

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION HELD IN ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH, WELLS ON EASTER MONDAY 5th APRIL 2010

**Present:** The Attendance Book records the names of 118 people. Branches were represented as follows: Axbridge 33, Bath 1, Bridgwater 10, Cary 7, Chew 9, Crewkerne 2, Dunster 2, Frome 15, Glaston 13, Ilchester 15, Taunton 9, Visitors 2.

1. The Master opened the meeting with a moment of quiet and prayer at 2.47 pm.
2. Kate Flavell, Vice President of the Central Council of Church Bellringers gave a brief presentation on the work of the Council. She emphasised that the Council meeting was a time for work to be done and that Council members were expected to work on the various committees that meet during the year.
3. Members who had died since the last AGM were remembered.
4. **Apologies for Absence** Apologies were recorded from: James Taylor, Jeremy Dugdale, Jan Swan, Roy Cave, Jenny Astridge (who arrived later), Roger Fry (who sent his best wishes to the members), Jill Allanson-Bailey, Craig Rendell, Angie Hodges and James Stosiek.
5. **Notification of Any Other Business** Andrew Howard - finances, Keith Beale - charitable status.
6. **Young Ringer of the Year Award** The George Wareham trophy, together with cheques from the Association and the Edna Grabham Educational Fund, was presented to the Association Young Ringer of the Year (for the second year running) Matthew Martin of South Petherton. Kris Martin, also from South Petherton, was second and James Stosiek from Yeovil third. The Master noted that all were from Ilchester Branch and that should be a challenge to other branches. David Purnell reported that last year there were only 9 entries. Already this year there are 28.
7. **Minutes of the 2009 Annual General Meeting** The minutes as printed in the 2009 Annual Report were approved and signed by the Master.
8. **Matters Arising** – none.
9. **Officers' Reports** All reports were accepted without comment on the proposal of Stephen Powell, seconded by Mike Horseman and carried without dissent.
10. **Election of Officers for 2010-2011**

It was proposed by Brian Weare and seconded by Mike Hansford that all officers be elected as per the General Committee recommendations. Carried with abstentions from the listed officers. The following were therefore elected:

Master	Tim Hawkings
Deputy Master	Sheila Jenkins
General Secretary	Jay Bunyan
Assistant Secretary - Report	David Floyd
Assistant Secretary - Membership	Jenny Astridge
Treasurer	Charles Pipe-Wolferstan
Peal Secretary	Jenny Astridge
Quarter Peal Secretary	Clifford Nicholls
Tower Adviser	John Hallett
Assistant Tower Advisers	Roland Backhurst and Bernard North
Librarian	David Bromwich
Bell Funds Officer	Janet Wyatt
Education Officer	David Purnell
Deputy Education Officer	Janet Wyatt
Web Maintainer	David Floyd
Independent Examiner	Paul Treby

11. **Election of Central Council representatives**
  - a. For the current year (vacancy due to the death of Carol Hardwick). It was proposed from the chair that Mike Hansford be elected - carried.
  - b. For the 2011-2013 triennium. James Taylor was standing down and we have an allocation of 5 representatives. It was proposed by Derek Livsey and seconded by Jenny Cornwell that Roland Backhurst, Jay Bunyan, Mike Hansford, Matthew Higby and Richard Newman be elected. Keith Beale asked those proposed to outline their suitability for the posts, which they did. All were elected with 6 abstentions and no votes against.

David Floyd said that he had abstained as he felt there had been no opportunity to discuss the vacancies at branch level and that we needed more younger representatives. The General Secretary informed the meeting that she had written to Branch Secretaries in September to inform them that all Association posts, including Central Council representatives, were available and requesting nominations by 31<sup>st</sup> January. There had been no response. Andrew Howard asked if communications to the branches were effective as we need to make sure communication works.

The Master thanked James Taylor for his work on behalf of the Association at the Central Council.

## 12. General Committee decisions

- a. Standing Committee Appointment: Richard Newman was appointed
- b. Jay Bunyan was elected an Honorary Life Member
- c. It was agreed that Bell Fund grants should be available to all towers affiliated to the Association
- d. Bell Fund grants

### **Chedzoy**

Remove canons from bells 1 & 3. Remove crown staples. Rehang all bells on new metal headstocks, new modern bearings, new clappers, stays and sliders. Adapt second hand wheels to suit the new headstocks. Swap bells 1 & 2 in their pits to improve rope circle.

Cost: £14,695 Grant - £2,000

### **Congresbury**

Refurbish clappers and headstocks of bells 4, 5 & 6 and rehang on ball bearings. Rebrush clappers. Fit clapper adjusting screws. Adjust tenor clapper.

Cost: £7,628 Grant - £628 as required to complete funding

### **Long Ashton**

Overhaul clappers and rope pulleys. Refurbish wheels, remove headstocks and fit new gudgeons and ball bearings. Remove cast-in crown staples from bells 1-7. Treat corrosion beneath frame. Clean down and repaint frame.

Cost: £18,960 Grant - £2,500

### **Pitcombe**

Augment to 6, hanging new bells 1, 2 & 6 in a new lower frame (which will provide secure and safe access). Rehang the 3 original bells in new fittings within the existing 1901 frame.

Cost: £62,058 Grant - £9,000.

Should augmentation be to only 5, a reduced percentage will be applied to a maximum of £7,000

### **Wookey**

Fit new headstocks to 2, 3, 4 & 6. Drill out remains of cast-in crown staples. New bearings for 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. New bedplates and wheel brackets. Refurbish wheels (new wheel for 5). New stays, sliders, clappers and rollers.

Cost: £23,391 Grant - £2,500 to be confirmed when faculty is granted.

## 13. Financial

### a. Subscriptions and fees from 1st November 2010

Andrew Howard asked if any progress had been made regarding the payment of subscriptions by direct debit. The Treasurer had investigated this with our Bank and it was not cost effective, costing some £850 a year initially then a charge for every change made. A rule change would also be required.

Andrew Howard then stated that he did not agree with the General Committee recommendation to keep subscriptions at £6 as this did not bring in sufficient income. Other associations charged considerably more. 25% of the income went to producing the annual report - we had a superb website - possibly the best in the country - and all the information could be shown there. 62% of income went to the Bell Fund - a worthy cause but we need ringers. 82% of the Association's income was therefore spent without furthering Rule 1. He felt that the Bell Fund should be used to fund training centres. Roland Backhurst pointed out that there was an excellent and underused training centre at South Petherton and Joan Hopwood stated that the simulator at Minehead was well used by Dunster Branch. Marion Newman commented that there is a need for bells that are in safe and reasonable order. These will sustain a band in better fashion than those that are not safe and reasonable.

The General Secretary referred to discussions in 2006 when an Association training facility was proposed and rejected.

The Master closed this discussion by stating that facilities do exist. We need to look at what is available and make more use of it.

Andrew Howard then proposed that subscriptions be raised to £10 in 2 stages, to £8 in November 2010 then to £10. This was seconded by Keith Beale and provoked more discussions. Brian Weare asked why we needed more money.

Charles Pipe-Wolferstan quoted his late father in law who had stated that belfry maintenance was the first priority, followed by teaching learners and thirdly ringing for Sunday service. The Bell Fund puts bells first - without bells there can be no ringers and if bells are difficult to ring there will be fewer ringers willing to ring them. More use could be made of our teaching centres but both South Petherton and Minehead are in distant parts of the Association. More teaching facilities are needed in the branches - ideally there should be at least one simulator per branch for those who need it. (The cost is approximately £2000 for a 6 bell fitting).

Before a vote was taken, Keith Beale asked about whole association charitable status and perhaps allocating 1/3 of the subscription to the general Fund and 2/3 to the Bell Fund. The Treasurer responded that this was no more cost effective now than when the idea was last floated in 2002. Additionally several branches hold bank accounts and he was not happy to include/put his name to accounts that he did not control.

Michael Horseman felt that it was time to put the proposal to the vote. The proposal to raise subscriptions this year to £8 and subsequently to £10 was defeated, with 20 votes in favour and significantly more against.

Fran Johnson then proposed that the General Committee's recommendation that subscriptions and fees remain unchanged. This was seconded by Andrew Pugh and clearly carried.

**b. Central Council representatives expenses**

The General Committee recommendation was that these remain at £120 per representative. This figure was proposed by John Gilbert and seconded by Wally Rice with 5 abstentions and no votes against. The General Secretary thanked the membership for their generosity.

**14. Proposed Rule Change to Rule 4**

Proposed by Charles Pipe-Wolferstan and seconded by Richard Newman.

Rule 4 with the proposed amendment would read: All annual subscriptions fall due on 1st November, **and should be paid to the designated Branch Officer within five months.** Re-election is necessary after two or more years lapse in subscriptions unless arrears are paid. Membership may be suspended or withdrawn at the discretion of the General Committee, in which case there shall be a right of appeal to that body.

The Treasurer outlined the reasons behind his proposal:

The change would make subscriptions payable by 31st March rather than 30th April as at present. This change would allow Branch Secretaries one month's leeway to collate Branch Return figures and would still leave 5 months from the 1st November when subscriptions become due until they have to be with the Branch Secretary/Treasurer, allowing time to check any discrepancies before sending subscriptions on to the Association Treasurer. The change would also remind members of their responsibility to pay over their subscriptions rather than wait to be contacted.

In seconding the proposal, Richard Newman felt that this was more than reasonable as subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> November annually. The proposal was carried with 2 abstentions and no votes against.

Rule 11 will now need adjusting and it was proposed by Richard Newman, seconded by Charles Pipe-Wolferstan that Rule 11 would now read "The designated Branch Officer shall collect subscriptions of the resident and associate members before **the 31st March each year**....."

Roland Backhurst felt that in the circumstances the required notice of a rule change could be waived and the amendment to Rule 11 was carried without dissent.

**15. Ratification of election of Non Resident Life Members prior to peals**

The belfry elections of Clare McArdle, Jack Aylward, Janice V Scull, Simon A Percy, Deborah M Talbott and Simon D G Webb were ratified.

Branch Secretaries are reminded that resident members may transfer to non-resident status on moving out of the Diocese if fully paid-up after three years of subscriptions have been paid. The Assistant Secretary (Membership) should be notified of such changes of status.

**16. Training and development**

David Purnell reported on the seminar held on 30th January at Butleigh. One of the major problems encountered by towers is keeping ringers and the seminar held workshops on recruitment, retention and development. Teaching for the teachers is to be a priority this year and there are plans for a recruitment drive in the autumn. David felt that communications could be improved - could this be achieved if members addresses and e-mail were on file for direct communication?

Keith Beale commented that he had only found out about the seminar via Ilchester Branch's Newsletter.

The Master thanked David Purnell and David Lingard (the facilitator) for setting up the seminar. The day had been full of enthusiasm and he would like to encourage all who are involved with teaching learners. There is a lot of good practice around and this should be shared.

David Purnell took this opportunity to thank Janet Wyatt, Deputy Education Officer, for her help in running the Bell Maintenance course and the bookstall as well as helping with the Young Ringer of the Year programme.

**17. A Bell for Zambia**

The General Secretary reported that this project was moving very slowly, due mainly to communication problems. Alternative lines of communication had been suggested but Bishop Robert wishes to keep Father Martin at Cannington as the conduit. As an example, the diagram and measurements of where the bell is to hang were received today (having been promised in November) but do not give any dimensions or show the tower/turret where the bell is to go. We are now informed that there is nobody locally who could install the bell.

Matthew Higby asked what money has been raised and the General Secretary said only the £80 from last year's AGM. Until we know what is needed we do not know how much the project will cost. The Master felt that we should support the project and once more information has been received the General Secretary will contact branches for their support.

It was suggested that Colin Lewis, with his experience of new rings in South Africa, could assist. This idea was originally suggested to the Bishop and rejected.

18. **Association Striking Competitions**

**Dates for 2010:**

6 bell	Bath Branch	19th June
8 bell	Dunster Branch	25th September

**Dates for 2011**

6 bell	Bridgwater Branch	18th June
8 bell	Frome Branch	24th September

19. **2011 AGM**

This will be held in the Ilchester Branch on Easter Monday, 25th April 2011.

20. **Any other business** - the points proposed had been covered in discussions elsewhere.

21. **Votes of thanks**

Michael Horseman proposed a vote of thanks to St Cuthbert's PCC for the use of the church, the Master and his assistant Andrew Pugh for taking the service, to Charles Pipe-Wolferstan for playing the organ, Kate Buckley and her team for tea and all those involved in organising the ringing and other local arrangements. He then invested his successor Sheila Jenkins with the chain of office.

June Legge thanked Michael for his talks on ringing. This was endorsed by the Master who also thanked members for all their hard work at tower, branch and Association level.

There being no other business the Master closed the meeting with a prayer at 4.35 pm.

**Child Protection & Bell Ringing**

- Always have two adults present when children are being taught
- Invite parents of any trainees to come and watch a training session before allowing their child to start to learn. Require a parent to attend the first training session and ensure that the parent fully understands what is involved in learning to ring
- Make sure a parent is responsible for delivering the child to and collecting the child from the tower
- Ask parents to sign a 'permission to learn to ring' form
- Keep an attendance register
- Be aware of the insurance position for children
- Never allow children up amongst the bells apart from an initial demonstration visit if it is safe to have one
- For tower outings get parents to sign a detailed permission form. Organisers should be aware of Health and Safety and other issues: for example, it is inadvisable for a child to travel alone in a car with an adult

New legislation requires registration for certain face to face training and transport of young persons. Seek advice from your parish, Diocese, local ringing society or visit the Central Council website - [www.cccb.org.uk](http://www.cccb.org.uk)