

BATH & WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS

Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on Saturday 10th October 2020

1. Opening

The Master opened the meeting with prayer before welcoming attendees, especially those attending for their first time. The Master commented on the difficulties of this year and how this was affecting everyone. Within his introduction he noted that we had all hoped that we would have been able to hold the AGM in the Frome Branch, and we had deferred the date in the hope that the pandemic conditions would improve, however it had become clear to the committee that this was not going to be possible, and he thanked members for their forbearance.

2. Remembering Friends

In remembering all those members, past and present, who have died since we last met the Master read their names:

Roland Backhurst
Peter Barton
Andrew Clark
Jim Cook
Robert Davis
Michael Horseman
Alison Lowe
Jim Taylor

Let light perpetual shine upon them

3. Attendance and Apologies

The attendance book was unable to be used for this meeting due to it being held online. However, all attendees had been sent the Zoom link and therefore we were able to confirm 55 members attending. Apologies were received from: Simon Tremewan, Derek Livsey, Julian Back, Paul Wotton, Chris Marshall, Geoff Walker, Edward Leigh-Wood, Robin Peachey

4. Minutes of 2019 Annual General Meeting

Having been circulated these were agreed by the meeting.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Officers Reports

These had all been made available to read on the website, and they were accepted without further comment.

7. Election of Officers for 2019/20

Apart from two officers, who had indicated their wish to step down, all officers were happy to continue for a further year.

The Master in thanking all officers, particularly gave thanks for many years of great service to Barrie Hendry and Julian Back who were retiring from their respective roles as Safeguarding Officer and Webmaster.

The Master said he was delighted to report that Steffi Penny had agreed to serve as Safeguarding Officer and Lawrence Bignall as Webmaster.

The Master thanked Joan Hopwood for her year as Deputy Master and welcomed Terry Nicholls as the new Deputy Master.

The officers for 20/21 were elected on bloc.

Master – Rev Mark Jackson	Deputy Master – Terry Nicholls
General Secretary – David Parfrey	Treasurer – Liz Lane
Tower Adviser – John Hallett	Assistant Tower Advisor – Bernard North
Report Editor – Jay Bunyan	Membership Secretary – Debbie Parfrey
Education Officer – Jill Hansford	Deputy Education Officer – Jan Wyatt
Bell Funds Officer – Jay Bunyan	Peal Secretary – Tony Cox
Quarter Peal Secretary – Clifford Nichols	Webmaster – Lawrence Bignall
Safeguarding Officer – Steffi Penny	Librarian – David Bromwich
Independent Examiner – Anna Hallett	

8. Election of Central Council representatives for 2020-2022.

The following members were elected

Jay Bunyan
Mike Hansford
Matthew Higby
David Parfrey
Charles Pipe-Wolferstan

9. General Committee Decisions

The General Committee had met on 4th July, and due the COVID-19 pandemic this had also been by Zoom.

The principal items discussed had been:

- i) Proposed revision of the rules – Agenda item 11.
- ii) 'Return to Ringing' Grant
It was reported that the General Committee had decided to make small grants available to parishes to assist with bringing bells back into use, following the many months of silence. It was acknowledged that full ringing as we would wish is still not possible, however given the limited ringing that is possible the timing for this initiative is right. The application process is light touch, although must come from an authorised PCC officer and can only be used to contribute towards external costs from an appropriate provider. Grants will be limited to one per tower, and will be for a maximum of £250, subject to availability of funding. £10,000 has been made available from the Association General Fund for this purpose, on 'when it's gone it's gone' basis.

iii) Bell Fund Grants

Two grants from the Bell Fund has been approved and awarded by the General Committee:

- £2,545 to St Mary & St Andrew, Pitminster – replacement of cracked 7th and new headstocks for the treble, 4th & 6th.
- £200 to St James, Taunton – works on clappers.

10. Financial

The Treasurer reported that both the Association and Bell Fund finances were in good heart. In part, through the effect of the Pandemic there had been unusually low activity bringing requests to the Bell Fund and similarly the low physical activity had kept costs down in the General Fund, although these impacts will be reported through the 2019/20 accounts.

The General Committee had supported the Treasurer's proposal that the annual subscription or affiliation fees would continue to be frozen this year.

Notwithstanding the general review of the Association & Bell Fund rules (Agenda item 11), the Treasurer proposed a change to the year end for both the Association & Bell Fund to 31st December in both cases. The change would have immediate effect and therefore 2019/20 would become a 14 month 'year' running from 1st November 2019 to 31st December 2020, with future years fully aligned to the calendar year. In future fees would become due on the 1st January, rather than the present 1st November. It was confirmed that no additional fees would be payable for the longer year this year.

During a short discussion the meeting was reminded that the Association had previously changed its date to the present timing to allow enough time for the accounts to be completed. However, in response it was noted that this had been some time ago, and since that time technology has advanced and the (normal) AGM date has been moved back to May.

The meeting approved the change with one abstention.

11. Proposed new Rules.

The Master introduced this item, notwithstanding the amendment to rule 4 last year, there has been no substantive review of our rules for some decades. Consequently, the General Committee commissioned the General Secretary to lead a review and propose such changes that might usefully not only bring us into the present millennium but place us in good stead for the next few years. Following this review, The Master suggested that it would be sensible for the rules to be routinely reviewed as a norm, every five years, in this way the reviews would not be such a task as we have undertaken this time, and that regular reviews would likely result only in minor changes.

A copy of the latest draft had been included with the meeting papers to all attendees. This draft is the product of much discussion and iteration by General Committee

members and was formally agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 4th July for submission to this AGM. In presenting the draft to members present the General Secretary thanked those who had already provided comments in advance of the meeting and said these would be taken together with any received during or after this meeting.

Members were keen to discuss and debate the detail, however, to work through all the individual rules would be time consuming and difficult. The Master asked that members take until 31st January 2021, working with their Branches to provide any comments. Following the end of the consultation process the General Committee will review the comments received and produce a final version for voting at the 2021 AGM.

In answer to a question from David Floyd, although existing rule 10 covers the financial year, it was confirmed that this rule was updated by agreement during Agenda item 10 above. The Financial year is now 1st January to 31st December (with a 14-month transition 'year' for 2019/20).

12. Ratification of election of non resident life members elected prior to peals

The Peal Secretary reported that 10 new non resident life members had been elected prior to peals:

Richard J Andrew
Julian O Howes
Mandy Burnett
Robert C Beavis
Isaac O'Shea
Christopher Spencer
Andrew Spencer
Jon M Spreadbury
Helen M McGregor
Jamie R McLeod

13. Association Striking Competitions

The Master spoke of his sadness that our normal fellowship through meetings and competitions had not been possible during 2020, however he hoped that conditions might improve such as to allow things to return in 2021. At the present time it is felt premature to make specific plans however, and therefore plans will be communicated as and when things become possible.

14. Central Council Annual Meeting 2022

The Master noted that we may have an opportunity to host the Central Council in 2022, and he canvassed the feeling of the meeting to ascertain whether we would wish to offer. The general view was supportive and various possible venues were suggested, including Cannington College and Bath Spa University. If this moves forward a small committee will be formed to undertake the planning and organisation (to include Jan Wyatt & Matthew Higby).

15. 2021 AGM

The Master introduced this item, noting that things were as for the Striking Competitions above.

Frome Branch had been due to host the 2020 AGM, and as a physical meeting had not been possible Frome Branch had kindly offered to host 2021 instead.

Clearly, we hope that a physical meeting will be possible, however members were informed that the AGM will be held in 2021 on the normal 2nd Saturday in May – come what may!

If a physical meeting in the Frome Branch is possible then the normal pattern will be followed with specific arrangements to follow. However, if the pandemic conditions continue to prevent a physical meeting, then the meeting will commence at 10:00 by Zoom. Either way the Standing Committee will decide based on the prevailing advice and liaising with Frome Branch regarding the ability for local arrangements to be made. If the 2021 meeting is again virtual, it has been suggested that, provided they are willing, that Frome Branch host the next possible AGM and we then revert to the normal sequence.

16. Any Other Business

None had been received.

17. Closing Remarks

The Master close the meeting in prayer after thanking everyone in the Association for all they do, particularly in these difficult times. He wished everyone safety from the virus and urged everyone to continue supporting each other and the wider community and hoped that the time for the in-person fellowship of our great art would return soon.