

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION
HELD IN
THE CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, YATTON
ON EASTER MONDAY 17th April 2017**

Present: The Attendance Book records 110 people. Branches were represented as follows: Axbridge 25, Bath 6, Bridgwater 9, Cary 6, Chew 28, Crewkerne 1, Dunster 3, Frome 9, Glaston 5, Ilchester 3, Taunton 14 plus 1 visitor.

1. The Master opened the meeting with a moment of quiet and prayer at 3.05 pm and welcomed members, especially those attending for the first time. He thanked the outgoing Deputy Mater for her useful advice.
2. Members who had died since the last AGM had been remembered during the earlier service.
3. **Apologies for absence** were received from: Michael and Pauline Whittaker, Jane Grellier, Ken and Helen Brown, Shirley and Peter Edwards, Tina Harley, David Grabham, Backwell ringers, Jenni Llewlllyn, Peter Wilford, Clare and Peter Leavold, Les Curnow, Mike Hebden, Mick Howes, Nathan Bartin, Peter Bartin. Christopher Marshall, Gordon Rendell. The General Secretary asked members not to confuse this book (red) with the attendance register (black) which was circulating (very slowly).
4. **Young Ringer of the Year and Young Ringer Awards**
The Master, with assistance from Jill Hansford, the Education Officer, presented The Young Ringer of the Year trophy was presented to Olivia Hunt of the Axbridge Branch, her younger sister, Melissa, taking second place. A large number of young ringers were presented with their Young Ringer Awards. ITTS, ART and modular certificates were also presented.
5. **Notification of Any Other Business** - None
6. **Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting** - these were signed by the Master as a correct record.,
7. **Matters Arising that are not agenda items** - None
8. **Officers Reports** - Margaret Lee, the Bell Funds Officer, announced that the Quarter-Peal Month would be from 1st to 31st May. She also mentioned that the new Association Pens were now available at just £1 each. Andrew Howard said that his comments, to come later at item 11, were not intended as a criticism of the outgoing Treasurer.

All the reports were accepted without further comment.

9. Election of Officers for 2016/7

All the present officers except the treasurer were willing to stand for election. Bernard North proposed that with the exception of the Treasurer, all the officers listed on the agenda should be elected en bloc, Mike Hansford seconded and this was carried nem.con. Peter Bartin proposed Liz Lane for the post of Association Treasurer, Anna Piechna seconded and Liz Lane was elected nem. con.

Officers for 2016/7 are therefore:

Master	Rev Mark Jackson
Deputy Master	Janet Wyatt
General Secretary	Jay Bunyan
Report Editor	Jenny Astridge
Membership Secretary	Jay Bunyan
Treasurer	Liz Lane
Peal Secretary	Jenny Astridge
Quarter Peal Secretary	Clifford Nicholls
Tower Adviser	John Hallett
Assistant Tower Advisers	Roland Backhurst and Bernard North
Librarian	David Bromwich
Education Officer	Jill Hansford
Deputy Education Officer	Janet Wyatt
Bell Funds Officer	Margaret Lee
Web Master	Julian Back
Safeguarding Officer	Barrie Hendry
Independent Examiner	Anna Hallett

The General Secretary said that this would be her last year in office and invited volunteers to consider standing in a year's time. She also said that if no (suitable) volunteer stood forward, members might expect "a tap on the shoulder".

10. General Committee decisions

- a. Standing Committee Appointment: Charles Pipe-Wolferstan was appointed
- b. Rev'd. Tim Hawkings, Terry Nicholls & Charles Pipe-Wolferstan were elected Honorary Life Members.
- c. It was agreed that previously unaffiliated towers would need to pay 5 years' subscriptions (not necessarily over 5 years) before qualifying for a grant. There would also be an expectation that towers receiving a grant would continue to subscribe to the scheme.
- d. Bell Fund grants were allocated as shown:

Tower	Details	Contractor	Cost	Start date		Grant
Leigh on Mendip	Replacement of bell fittings, drill out cast in crown staples, re-tune	M Higby	£31,653	Autumn 2018	Not yet	£4,750
Drayton	Replace pulleys, add new ground pulleys, fit new sliders/brackets, check over/tighten all fittings, check bearings	Whites of Appleton	£7,649	Early 2017	Not needed	£1,150
North Cadbury	Re-rope bells 2 & 6. Clean, treat and paint all ironwork, Overhaul all bearings, tighten clapper bearings	M Higby	£2,148	June 2017	In progress	£325
Publow	Replace headstocks, wheels, stays and sliders. Provide heavy duty horizontal X braces to create safety cradle	M Higby	£28,994	Jan 2018	Not yet	£4,350
Totals						£10,575

11. Financial

- a. **Subscriptions and fees from 1 November 2015.** The General Committee recommended that no changes are made and this was agreed.
- b. **Direct Debits.** Andrew Howard spoke. He said that the majority of the members were in the age range 50 to 70 and in 20 years time would be dead. We needed to recruit more young ringers, move into the 21st century and pay our subscriptions by direct debit. He appreciated that this would require a rule change, but the Association should be run more like a business with the officers acting like business directors or managers. The Treasurer thanked Andrew for his comments and for advising him in advance that he would raise this issue again (see 201AGM minutes). He was not sure just how the need to recruit younger ringers tied in with setting up a direct debit system. However, he had investigated the costs of setting up and running a DD system and had figures albeit only by telephone, viz. £1,500 to set up 25p to add or delete each member. It would also require either a dedicated on-line computer to run it, or it could be outsourced for £500 a year. Another problem with such a system is that Branch Secretaries / Treasurers would not know who had paid and who had not, and the entire membership would have to subscribe to this system. Some Branch treasurers had already arranged for members to pay their subscriptions into their Branch bank accounts and maybe this was a better way forward as, unlike a DD system, Standing Orders were currently free to set up. However, the Treasurer-Elect agreed to discuss this further with Andrew, but pointed out that the Association was a voluntary charity and did not therefore necessarily need to be run as a business. Matt Gardiner said that he didn't think a DD system was necessary. Keith Beale said that the whole Association should be brought into charitable status, and then gift-aid could be claimed on subscriptions. The Treasurer replied that if this was done, all branch accounts would need to be closed as the treasurer was answerable to the Charity Commission (as Treasurer to the Trustees) and could not be answerable for accounts about which he had no knowledge.

- c. **Education Budget** – the details had already been posted on the website. The General Committee had recommended that the £2,000 requested by the Education Officer. This was agreed.
 - d. **Central Council Representatives' expenses.** The GC had recommended that for 2017 only, CC reps could claim up to £300 to cover reasonable travel expenses and one night's accommodation as the CC meeting would be held in Edinburgh.
12. Andrew Howard reported on CRAG (Central Council Review Group), saying that he felt that there was not much worthwhile progress. He had resigned as a member. He suggested that our CC Reps. ask the CC to consider holding future meetings in more central locations to improve accessibility.

13. Branch Bell Maintenance Contacts:- Training Issues

Jill Hansford said that she was still waiting for the BMC Handbook and apologised for the delay. Roland Backhurst said that the Handbook was still in preparation by the Central Council Towers and Belfries Committee, in the final stages of “tidying up”, and should soon be available.

14. Ratification of election of non resident life members prior to peals (2014/5)

The belfry elections of Daniel Graham, Matthew Thewsey. Cameron Waters & Judith Williamson were confirmed.

15. Association Striking Competitions

- a. 6 bell – 17th June in the Glaston Branch (Butleigh, back six),
- b. 8-bell – 30th September in the Bridgwater Branch. Babara Wylde said that the venue would be notified later, but it would not be at Highbridge. The method would be Grandsire Triples.
- c. Young Ringers Inter Branch competition: This will take place on 9th September in the Bath Branch. Jill Hansford will let branches know when the arrangements are confirmed.
- d. Ringing World National Youth Competition. A team will be entered for the competition in Birmingham on 1st July. Practices for this competition would commence at the end of the month, probably at Marston Bigot.

16 Date for 2018 AGM

The Master said that he'd received several representations requesting that the date for the AGM should be moved away from the Easter Bank Holiday Monday (at least on a trial basis) as 1. Many members could not attend owing to family and other commitments over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend and 2. Bank Holiday traffic was always a problem. The General Committee had recommended moving the AGM date to the second Saturday in May, away from any Bank Holiday weekends.

Some discussion followed. Jenny Cornwall said that the proposed date was in the middle of an exam period. However comments were generally in favour of moving the date and the Master called for a vote by show of hands. The result was: In favour of moving the date to the 2nd Saturday in May: 58, against: 28, abstentions: 20. Hence the date for next year's AGM , to be hosted by the Crewkerne Branch, would be: Saturday 12th May 2018.

17. Any other business: None

18. Anna Joyce then handed over the Deputy Master's chain of office to Janet Wyatt, now duly installed as the Deputy Master. The Master presented the Young Ringer of the Year Trophy to Olivia Hunt.

19 Votes of thanks.

The outgoing Deputy Master thanked all those involved in the arrangements for the day, Yatton ringers, clergy and PCC, and those who prepared and served the tea. She also thanked The Master for taking the service and Charles Pipe-Wolferstan for playing the organ. Charles said that he'd played the hymns loud and fast, as instructed by the Master.

There being no other business the Master closed the meeting with a prayer at 4.05 pm

Signed

Date