

The Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Saturday 16 May 2015 at Leighton Buzzard

1. President's welcome

Sue Silver welcomed members and thanked everyone for coming. She congratulated the young ringers for winning the Whitechapel Trophy again in July 2014 and they were looking to retain it for a third successive year at Oxford this year.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Bishop Alan and Bishop Richard, David Adams , Stan and Sheila Ashton, Val and Andrew Bryans, Paul Briscoe , Miriam Clark, Andrew Dennison, Maureen Hall, Yvonne Humberstone, Cliff Izzard, Mary Mann, Colin and Liz McCartney , Sue and Simon Melvin , Prudence Moore, Peter Phillips, Mervyn Potts Frank Rivett, Guy, Kate, Alice and Clarrie Scott, Adrienne Sharp, Alan and Sheila Smith, Philippa Whittington, Chris Williams.

3. Members who have died since the last AGM

We stood to remember:

- Patricia Woolhead from Aspley Guise who had died in January.
- Ron Freeman, a former member of Kempston and Wootton.
- Ralph West, a former member from Biddenham.

Several members gave a few words about each of these.

4. Minutes of the AGM held at Kempston on Saturday 17 May 2014

The minutes of the 2014 AGM were taken as read.

The minutes were adopted as a correct record, on a proposal by Linda Garton, seconded by Charlotte Smith; unanimous.

5. Matters arising from items not on the agenda

- a) Item 4 - The 2013 AGM Minutes had been amended to reflect Steve Stanford's points.
- b) Item 11a - Bedford River Festival in July. This went well. Thanks to everyone who helped, to Sarah Ward for organising the stand, Charnborough Ring and helpers, and to Bob Jones for negotiating a reduced pitch cost because of a problem with the neighbouring pitch.
- c) Item 11b - Diocesan Centenary Event, Keysoe in August. Unfortunately the weather was awful, but we made the best of it. Thanks to everyone who helped, to Linda Garton for organising the stand, the Charnborough Ring and helpers. Linda reflected that we hadn't met our recruitment objectives but our attendance had been appreciated by the Diocese.
- d) Item 11c - Associations insurance situation – Terry Brown explained that we aren't able to join Oxford DG personal insurance scheme. A note about our insurance had been put on the website and included in annual report. The General Committee will continue to review insurance position. Sue thanked Terry for her work on this.

6. The 2014 annual accounts and report

a) Accounts adoption

Two errors were highlighted. The 2014 accounts were adopted on a proposal by Pat Albon, seconded by Sarah Ward; unanimous.

Barbara Fraser and Richard Hillson were thanked for their work on the accounts.

b) Report adoption

A few errors were highlighted. The 2014 report was adopted on a proposal by Linda Garton, seconded by John Loveless; unanimous. Terry Brown was thanked for her work to produce the report.

7. Election of Officers

The meeting showed their appreciation for Sue Silver and her work as President. Officers were elected as follows:

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded	Vote
President	Sue Silver	Charlotte Smith	Anthony Smith	Elected unopposed
Vice President	Pat Albon	John Loveless	Martin Major	Elected unopposed
Honorary Secretary	Terry Brown	Peter Overfield	Helen DeMatties	Elected unopposed
Honorary Treasurer	Barbara Fraser	Charlotte Smith	Sally Cruvuel	Elected unopposed
Honorary Peal Secretary	Anthony Smith	Simon Stranks	Sarah Ward	Elected unopposed
Honorary Librarian	Pat Albon	Alan Shepherd	Dean DeMatties	Elected unopposed
Honorary Independent Examiner	Richard Hillson	Beth Overfield	Charlotte Smith	Elected unopposed

Pat Albon thanked Alan Shepherd for his assistance with looking after the library in Chews House, Dunstable.

Sue thanked the officers appointed by the Committee: Roger Kendrick - Technical Advisor, Rosemary Drewery - Safeguarding Coordinator and Chris Williams – Webmaster. Chris has made it known that she's not seeking reappointment in 2016; as such we need to find a new webmaster.

Sue also reminded the meeting that our Central Council reps will need to be re-elected at next year's AGM, and that she was considering not standing again herself.

Election of Honorary Life Member.

Alan Smith – proposed by Martin Major, seconded by Beth Overfield and passed on a majority vote with 3 abstentions.

As Alan wasn't present at the meeting Terry agreed to let him know about his nomination and election.

8. Subscriptions

The General Committee proposed no changes for 2016.

9. Association Bell Restoration Fund – proposed rule change

Terry Brown explained about the need to clarify BRF rule 6 on the Fund's sources of income:

- Currently rule 6 says that 50% of 'Resident Ringing Member' subscriptions will be paid over to the Fund. No distinction was made between age membership categories.
- At the 2013 AGM a £5 increase in subscriptions was only agreed for 'Adult Resident Ringing' Members. The 'Under 19' rate remained at £2.50.
- Technically, the BRF rule 6 also required 50% of the 'Under 19s' subscriptions to be paid over to the BRF even though there hadn't been an subscription increase.

- In 2014 only 50% of the 'Adult Resident Ringing Member' subscription income was transferred to the BRF.
- The General Committee agreed that BRF rule 6 shouldn't apply to the 'Under 19 Resident Ringing Member' subscription and that this should be clarified by a BRF rule 6 amendment.
- The General Committee also agreed that it wasn't necessary for 50% of the 'Under 19 Resident Ringing Member' subscription paid in 2014, amounting to £42.50, to be transferred the BRF.

Terry proposed, and Pat Albon seconded, to amend the first part of BRF rule 6 from:

The Fund's income will comprise:

- 50% of Resident Ringing Member annual subscriptions.

to:

The Fund's income will comprise:

- 50% of Resident Ringing Member, aged 19 and over, annual subscriptions.

This was passed by a majority vote with 1 abstention.

10. Election of new members

Anne Clarke of Aspley Guise, proposed by Liz Churchill, seconded by Bob Churchill; the proposal was carried.

11. Striking competition dates - for the St Peters Cup and Melville Cup

2015: Saturday 19 September, Biggleswade District to host at Haynes.

Melville Cup draw 3.30pm, St Peters Cup draw at 5.00pm.

Test piece 120 rows of a doubles or minor method.

2016: Saturday 17 September, Luton District to host, venue to be confirmed.

12. Any other business

a) Central Council (CC) Change Ringing for the Future

Terry Brown passed round copies of the CC's discussion paper on the future of change ringing and explained what it covered and the action we have been asked to take:

- In recent years the CC have been increasingly concerned about declining numbers of ringers. They set up a recruitment and training forum several years ago to look into this and see what could be done. Regional seminars were held in 2013 and 2014. The paper is a summary of this work and includes some recommendations that we are being asked to comment on.
- The paper will be discussed at the May 2015 CC meeting in a few weeks time so there isn't much time to consider this as an Association and give feedback via our CC reps at that meeting.
- The main proposals in the paper are for the CC to do more 'regional' level working through 8 proposed Regions, a new format for CC meetings, a new website to attract prospective learners, a survey, leadership training modules, new learner initiative/new learner pack and a partnership with the Association of Ringing Teachers.
- Our membership is fairly stable at around 370 members (not including non-resident associate members) but the average age of our membership is probably increasing. We have put a lot of effort into developing our young ringers but this success needs to be built on to include ringers of all ages. We should be better at recruiting, motivating and retaining ringers.

There was a discussion on the proposals and some comments were made, including:

- Linda Garton said that we do a lot of things well but often this is down to a few enthusiastic individuals. Although we are successful we could do a lot better and this initiative gives us the opportunity to think about ways to achieve this. Our CC reps should support the CC proposals.
- Alex Nash observed that the CC is looking to work as an 'oversight' organisation and this would be better to pull together all the different strands of ringing. We are fortunate in Bedfordshire to have ringing families who bring their children into ringing, we may not be so fortunate in the future.
- Linda Garton mentioned that a new band at Cople had been discovered, they had started to teach themselves. They were mainly in the 30-40 age group. They are all now members and are being supported by ringers from the Biggleswade District.
- Lyndsey Brett said that we train our young ringers and they move away. We don't do anything specific for the 19 – 30 age group and we need to attract them to our Association.
- John Loveless said there is a big need for us to be better recruiters.
- Anthony Smith said that we should be looking to recruit from every age group; 19 – 30 is a good group to target but we need to cater for everyone. We should encourage and support people who are making efforts to recruit; success lies where there are enthusiastic and charismatic leaders who make things happen.

Our CC Reps, Sue Silver, Pat Albon and Richard Horne, will take these views to the CC meeting.

b) Sarah Ward said that Miriam Clark will reach 50 years as Elstow Tower Captain this year. A celebration is being arranged for her on 21st June and more details would be available in due course.

c) First Peal 2015 - Linda Garton reminded everyone about the Central Council's First Peal 2015 initiative to get 300 people to ring their first peal during 2015 as celebration of the 300th anniversary of the first peal ever rung. Some Bedfordshire ringers had already achieved this goal – Dean De-Matteis, Tom and Ruth Monks and Nick Brett had called his first peal. Linda asked that if anyone knew of ringers who would like to attempt a first peal but with no local resources to help, to get in touch with Sue Silver.

d) Association website – Terry Brown mentioned that, as Chris Williams was standing down as Webmaster, there was an opportunity to review the current website. Terry suggested setting up a small working group to look at this in the coming year and for anyone who was interested to let her know.

e) Sue Silver reminded everyone about gift aiding their subscriptions if possible.

13. Date and place of 2016 AGM

21 May 2016, Bedford District to host.

13. Vote of thanks

Sue Silver thanked the Leighton Buzzard ringers and helpers for the tea, the vicar for taking the service and for the use of the bells, the organist, and the incumbent at Linslade for the use of the bells in the afternoon. Sue was also grateful for the generous £74 donation to the Association BRF from the surplus tea money.