District hosting, 4 teams taking part.
- 10.3 AGM (21/04/2025) (in Tonbridge District, likely at Sevenoaks.)  
 11:00 – ringing at Sevenoaks  
 12:00 – service  
 14:00 – AGM starts  
 Ringing after, at towers around.  
 District Secretary arranges service. JP  
 JP to confer with NJ re agenda, nomination forms, etc.
- 10.4 KCACR 8-Bell Inter-district Striking Competition (21/06/2025) - Lewisham, St Peter & St Paul Bromley. Method – Double Norwich Court Bob Major. Judges: Stu Aitken plus one other from Guildford Guild.
- 10.5 Essex Trophy competition (13/09/2025) – Carisbrooke on the Isle of Wight, hosted by W&P Guild.
- 10.6 Association 6-Bell Competitions (Call Change & Striking) (27/09/2025) – Maidstone District; 09:45am draw.

## 11 Reports

- 11.1 Youth Officer Report – JT
- a) The Kent Young Ringers (KYR) recently had three successful quarter peals over half term – two Bob Triples on Monday and one Bob Doubles on Tuesday.
  - b) JT thanked Adam Moore for his support. While he is no longer a Young Ringer he has been a solid support and help over the last few years.
- 11.2 KYR Budget proposal – JT
- a) NJ said he fully supports the KYR Budget Proposal. NJ recognised we make a large investment in Young Ringers: at the Ringing World Youth Contest last year it was an incredibly vibrant event, and it's been a privilege to see so many youngsters taking part.
  - b) 2024 budget didn't include overnight stays, but 2023 did. Overnight costs have increased since 2023.
  - c) The General Committee agreed to pass the budget.
  - d) EJ said we should be proud that as an Association we support our Young Ringers.
  - e) PJ proposed he transfer £5,000 to KYR Fund, which was approved.
- 11.3 Training Officer Report
- a) Report provided by SB.
  - b) Should the fee for learners be formalised?
    - i. In her report, SB stated that some of the hub hosts request a specific donation from learners towards tower maintenance. Other hubs/towers do not ask for any specific fee. Thinking about this also in relation to the Ringing 2030 super hubs project, it would be good to have feedback on whether the teaching of learners should become more formalised and chargeable like an adult educational course. Views welcomed.
    - ii. HM shared that in some towers in Tonbridge District, they suggest a donation to the church.
    - iii. This fee / requested donation is for hub learning at a tower (eg cost for heating, booklets, much like a tower donation – to cover the costs incurred for the course).
    - iv. To be considered for a future meeting post-AGM. SB/JP

11.4 Bell Restoration Officer Report – BB

- a) Listed places of worship scheme is changing: the government has decided to trim it back. Under the new calculation, a church will only get VAT back on £25,000 worth of work done (rather than a set amount that can be claimed). Any significant project will become more expensive for churches.
- b) Scheme runs to £23million across the country.

**12 Any Other Business**

- 12.1 a) EJ confirmed with the committee there were no confidential items in today's meeting.
- 12.2 a) EJ asked whether we need to consider if these meetings ought to be in person. We have quorum today, but would we have more attendance? JP  
b) JP to ask Committee members who weren't able to attend, if they had considered joining virtually.
- 12.3 a) PJ shared that DD would like to put an advert in the Handbook, about leaving a legacy to the Association. DD and PJ have come up with some wording, which they will circulate. DD/PJ
- 12.4 c) PJ raised the matter of the split of funds from subscriptions: at the AGM, we need to decide how much of the income of subscriptions is going to go into each account (BRF, Training, and General funds). BRF money is ring-fenced once it goes into the account, subject to Charity Commission rules.  
d) Allocation last time was 50% (General), 25% (BRF), and 25% (Training). The General Committee agreed we stick to that split.
- 12.5 a) JubiPeal is now in NJ's shed. Might make first outing at Ringing Day.
- 12.6 a) NJ going to ART AGM in March, in York, and asked if he may claim his travel and accommodation. PJ confirmed this is in order.

**13 Date of next meeting – 22/02/2025**

- a) The AGM takes place on Easter Monday, 21/04/2025.
- b) The dates for the General Committee Meetings for 2025 are: 26/04/2025, 26/07/2025. AGM: Easter Monday, 21/04/2025.
- c) The venue for the General Committee meetings will be Downswood Community Centre, Chiltern Close, Maidstone, ME15 8XG on Saturday 22 February, 2025.

The meeting closed at 12:43

SIGNED as a true record by .....on 26 April 2025  
Neil Jones, Chairman of the KCACR