

The Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Saturday 21st May 2011 at Biggleswade

1. Presidents welcome

The President, Sue Silver, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Kate Flavel, Vice President of the Central Council. She congratulated the young ringers who represented the Association at the Ringing World Centenary Striking Competition, (of whom Alice, Courtney, Cameron, and Aaron were present at the meeting) and team coach Nick Brown. She thanked the ringers and church authorities at Sharnbrook and Campton for the use of their bells for the team to practice.

2. Apologies for absence

Received from: Sally Creveul, Barbara Fraser, John Long, Sue Melvin, Alex Nash, Colin Payne, Peter Phillips, Chris Williams, Jacqui Albon, Ann Izzard, Dick Crisp, Roger Framp, Dorothy Kirby, Miriam Clark, our Patrons, the Right Reverend Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans, and the Right Reverend Richard Inward, Bishop of Bedford.

3. Members who have died since the last AGM

The meeting stood to remember Howard Barker of Thurleigh, John North of Tilsworth, Philip Rogers of Henlow, Jim Routledge of Kempston and Wootton and Archie Russell of Meppershall.

4. Minutes of the AGM held at Bromham on Saturday 15th May 2010

The minutes, taken as read, were proposed as a correct record by Sarah Ward, seconded by Mary Mann, and carried on a vote which was unanimous. Sue signed the minutes.

5. Matters Arising for items not on the agenda

None.

6. The 2011 Annual Report and Accounts

Sue thanked Martin Major and Terry Brown for producing the report and for getting it out so early. Terry said that she would get corrections put on the web site.

The accounts were adopted on a proposal by Sarah Ward, seconded by Vernon Green and carried on a unanimous vote.

The report was adopted on a proposal by Pat Albon, seconded by Linda Garton and carried on a unanimous vote.

7. Rule change

Terry explained that two rule changes were required to bring the Association into line with Charity Commissioners recommendations.

Rule 4 Management

Reason: we should appoint Bank Trustees (who are cheque signatories) from the General Committee, not from members at the AGM.

Proposal: Add before the sentence starting 'Any officer':

'Each year the General Committee must appoint two of its members to be Bank Trustees.'

Rule 11 Accounts

Reason: to regularise how we operate and manage our bank accounts.

Proposal: Add before the first sentence:

'The General Committee must:

- authorise opening and closing all Association bank accounts, and
- review all bank accounts regularly to make sure that charges and/or interest rates are competitive.

The Hon Treasurer and Bank Trustees must be authorised signatories and any two of these three must authorise payments and/or withdrawals'

Both rule changes were proposed by Terry Brown, seconded by John Loveless and carried on a unanimous vote.

8. Election of Officers

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded	Outcome
President	Sue Silver	Bob Churchill	Linda Garton	elected unopposed
Vice President	Bob Churchill	Stan Ashton	Charlotte Smith	elected unopposed
Honorary Secretary	Terry Brown	Nick Brown	Martin Major	elected unopposed
Honorary Treasurer	Barbara Fraser	Simon Stranks	Mary Mann	elected unopposed
Honorary Peal Secretary	Anthony Smith	Alan Shepherd	Russell Brown	elected unopposed
Honorary Librarian	Pat Albon	Charlotte Smith	Sue Spencer	elected unopposed
Independent Accounts Examiner	Richard Hillson	Keith Lewin	John Loveless	elected unopposed

There were no Honorary Life Members elected to the General Committee.

9. Election of new members

a) Honorary Life Members.

Sue read out a proposal by Martin Major to elect Anthony Smith as an Honorary Life Member of the Association. Mary Mann seconded and this was carried on a unanimous vote. Anthony was congratulated on his achievements and the huge contribution he has made to the Association over the years. Guy Scott also thanked Anthony for the welcome that he had given to him and his family on their arrival in Biggleswade.

Anthony responded by thanking everyone for giving him this honour.

b) New members

Christopher Spencer, ratification of a belfry election before a peal at Eaton Socon, transfer from Resident to Non-resident member, proposed John Loveless and seconded by Sue Spencer.

Janet Yeo, ratification of a belfry election before a peal at Eaton Socon, proposed John Loveless, seconded Sue Spencer.

Margaret Triste and Christopher McCarthy, ratification of belfry elections before a peal at Stotfold, proposed Richard Castledine, seconded, Vernon Green.

All were elected unanimously.

10. Subscriptions

Sue reported that the General Committee had decided, by a majority vote, not to change the subscriptions for 2012.

Chris Williams provided a written update about the subscription gift aid situation which Sue read out. In summary, 70 gift aid declarations had been made which will generate a return of approximately £96 from HMRC. Members who are UK tax payers are encouraged to gift aid their subscriptions which will increase the Association's income.

Richard Hillson asked about the gift aid status of members paying the reduced subscription rate. Sue said that they don't pay enough to qualify for gift aid; their subscription only covers the cost of the annual report.

John Loveless suggested putting a gift aid insert in the Annual Report to encourage members to do sign up.

11. Website update

Chris Williams provided a written update about the Association website which Sue read out. In summary, we have a temporary website (because the original one was hosted on a former officer's personal web space) which is being kept up to date with Association events, district newsletters and young ringer's events. The intention is to build a permanent website with all this existing information and more. Everyone is encouraged to use the website and send Chris anything that should be reported. Sue thanked Chris for her work on the website and for keeping it up to date.

12. Central Council (CC) Update

CC Vice President and President elect, Kate Flavel, gave an update about the work of the CC and the importance of Association reps being involved with the CC Committees.

13. Striking Competition dates for the St Peters Cup and the Melville Cup

Pat Albon reported that Sharnbrook wouldn't be able to field a team for the St Peters Cup. Sue reported that both competitions would be held on the same day.

- 2011: Saturday 17 September at Renhold
- 2012: Saturday 15 September, Biggleswade District, venue to be confirmed.

14. Any other business

a) Martin Major asked whether the Hon Librarian would be chasing up outstanding loans to a past Association Secretary as mentioned in his report. Before Pat could respond Richard Horne said he would return them!

b) Stephen Stanford said that last year he had raised questions about the Association's bell funds and a number of issues about charitable status and the responsibilities of Trustees. Had the General Committee discussed this yet? Sue said that this hadn't been done, mainly due to the loss of the Jacqui O'Regan as Hon Secretary. Stephen agreed to write to Terry with his observations and concerns to start this up again.

c) Stephen Stanford asked Sue if anyone had written to Jacqui O'Regan to thank her for her work for the Association as web master and Hon Secretary. Sue confirmed that she had done so.

d) Andrew Dennison said that the Goldington ringers would like to challenge Biggleswade again for Jim's Jug.

Anthony Smith accepted the challenge. He also suggested that the General Committee should look at the rules to make sure the raising and lowering striking challenge could be held more regularly and possibly on the same day as the other Association Striking competitions.

e) Martin Whiteley asked about the rumours of a refurbishment project at Biggleswade and possible ringing centre. He went on to say that, in view of the falling numbers of new ringers and the CC push on recruitment and training, a ringing centre at Biggleswade would be a great initiative and everyone in the Association should support it.

f) Terry said that she would like to review the rules, firstly for plain English, then for content, as she found them too wordy and cumbersome. Stephen Stanford agreed and said that the rules are generally too complicated and constraining; it would be better if they could be simplified.

g) Sue Sliver reminded everyone that if they would like to receive updates and information about Association events by email to let her have email details.

15. Date, place and time of 2012 AGM

Saturday 19 May, 6.00pm, Luton District, venue to be confirmed.

16. Vote of thanks

Sue proposed a vote of thanks to the incumbents and PCCs of Meppershall, Clifton, Henlow, Southill and Biggleswade for the use of their bells, Guy Scott for taking the service, James Eggleston for playing the organ, the ringers who rang the service touch and the Biggleswade Ringers for the excellent tea.