

BATH & WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS

Minutes of the General Committee meeting held in the Hood Chapel, Butleigh Church on Saturday 7th March 2015

Officers and Central Council Representatives: Tim Hawkings (Chairman), David Kelly, Jenny Astridge, Roland Backhurst, David Bromwich, Charles Pipe-Wolferstan, Jill Hansford, Michael Hansford, Jay Bunyan (Secretary).
 Elected Branch Representatives: Axbridge – Fran Johnson; Bath – David Kelly (also Deputy Master); Bridgwater – Freda Prime (deputising for John Hallett); Cary – Anna Joyce (deputising for Peter Alderson); Chew – Bernard North; Crewkerne – Jim Shepard (deputising for Lynne Smith); Dunster – Joan Hopwood; Frome – Matthew Higby; Glaston – Ken Brown; Ilchester – Gordon Rendell; Taunton – Bob Boulton (Attendance – 19 plus Julian Back until item 10)

1. The Master opened the meeting with a moment of quiet and a prayer at 10.04 am.
2. The General Secretary welcomed new members to the Committee: David Kelly (Deputy Master), Ken Brown (Glaston Branch rep), Bob Boulton (Taunton Branch rep) and, in their absence, David Floyd and George Wyatt.
3. Apologies were recorded for Peter Alderson, Richard Newman, David Floyd, Margaret Lee, Lynne Smith, John Hallett and George Wyatt.
4. Declarations of interest – Matthew Higby is the contractor for Evercreech, South Petherton and Badgworth. Ken Brown is project manager for Croscombe.
5. Notification of any other business – none notified
6. Minutes of the previous meeting on 15th March 2014 were signed as correct.
7. Matters Arising None
8. Officers' Reports

Master	No comments
Secretary	See below
Treasurer	No comments, but see 13 (a) below
Peal Secretary	No comment
¼ Peal Secretary	No comments
Tower Adviser	No comments
Librarian	The Librarian was asked how much the library was used – very little.
Education Officer	No comments
Bell Funds Officer	See item 13(c)

The reports were accepted on the proposal of Charles Pipe-Wolferstan, seconded by Gordon Rendell and the Master thanked all officers for their reports and hard work.

The General Secretary briefly outlined the reasons for the first half of her report and a lively discussion ensued. It was agreed that retention of recruits is a key issue and the Education Committee are aware of this. It was proposed by Matthew Higby and seconded by Roland Backhurst that a sub committee be formed by the Standing Committee to look into whether the current Association structure is the best possible in today's changing world. This would be noted as a General Committee decision in the AGM agenda. Anna, Matthew, Freda, Roland, Bernard, Jill and Julian expressed an interest in being on the sub committee. It was also felt that the Terms of Reference for the Bell Fund might need addressing – initial action by Standing Committee but see also item 17.

9. Association Officers for 2015/2016
 Proposed by Jay Bunyan and seconded by Gordon Rendell, that the Towers Advisers be re-appointed. It was agreed to recommend the following to the Annual Meeting.

Post	Nominee
Master	Tim Hawkings
Deputy Master	Keith Prime
General Secretary	Jay Bunyan
Membership Secretary	Jenny Astridge
Report Editor	Jenny Astridge
Treasurer	Charles Pipe-Wolferstan
Peal Secretary	Jenny Astridge
Quarter Peal Secretary	Clifford Nicholls
Tower Adviser	John Hallett
Asst Tower Advisers	Roland Backhurst Bernard North
Librarian	David Bromwich

Bell Funds Officer	Margaret Lee
Education Officer	Jill Hansford
Dep. Ed. Officer	Janet Wyatt
Web Master	Julian Back
Independent Examiner	Owen Cullwick
Safeguarding Officer	No nomination received

Tim Hawkings indicated that he wished to stand down next year. This provoked a discussion on whether posts should be time limited but no decision was taken at this stage. No interest has been shown in the post of Safeguarding Officer, which both the Central Council and Diocese feel we should have – those present were asked to think about this and approach anyone felt suitable. Freda Prime commented that many PCCs are not aware of the safeguarding requirements relating to ringing. Julian Back was introduced to the meeting and presented his credentials for the post of Webmaster.

10. Standing Committee Appointment - Richard Newman was reappointed, proposed by Charles Pipe-Wolferstan and seconded by Gordon Rendell – carried unanimously.
11. Honorary Life Members – no nominations had been received. Joan Hopwood made mention of Dunster branch electing honorary members of the branch
12. Rule change proposals- feedback from branches was fairly positive
13. Review of overall financial situation – see accounts in annual report
 - a. The Treasurer noted that on page 7 of the Annual Report the line showing transfer of £4,050 from the General Fund to the Bell Fund was missing from the General Fund accounts. This is shown correctly in the Bell Fund accounts
 - b. Education Officer's budget. The Treasurer asked if any figures were available on the retention rate for those young ringers receiving prizes. The Education Officer stated that this was over 70%. Charles also asked if PCCs were aware when a simulator was installed. Mike Hansford had arranged for installation to be covered by an Archdeacon's Certificate, which is applied for by the PCC. Jim Shepard asked how many of the simulators were actually being used. Taunton and Bridgwater branches use theirs very heavily, Cary branch regularly. The need to choose the right tower was emphasised. It was proposed by David Bromwich and seconded by Matthew Higby that the Education Officer's request for £4,000 was recommended to the AGM.
 - c. In the absence of the Bell Funds Officer, the General Secretary emphasised that we need to think big in the search for funds. The Bell Fund has been almost completely emptied and efforts need to be made to build it up again. A Just Giving page was suggested. The Quarter Peal month will be from mid May to mid June to coincide with the Association 125th anniversary.
 - d. It was agreed that the Central Council representatives expenses remain at £150 (meeting is in Hull).
 - e. It was proposed by Matthew Higby, seconded by Bob Boulton that the annual subscription is increased to £10. This was agreed with one vote against with some abstentions and should help the Bell Fund. Jenny Astridge pointed out that the peal fee would therefore rise to £1 per ringer. Matthew Higby felt that the peal fee should cover the cost of printing the peals in the annual report and the amount received was almost double that required for this task. It was appreciated that some conductors are very lax in paying their peal fees. This committee cannot recommend the reduction of the peal fee percentage to this AGM as it would require a rule change. Charles Pipe-Wolferstan proposed that the way forward was to propose an increase in subscriptions (from 1 November 2015) then put forward an appropriate rule change for peal fees in accordance with Rule 15.
 - f. Affiliation fees – these had not been increased since 2001 and the Treasurer felt that it might be time to increase this to £20 starting with those towers who paid by cheque or lapsed. The General Secretary will also write to those PCCs that had received a grant from the Bell Fund, say in the past 5 years, asking for a donation to keep grants available to other towers.
14. Bell Fund
 - a. Review of current projects: Mike Hansford reported the DAC had heard nothing from Backwell and Wedmore. Work is in progress at Kilmerston, Puckington are still fund raising, and Taunton has raised half the required amount. The newly refurbished bells at Yeovil cannot be rung as work is in progress on the tower for a further 3 months, then a further 6 months for the stonework to settle.
 - b. Grant applications

Tower	Details	Contractor	Cost	Start date	Grant
Badgworth	Refurbish/replace bells and fittings, clean and treat bell frame, fit tie rods to frame side	M Higby & Co	£27,545	When funding is assured	£2,750
Croscombe	Refurbish fittings, refit headstock to tenor, inspect/replace bearings, housing etc. swap treble and second in their pits to improve access, fit new headstock to treble. Clean down and paint all appropriate metalwork	Taylor's	£22,525	March 2015	£2,250

Curry Rivel	Urgent repairs to clapper and other fittings, de-rust/paint frame, restore wheels, refurbish bearings, roller boxes	Taylor's	£19,188 eligible (from total of £30,000)	April 2015	£1,900
Evercreech	Rehang back 8 on cast iron headstocks, overhaul/convert/replace existing fittings. Treat/repair corroded supporting beam	M Higby & Co	£30,961	July/August 2015	£3,000
South Petherton	Replace clapper bearings, secure crown staple bolts, inspect main bearings	M Higby & Co	£2,100	March/April 2015	£200
Templecombe	Rehang in all new fittings, strengthen supporting beams, retune bells 1-5 to tenor, remove cast in crown staples	Taylor's	£40,412	2016	£4,000
Whitestaunton	Replace old frame with cast iron 6 bell frame, remove crown staples, re-tune, and fit modern headstocks and fittings. Augment to 6 if funds permit.	Whites	£54,728 (excluding new treble)	2016	£5,400

15. Branch Bell Maintenance Contacts.

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to this meeting. Matthew Higby felt that these needed further action. As an example, in Frome Branch out of the 24 towers 2/3 received no regular maintenance. Should we have a Bell Maintenance squad as in Kent, Winchester & Portsmouth and Middlesex? The Treasurer emphasised that the meeting needed to approve the Terms of Reference so that he could request insurance quotes. Matthew Higby felt that the TOR needed to be more specific so that the BMCs can actually do things. David Kelly agreed – times have changed and we need to be more proactive. The Treasurer asked what we want insured and there was no positive answer. Matthew Higby suggested that the sub committee already proposed should include Roland Backhurst and look at BMCs as well. Proposed by Roland Backhurst and seconded by David Bromwich. Carried with 10 votes in favour, 2 against and 3 abstentions. The Treasurer will continue to seek advice on professional indemnity and personal accident insurance.

16. Association mobile belfry

This had been raised at the Education Committee meeting as a possible useful asset for the Association. Matthew Higby confirmed that the approximate cost of something similar to the Charmborough Ring (i.e. not a mini ring) would cost in the region of £20,000. He would be happy to house and maintain such a ring, but not administer it. As an example, both the Lichfield Mobile Belfry and the Charmborough ring run at a loss. More information is needed on funding, maintenance and insurance. Proposed by Jim Shepard, seconded by Charles Pipe-Wolferstan that this is listed as a discussion item for the AGM. Agreed.

17. Relationship between the Association and EGMEF

The Master thanked David Kelly for all his hard work with EGMEF. There are 4 stages:

- the reasons behind the proposal (previously circulated and will be put on AGM agenda)
- the specific governing document – already circulated
- necessary rule change (cannot happen until 2016 in order to comply with Rule 15) – see below
- acceptance by the membership at the AGM

Under (a) Fran Johnson asked if the proposed changes would still meet Edna Grabham's wishes. David Kelly responded that the Trustees could agree changes and it was felt that the new charity is what Edna would have wanted.

Under (b) Mike Hansford pointed out that no mention is made of the governing body. This is not required. Jenny Astridge noted that there was no mention of "young" ringers. David Kelly replied that the need was for training of ringers of all ages and the wording was the result of several meetings with EGMEF and the Standing Committee. Roland Backhurst felt that the wording might be too restrictive.

Under (c) the AGM should be informed that the Edna Grabham Education Fund will be administered by Trustees. The actual rule change cannot take place without the proper notice under Rule 15 and until the new charity has been registered with the Charity Commissioners.

Under (d) the membership should be informed at the AGM that the General Committee recommend these proposals. The reasons and the rule change details will be circulated with the agenda.

Roland Backhurst asked if this would duplicate the existing EGMEF – it will replace the existing fund and be more flexible. As part of the Association it will also be more accountable.

Matthew Higby suggested that the Bell Fund terms of Reference should be updated to separate maintenance from instruction – see also item 8.

Fran Johnson asked where the original trustees were listed – nowhere, and they are self appointed. The new set up will be much more transparent.

18. Association 125th Anniversary – 2015

The Bishop had agreed to attend the service and possibly lunch, for which there are still some places available. Joan Hopwood was thanked for her work in making the arrangements. There had been a comment that the lunch was expensive however a decent meal in a nice setting during the "wedding season" is not easy to arrange at a low price.

19. 2015 AGM

- this will be on Easter Monday 6th April in Bridgwater Branch. Details are on the website and have been sent to individual towers via the Branch Towers mailing lists. The agenda will be posted on the website early next week.
- Agenda/AOB items – none notified except item 16 above, which was known in November.

- 20. Striking Competitions
 The 2015 Association Young Ringer competition will take place on the second Sunday in September
 The 2015 6 bell competition will take place on 20th June in the Dunster Branch. The 2016 competition will be on 18th June in the Frome Branch. Joan Hopwood reported problems finding judges for the 6 Bell but it was agreed that judges from within the Association were acceptable for the heats but ideally and outsider should judge the final.
 The 2015 8 bell competition will take place on 26th September in the Axbridge Branch (at Wedmore). The method will be Middlesex Triples. Jim Shepard asked why bands could not ring a method of their own choice – e.g. 168 Triples. Charles P-W replied that the choice of method and touch was (currently) up to the host branch. In 2016 the 8 bell competition will be on 24th September in the Bath Branch.
- 21. Any other business. None
- 22. Next meeting - 5th March 2016 at Butleigh.
- 23. A Vote of Thanks was extended to Roland Backhurst for making the local arrangements, to Marilyn Backhurst for providing refreshments and to Butleigh PCC for use of the Hood Chapel.

The meeting closed at 13.30

Post meeting note: Barrie Hendry has offered to be Safeguarding Officer

Signed

Date