

## **Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers**

### **Association Bell Restoration Fund (BRF)**

At the 2013 AGM, Members voted to set up an Association BRF. The Rules and application form are on the website. Here are the answers to some BRF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

We will continue to review and add to these FAQs. If you have a question please email [secretary@bacr.co.uk](mailto:secretary@bacr.co.uk)

#### **1. Why does the General Committee feel that an Association BRF is necessary?**

There are several reasons:

- The cost for all types of bell projects is increasing and finding money to pay for them is getting harder. Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) are less likely to commit church funds for bell installations because they're struggling to raise money for church upkeep and running expenses.
- As Association bell ringers we should be more responsible for funding bell maintenance, restoration and augmentation projects in Bedfordshire. We need to make sure that we can continue to give our service to the church and local communities, and be able to ring as a hobby. If we don't take a more collective and pro-active part in the upkeep of our bells they may fall into disrepair and become unringable.
- Over time we can build up a substantial fund to make significant grants to bell projects that might otherwise not happen.

#### **2. What types of work will be eligible for a BRF grant?**

Grants would be available for work to provide, restore, maintain and improve bells, bell installations and their supporting structures. Work could include:

- recast, weld, tune and re-clapper bells;
- replacement or additional bells;
- repair or extend existing frames, provide new frames;
- overhaul existing ringing fittings, provide replacement or additional fittings;
- re-hang bells;
- install or improve sound management and acoustic systems.

#### **3. How will the BRF get its income?**

- 50% of Resident Ringing Member annual subscriptions.
- Non-Resident Ringing Life Member subscriptions.
- Association peal fees.
- Surplus income from Association events where a BRF donation is agreed by the Association General Committee.
- Donations, gifts and bequests from Districts, tower bands, church authorities and individuals.
- Tax recovered from Gift Aid.
- Investment income and interest.

#### **4. Will the BRF be a new, separate charity?**

No, the BRF will be a designated Fund under the Association's accounting umbrella. We can combine the BRF with our other Funds and get a greater investment income.

#### **5. Will subscriptions have to increase?**

Yes. From January 2014 the annual subscription will rise to £10 for resident ringing members over 19 years of age. £5 of this will go into the BRF. This is still extremely good value; compared with other hobbies and activities our subscriptions are, and have been for many years, ludicrously cheap. Our enjoyment of ringing comes at a very low price.

Association Rule 7 says that subscription amounts are recommended by the General Committee and approved at the Association Annual General Meeting.

#### **6. What about District bell funds?**

Districts will not have to close down their bell funds. They can continue as long as District members wish. Districts would be able to make grants in the same way that they do now, possibly in addition to the Association BRF.

#### **7. How will the BRF be administered?**

There will be a separate BRF Committee comprising the President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and three elected Life or Resident Members – one from each District. The election of District Representatives will be made at respective Annual District Meetings. There's nothing to preclude the BRF District Representative being:

- one of those already elected to the Association's General Committee, or
- the District's Ronald J Sharp Bell Fund Representative.

A quorum will be a minimum of five Fund Committee members of which at least two must be Association Officers. Any vote will be taken on a majority of those present.

The BRF will form a standing item on the Association's General Committee meeting and AGM agenda. A BRF report and accounts will be included in the Association's Annual Report.

#### **8. How will grants be made?**

Unfortunately we won't be able to accept applications for grants for some years whilst we build up the Fund. When we are in a position to do so, an application for a grant must be made by a Church PCC on the Association BRF Application Form. The BRF Committee will consider the application and make a recommendation which must be agreed by the General Committee. A payment will be made to the applicant PCC when the agreed work is completed.

#### **9. How is the BRF different from the Ronald J Sharp Bell Fund?**

The Association Bell Restoration Fund will make non-repayable grants to PCCs. The R J Sharp Bell Fund has been set up to provide **loans** to 'churches':

- To augment, recast or carry out other work on bells, frames and fittings.
- For major work in ringing rooms ('major' isn't defined).
- For work to the fabric of towers.
- To provide and hang new bells.

and only provide **grants** to the Association General Committee and District Committee for these educational purposes:

- Training course on bell ringing.
- Educational materials relating to bells and bell ringing.
- To promote bell ringing.

**10. What happens if the applicant PCC needs to change or vary their initial BRF grant application because of unforeseen or other circumstances?**

The General Committee decided that it wasn't necessary to cover this with a specific rule. It is envisaged that the Fund and General Committee will consider any amended proposals or grant applications on their own merit if the situation arises. A future rule change to formalise a procedure could be considered if this was found to be necessary.

**11. How long will it be before the BRF has sufficient money to make a grant?**

Unfortunately we do not know at the moment. We are at the start of a long journey towards a time when the Association will be able to provide more financial support for work than we currently do. We know it will take some years but at least we have taken the first steps and we're on our way!

Now that we have agreement for the BRF the General Committee and the BRF Committee can begin to plan for the future.

On our current activity we can expect a minimum annual income of between £1500 and £2000 a year. With concerted fund raising effort, donations, interest and gift aid we should expect this to increase within 2 or 3 years to over £3000/year.