

THE WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

Founded 20 June 1879 as the Winchester Diocesan Guild

Presidents: THE RIGHT REVD THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER
THE RIGHT REVD THE LORD BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 5 JULY 2008

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN HURSLEY

1. Master's Welcome

The meeting was chaired by the Master David Strong, who was supported by the Honorary General Secretary Pam Thompson, the Honorary General Treasurer Michael Bubb and the Minute Secretary Francis Mitchell. He started proceedings at 5.12 p.m. by welcoming members and friends to the meeting in John Keeble School. The Master thanked all concerned in the Winchester District for organising the day, especially Peter and Christine Hill for making the ringing arrangements, Hursley ringers for the excellent tea, Rita Hortin for the service and organist Derek Blazell.

2. Striking Competition Results

The master thanked all who took part in the 8-bell Inter-District Striking Competition held at North Stoneham earlier in the day and announced the results:

1. Winchester District
2. Alton & Petersfield District
3. Portsmouth District
4. Andover District

3. Apologies for absence

58 members signed the attendance book.

Apologies were presented from:

Roger Barber, Diana Bishop, Judy Bishop, Marie Boniface, Val Cleaver, Sue and Andrew Craddock, John Croft, Gill Gardner, Ruth Jackson, Sara Janssen, Eileen Jayne-Wood, Christine Knights-Whittome, Viv and Graham Nobbs, Bruce Purvis, Ceri and David Salter and Margaret Winterbourne.

4. Loss of Members from death since the 2007 AGM

The meeting stood in silence to remember:

Lyn Breslain of Cheriton, John Burrell of Newchurch IOW, Sandy Keay of Alderney, Jessie Kippin (LM), Mick Thomas previously of Bishopstoke, Keith Walpole of St Michael, Basingstoke, Val Welch of Ryde IOW, Armine Woodhouse of Goodworth Clatford.

5. Minutes of the 2007 AGM

Minutes of the 2007 AGM at Bishops Waltham had been circulated to all towers via District Secretaries. They were accepted as a true record and signed by the Master.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

7. Life Membership of the Guild

Mark Esbester was recommended by the Executive Committee to be granted life membership for outstanding service to the Guild., including over 30 years as a BRF trustee and many periods of office in the Portsmouth District This was agreed by the meeting with no votes against.

Anne Biddlecombe of Alton St Laurence, John Rolph of Wickham and Prisca Tremeer of St John Jersey will achieve 50 years membership in 2008 and automatically become life members.

They were congratulated by the Guild Master and those present were presented with life member certificates.

8. Officers' & Sub-Committees' Reports for 2007

For each report published in the Guild Report (in alphabetical order) the Master invited questions. The meeting agreed to vote on their acceptance en bloc.

- i. Belfry Stewardship Committee Report
- ii. Communications Committee Report
- iii. Education Committee Report
- iv. Librarian & Archivist's Report

Jack Walters reported that "Church Bells of The Channel Islands" had raised £2,500 so far. 22 more copies had to be sold for the Guild to break even on production costs. All money from subsequent sales will go to the BRF. David Strong again thanked Jack Walters and the author David Cawley, who offered to sign copies.

- v. Peal Recorder's Report
- vi. Public Relations Officer's Report
- vii. General Secretary's Report
- viii. Social Committee Report
- ix. Striking Competition Committee Report

The published report had not been amended as agreed at the March meeting of the Executive Committee. David Strong proposed the corrected version be published in next year's report, seconded by Tony Smith and agreed unopposed.

- x. Treasurer's Report

It was noted that accounts had not been provided for Reports numbered ii, viii, ix. Tony Smith proposed they be published in next year's Report, seconded by Barbara Townsend and carried unopposed.

Subject to the points noted above, the reports were accepted, proposed from the chair and agreed by the meeting.

9. Report of 2008 Central Council Meeting

Peter Niblett reported on this year's Central Council meeting at Newcastle on Tyne where the Guild was represented by Michael Church, Peter Niblett, Tony Smith, David Strong and Mike Winterbourne. Phil Watts also attended as a Director of the Ringing World.

Tony Smith was congratulated on his election as President of the Central Council.

10. Bell Restoration Fund

i Trustees Report and Accounts for 2007

There were no questions regarding BRF Report and Accounts, which were accepted with no votes against.

ii Grant Proposals

Andrew Case informed the meeting that 3 requests for grants had been assessed by the BRF and were being presented for approval at this AGM:

1. Bishop's Waltham - Overhaul all fittings and replace the 4th bell. Cost £25,799, grant £2,500.
2. Chawton - New ring of six and retain the two oldest bells for chiming. Cost £47,000 with £30,000 raised already, grant £2,000.
3. Whitwell - Stabilise upper frame, tune and rehang the bells. Cost £37,600, grant £4,000.

He explained the situation regarding St John's Jersey who had asked the BRF to reconsider not giving them a grant for work on tower and bells. The BRF Trustees recommended no change to their original decision because the Church already had the money and no fundraising was required by the ringers.

Approval of these recommendations for new grants and regarding St John's Jersey was proposed by Tony Smith, seconded by Jonathan Hetherington and carried unopposed.

Andrew Case informed the meeting that the late Richard Green had left £18,000 to the BRF in his will. Mark Esbester reminded members of the importance of the W&P 200 club in raising funds for the BRF and invited anyone not already in it to join today.

The question was raised of including donation buttons on the Guild website as per a recent Ringing World article. It was suggested the appropriate sub-committee investigate this and report to the Executive Committee.

11. Elections

i. Vice-Master

There were no nominations. The Guild Master appealed for volunteers to be forthcoming.

ii. Honorary Report Editor

John Palk had taken on this task at the November 2007 Executive meeting. He was proposed for election to the post by David Strong, seconded by Anne Strong and elected unopposed.

iii. Striking Competition Committee

Chris Caryer was proposed by Barbara Townsend, seconded by Jonathan Hetherington and elected with no votes against. Other members may be co-opted as required.

iv. Central Council Representatives

David Strong was proposed by Mike Winterbourne, seconded by John Davey and elected unopposed. Mark Esbester expressed thanks to the Guild's Central Council representatives for all their work behind the scenes.

v. Social Committee

Maureen Routh and Tessa Smith were proposed by Tony Smith, seconded by Pam Thompson and elected with no votes against. A vote of thanks was expressed to Sue Craddock, especially regarding the very successful 2008 Guild Dinner.

12. Donation of £300 towards the restoration of William Rayner's Tomb

William Rayner was a leading ringer around 200 years ago who was influential in the establishment of the Isle of Wight as a centre of change ringing. His tomb at Arreton was restored by the Guild in 1925 and a further restoration was accepted as a suitable project for the Guild's 125th anniversary in 2004. Some cleaning and maintenance has been carried out by the IOW District, who have raised most of the £1,500 required for a new inscription and restoration by stonemasons. The donation of £300 of Guild funds to this project was proposed by Pam Thompson on behalf of the Executive Committee, seconded by Derek Jackson and carried unopposed. It was suggested that an article on the restored tomb be written for the Guild Newsletter.

13. Changes to Guild Rules on Life Membership

Two proposed alterations of Guild Rules had been submitted in accordance with Rule 22

- i. The first sentence of Rule 6 be amended to read (underlined text is new):

"Life membership shall be conferred upon those who have completed 50 years ringing or associate membership."

Proposed by Tony Smith, seconded by John Davey to clarify the position regarding probationary members. Carried unopposed.

- ii. The second sentence of Rule 6b be amended to read (~~struck through~~ text is deleted, underlined text is added):-

~~"The Executive Committee may also recommend any individual for election~~ Any individual may also be elected to life membership at an Annual General Meeting of the Guild in recognition of their exceptional services to the Guild.

And that the following text be added to Rule 7 after "Life members may only be elected at a General Meeting of the Guild":-

"Election of life members shall be by ballot and shall require the agreement of four-fifths of those members present. Nominations for life membership must be given in writing, signed by two members of the Guild, at least two months before the date of the meeting, to the Honorary General Secretary of the Guild who shall inform all tower secretaries of the Guild of this nomination at least one month before the aforesaid meeting."

Proposed by Anthony P Smith, Seconded by Andrew Case.

Tony Smith explained the current method whereby only proposals endorsed by the Executive Committee were presented to the AGM for approval. He outlined potential difficulties in ensuring consistent application of the existing rules and detailed a similar change at the Central Council giving a better more democratic procedure.

Views expressed during the ensuing discussion included:

- Consideration by the Executive prior to the AGM does play an important screening role and saves unsuccessful candidates from more embarrassment;
- Current system can bestow the Guild's greatest honour as a surprise, the proposal would inform all members whether successful or not;
- Four fifths in favour was too high.

After an amendment to increase the period of notice was lost and a motion to split the original motion into two parts was withdrawn, Mike Bubb proposed the matter be deferred to the Executive Committee, which was seconded by John Davey and carried.

14. Welcome Leaflet

An introductory leaflet to be given to all new Guild members is available on the Guild website for printing locally.

15. Future Guild events

i Guild Dinner 2009

This will be the 40th Guild Dinner and will be held in Christchurch & Southampton District, like the first one.

ii. A 10 bell Inter-district striking competition is to be arranged.

16. Date & place of 2009 AGM

This will be held at Goodworth Clatford on Saturday 4 July 2009.

17. Any other business

i. Tony Smith has tickets for the 2008 Ringing Roadshow 5th-6th September 2008

ii. Roy Le Marechal advised that the 8 bell Striking competition cup is falling apart. Barry Fry recommended a silversmith and proposed that the Guild would pay for repairs, which was agreed by the meeting.

iii. Derek Jackson reminded the Guild that it had now been established beyond doubt that the Guild had been established on 20 June 1879 not the 26th which was believed to be a transcription error. The Guild heading needs changing.

There being no further business, The Master David Strong closed the meeting at 6.35 p.m.

The meeting was followed by the W&P 200 Club prize draw.