Extraordinary General Meeting held at "The Barn', St Mary the Virgin Church, Chalk, Gravesend DA12 2NL
on Saturday 26 September 2026, 12:00-12:10

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rona Joiner – Chair (Rochester Cathedral), Rhiannon Meredith – Honorary General Secretary (Bromley), Philippa Rooke (Chelsfield), Chris Rapley (Sittingbourne), Gill Rapley (Sittingbourne), Matthew Cockell (Bredgar), Anita Perryman (Rochester Cathedral), Tim Ford (Bredgar), Andrée Jordan (Eltham), Phillip Barnes (Wrotham), David Holdridge (Eltham), Susan Symons (Tunstall), Neil Jones (Rochester Cathedral), Ellen Jones (Rochester Cathedral), Mark Elvers (Rochester Cathedral), Charlotte Elvers (Rochester Cathedral), Lily-Ann Lambell (Shorne), Oscar Brooks-Wilkins (Farnborough), Mario Ribes-López (Sidcup), Chris Bassett (Staplehurst), Sue Bassett (Staplehurst), Keith Tolputt (Gravesend), Val Cooper (Rochester Cathedral), Annette Jacobs (Rainham), Helen Marshall (Willesborough), Martin Marshall (Willesborough), Jasmine Brown (Willesborough), Shirley Marshall (Willesborough), Keith Osbourne (Willesborough), Mark Chittenden-Pile (Ashford and Kennington), Celia Burns (Shorne), Diane Reynolds (Eltham), Ian Mills (Eltham), Graham Adley (Chalk), Steve Fitton (Rochester Cathedral), Joanne Pohl (Rochester Cathedral), Stuart Cox (Tunstall), Jeremy Byers (Beckenham). 38 members in total. 25 members represent a quorum, and therefore the meeting was quorate.

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1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The meeting opened at 12:00. The Chair, Rona Joiner (RJ) welcomed those present.

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Joyce – Honorary Treasurer (Meopham), Isobel Legg (St Alphege, Whitstable), Colin Wyld (unattached), Margaret Fitzgerald (unattached), Jackie Toulmin (West Wickham), Pamela Manger (Frittenden), Marilyn Barden (Ash-next-Sandwich), Freda Parker (St Laurence-in-Thanet), Marek Michalak (Rochester Cathedral), Liz Morris (Crayford), Peter Morris (Crayford), Dominic Meredith (unattached), Liz Barnes (Wrotham).

2. Introduction

RJ set out the purpose of the meeting.

A requisition to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) signed by eight members of the General Committee was received by the Hon General Secretary on 06 August 2026.

The EGM has been called in accordance with rule 8 of the Bell Restoration Fund Rules, which state:

"No alteration, addition or deletion shall be made except at the Annual General Meeting of the Association or at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association especially called for the purpose. Notice of any proposed alteration or addition to or deletion of these rules shall be given to the General Secretary of the Association at least one calendar month prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting."

The purpose of the EGM is to propose to change the wording of the charitable objects of the Bell Restoration Fund to ensure that rings of bells in secular towers and redundant churches can benefit from grants awarded by the BRF.

3. Proposed changes to the Charitable Objects of the BRF

The current wording of the charitable objects of the KCACR BRF as stated on the Charity Commission Register of Charities is:

"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 purpose of maintaining and improving their bell installations by the making of grants from the fund."

This wording precludes the award of grants to bell installations in non-church towers such as secular towers and redundant or deconsecrated churches. EGMs had been held in 2023, 2024, and 2025 to propose changes to the wording of the charitable objects to address this issue. At all three EGMs the proposals were approved, however the amendments have been rejected by the Charities Commission.

It should be noted that the rules of the BRF published on the website and in the handbook are the version adopted by the Association in 2023, however rule 2 (which states the charitable objects) includes the wording that has been rejected by the Charities Commission. Rule 8 states "*No alteration or addition to or deletion of these rules shall be made so as to cause the fund at any time to cease to be a charity in law".* Consequently, when the proposed amendments to Rule 2 were rejected by the Charities Commission, Rule 2 automatically reverted to the original wording as stated on the Register of Charities and reproduced above.

The Principal Officers, in consultation with the General Committee, have been working to understand the criteria set out by the Charities Commission for charitable objects. Revised wording with the purpose of ensuring that rings of bells in secular towers and redundant churches can benefit from grants awarded by the BRF is now being put forward.

The proposed motion is to alter the wording of the Charitable Objects to the following:

"The object of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers' Bell Restoration Fund is to preserve the historical tradition of bellringing and enhance the nation's cultural heritage by making grants to churches and towers within the area of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers (as defined in the rules of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers), to maintain, restore, improve, and install bells to serve churches and communities for the benefit of the public."

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The Hon General Secretary, Rhiannon Meredith (RM) clarified that the original Notice of the EGM published on 29 August 2026 stated that the area of the KCACR was defined in the annual report, however this had been changed to align with the Association rules as the annual report has not existed for some time and has been replaced by the Handbook. Notice of this minor change of wording was sent by email and published on the website in the week before the EGM.

RM outlined the process for the change of wording. If the amendments were approved at the EGM, the Principal Officers would submit the request to change the Charitable Objects to the Charities Commission. A response – either to approve or reject – is expected from the Charities Commission within three months. If rejected, a new proposal would be considered before the AGM in the Spring.

Phil Barnes (PJ) noted that version of the BRF Rules published on the website is the version adopted in 2023 and therefore not valid. He asked if this should this be changed to reflect the Charitable Objects as listed on the Charities Commission website. RM responded that this she had only noticed this at the point of preparing for the EGM and would arrange for the website to be updated as soon as possible.

PB asked if the revised wording was rejected by the Charities Commission, did the General Committee intend to propose further amendments before the next AGM, or will it be brought back to the membership for a vote? RM responded that in her opinion, the rules of the BRF are very clear: the Principal Officers cannot submit proposed changes to the rules (including changes to wording) without a positive vote from the membership, and would not have intended to do so in any case.

4. Motion

That Rule 2 of the Rules of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers' Bell Restoration Fund be amended to alter the wording of the Object of the Fund as follows:

"The object of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers' Bell Restoration Fund is to preserve the historical tradition of bellringing and enhance the nation's cultural heritage by making grants to churches and towers within the area of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers (as defined in the rules of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers), to maintain, restore, improve, and install bells to serve churches and communities for the benefit of the public."

A vote by show of hands was taken. All those present voted in favour with none against and no abstentions. The motion was carried unanimously.

It was noted that the rule change would not take effect until approval was received by the Charities Commission.

RJ thanked all those present for attending and the meeting closed at 12:11.

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