

THE WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 20th MARCH 2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE ZOOM PLATFORM

1. Welcome

The meeting was held online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Guild Master - Pete Jordan, supported by the Vice-Master - Allan Yalden, Hon. Gen. Secretary - Steve Lamb, Hon. Gen. Treasurer - Helen Woolford and Minute Secretary - Tony Smith, opened the meeting at 10.20 a.m. The Master welcomed those present and said a prayer.

The other members attending were Martin Barnes (Belfry Stewardship), Roger Booth (Communications), Michael Church (CC Rep.), Nici Collins (Basingstoke Sec.), Edd Colliss (Peal Recorder), John Davey (Safeguarding), Barry Fry (BRF Trustee), Mike Hopkins Till (CC Rep.), Lucy Hopkins Till (Andover Exec Rep.), Andy Ingram (Education, C&S Exec Rep.), Sallie-Louise Ingram (C&S Sec.), David Mattingley (BRF Trustee), Micki Nadal (Winchester Sec.), Adrian Nash (CC Rep.), Shân Nash (CC Rep.), Viv Nobbs (PRO), John Palk (Report Editor), Simon Poyser (A&P Sec. proxy), Bruce Purvis (Librarian & Archivist), Mary Tester (IoW Sec.), Matthew Wilks (Portsmouth Exec Rep.) and guest Andrew Glover (Webmaster).

2. **Apologies for absence** had been received from David Mattingley (who joined the meeting later). Further apologies were received from Roger Barber.

3. Loss of members through death since the last Executive Committee Meeting

The Master read the following names, asked for a few moments silence and Barry Fry said a prayer.

David Hughes (LM)	Buriton
Gerald Lambert	King's Somborne
Barrie Linnecor	Vale, Guernsey
Lynda Smith	Fawley
Colin Slade	formerly of New Alresford

4. Statement read by the Master

“There have recently been some concerns about a letter sent to the BRF Trustees. The member concerned has subsequently written to the BRF Trustees with the following apology:-

‘The wording of the last sentence in my email of 12th March was unfortunate and I wish to withdraw it. I am sorry if my intentions have been misinterpreted and for any distress this may have caused. Going forward I do hope that we can work together constructively for the benefit of the Guild.’

After discussions with the BRF Trustees this morning we accept the member's apology and now wish the BRF and the Guild to move forward in a positive manner. I know that feelings are running high amongst some members who have subsequently become aware of this through social media, etc., but I ask that you allow the BRF Trustees and principal officers of the Guild to work through this with the member involved and, in the meantime, please continue to support each other and the Guild through your excellent work with committees, districts, etc. I would like to remind all Guild members to choose their words carefully in any letter, statement or conversation which could be misinterpreted by others. I would now like to draw a line under this issue and move forward.”

5. Minutes of the last meeting

The [minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2020](#) were proposed by John Davey, seconded by Viv Nobbs, approved *nem. con.* and signed by Tony Smith, on behalf of the Master, as a true record.

Lucy Hopkins Till pointed out that two people sharing a connection had only one vote. Tony Smith said that if a vote were very close we would make sure all the votes of people sharing a connection were taken into account.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

- i. [\(13.v\)](#) Viv Nobbs asked if there was any news about the possible service at Winchester Cathedral in 2021 for the Centenary of the Guild's War Memorial. The Hon. Gen. Secretary said not.
- ii. [\(13.viii\)](#) Viv Nobbs asked if the A&P District trip to Ypres was still going ahead. Simon Poyser said he would make a decision by July at the latest but expected to postpone the trip until 2022.
- iii. [\(12\)](#) Andy Ingram said the Ringing World National Youth Competition had been postponed until 11th September.
- iv. [\(13.ii\)](#) The Master said the simulator had been taken by Roger Barber for use at Hawkley but had been found in need of repair that was not cost-effective and so was going to be scrapped.
- v. [\(13.iii\)](#) The Master said a Guild forum to review district training resources was held on 24th January and a follow-up meeting would be held early next month. This was looking at how the districts could support returning to ringing, in particular the training of new ringers.

7. Life Membership

No further names were brought forward under the 50-year rule.

8. Reports and accounts for 2020

The following reports and accounts had been distributed and were considered.

- i. **Hon. Gen. Secretary.** No comments.
- ii. **Hon. Gen. Treasurer (and accounts).** Viv Nobbs asked for an elaboration of the General Fund balance increase as a result of Covid 19. Tony Smith pointed out this could be found by comparing the 2019 and 2020 figures on the [Income and Expenditure Account](#). The Hon. Gen. Treasurer agreed.
- iii. **Hon. Peal Recorder.** No comments.
- iv. **Hon. Librarian and Archivist.** Bruce Purvis said that Colin Turner's researches had been for PealBase and he would reword the report accordingly. Bruce invited applications to borrow the duplicate volumes of *The Ringing World* or ideas for their use.
- v. **Public Relations Officer.** No comments.
- vi. **Education Committee.** No comments.
- vii. **Striking Competitions Committee.** No comments.
- viii. **Belfry Stewardship Committee.** No comments.

ix. **Communications Committee.** Roger Booth said Viv Nobbs, Andrew Glover and he had a meeting this week, and they had agreed the Guild website was out-of-date and it was difficult to remove obsolete material. We need to develop a new website, keeping the existing site live until we are happy with the new one. This is important because in a few months we'll be looking to recruit a lot of new ringers, and we need a website that is up-to-date and attractive. It should have a section friendly to young people, and they hope that young ringers, like Emma Hornsby and Sam Marriott from Alton, might be keen to help. He said input would be sought from the principal and district officers and proposals presented to the November Executive Committee Meeting. They were also on the lookout for anyone in the Guild with experience in designing websites professionally. Simon Poyser said there were plans to hold an online Zoom forum for young ringers in the Guild, who could lead the requirements for the young people's part of the website and social media. Andy Ingram said there was a clear distinction between the under-18s and university ringers in the 18-25 year group who very much run themselves. The Hon. Gen. Secretary said a lot of teenagers no longer used websites. Viv Nobbs agreed that input was needed from the principal officers and advice from young ringers as to the most appropriate platforms. Bruce Purvis thought that young people used TikTok these days but Andrew Glover said that was more for videos (like Snapchat and Instagram) and we wanted to know what route they wanted to use for communications.

Subject to the above correction, the reports and accounts were accepted *en bloc* on the proposition of Allan Yalden, seconded by John Palk.

In reply to a question from Andrew Glover, the Master confirmed his thinking that the reports would be included in Biennial Report for 2020 and 2021. Tony Smith said he could provide Andrew with the reports for the website, extracted from the meeting papers he had distributed, with any corrections agreed today.

9. Bell Restoration Fund

- i. **Reports and accounts.** The Hon. Gen. Treasurer said the report and accounts as distributed had, subject to some typographical corrections, been approved by the Trustees that morning.
- ii. **Report on Trustees' meeting.** The Hon. Gen. Treasurer reported that no new grant applications had been received. Outstanding grants were: **St Lawrence, Ecchinswell**, £2,500; **St Mary the Virgin, Brading**, £13,000; and **St Mary, Twyford**, £7,500. The Trustees are reviewing their investment strategy and will provide an update at the AGM and would welcome applications for grants for maintenance.

10. Guild Action Plan

An updated action plan had been distributed. The Master highlighted the changes marked in red.

Viv Nobbs read a request to Committee members (see [Appendix A](#)).

11. Guild Safeguarding Policy

A revised safeguarding policy had been distributed. John Davey said it was based on a document from the Central Council website. Roger Booth had recently attended a webinar with the Central Council Safeguarding Officers, David Bassford and Anne White, and understood their guidance was being revised. Roger said there was a need for training and also a distinction needed to be drawn between the Guild's role and the tower's role. John Davey said the C0 and C1 training was available online. John Palk said something could be included in the Handbook and John Davey thought this should be the good practice checklist. Andrew Glover offered to put the policy on the Guild website. The policy was approved on the proposition of John Davey, seconded by the Hon. Gen. Secretary.

12. Guild Insurance

A paper from the Hon. Gen. Treasurer had been distributed. John Davey asked about the the public liability cover. [*Post-meeting note: Not exceeding £5,000,000.*] In reply to a question from Bruce Purvis, the Hon. Gen. Treasurer confirmed the handbells were covered by an all-risks policy.

13. Draft Health and Safety Policy

The Master thanked the Hon. Gen. Treasurer and Graham Brown for drafting the policy that had been distributed, and wanted, at this stage, to discuss the principle of the policy. He thought it would be good from a management strategy and due diligence point of view and, for our members, to have a policy in place, and, potentially, there could be a small cost saving on insurance. However, there was an awful lot of work involved and we would need a Health and Safety Officer. He did not want to approve a policy before identifying someone prepared to take on that role. John Davey agreed we should be doing risk assessments when the Belfry Stewardship Committee were inspecting bells on behalf of the Guild but thought the policy was over the top for what was required as a Guild. The policy would also create the posts of Redundant Bell Officer and Bell Inspection and Maintenance Officer. The Master said the Central Council advised there is no legal requirement for us to have a Health and Safety policy, because we are volunteers, but he wanted us to be prepared in case it become a requirement in the future. Roger Booth suggested that as much of the policy related to the work of the Belfry Stewardship Committee, some people could be co-opted to the BSC to develop a simpler policy. Mike Hopkins Till said that at Winchester Cathedral they had already had to produce risk assessments and process instructions covering their ringing operations, and agreed with John Davey that the policy was more than was needed as a Guild. Andy Ingram said that whether or not we were required to have a policy, as soon as we had one, we would be judged against that policy. He thought, from a public perception point of view, it would be a good thing to have. Viv Nobbs thought that Heather Frazer had worked in health and safety and might be able to advise. Lucy Hopkins Till would be quite surprised if churches themselves were not obliged to have a health and safety policy and we would need to make sure we were not duplicating or disagreeing with their policies. John Davey and John Palk said their churches had health and safety policies. The Master thanked members for their input and would discuss with the Hon. Gen. Treasurer how to move forward.

14. Future dates

15th May 2021 Inter-Tower 6 & 8-bell striking competitions - Cancelled
15th May 2021 proposed Ringing Room striking competition - To be confirmed
12th June 2021 Inter-District 8-bell striking competition - Cancelled
12th June 2021 AGM on Zoom
11th September 2021 RWNYC
20th November 2021 Executive Committee Meeting

Michael Church requested the AGM be held in the morning and a start time of 10.15 a.m. was agreed.

There was a consensus in favour of the November Executive Committee Meeting being held on Zoom.

In reply to an inquiry by Simon Poyser, the Master confirmed the 2022 AGM would be held in the A&P District.

15. Any other business

- i. Viv Nobbs said the WW1 digital archive would be closed at the end of the year and published on the website. She again thanked the other team members, Rachel Anderson and Steve Lutener.
- ii. Viv Nobbs said the Master had asked the Channel Islands District Chairman, Jane Le Conte, and her to prepare an article for *The Ringing World*, and asked members to send any anecdotes to them.

- iii. Viv Nobbs read another request to Committee members (see [Appendix B](#)). John Davey said two towers in his area tried to arrange a routine maintenance visit in January 2020 and are still waiting for a response from the company concerned. Allan Yalden said he was steeplekeeper at his local tower and learnt how to maintain the clock by watching a professional do it several times and was now saving the church money. He supported the idea of getting someone professional in to do bell maintenance, that the steeplekeeper could watch and learn how to do it themselves. Martin Barnes said the Belfry Stewardship Committee was always able to help and the Basingstoke District had run maintenance courses. Viv said some towers did not have ringers who were fit and able to do any maintenance themselves.
- iv. Simon Poyser said the A&P District was holding a painting competition at Holybourne Church on Saturday 29th May, weather permitting. One of his work colleagues, who is an artist, would give a talk on watercolours, after which the competition would be socially-distanced in the churchyard. Any medium could be used and the winning entry will be featured on the front cover of *The Ringing World*. It was open to anyone and he would post further details on the Guild website and social media.

There being no further business, the Master closed the meeting at 11.55 a.m.

[After the meeting the Master announced the results of the draw for the W&P 200 Club conducted by Robin Milford. The winners were as follows (given by club number, name and prize amount)

1 Robin Milford £30; 30 Ian Redway £12; 7 Jan Allnut £6; 31 Wendy Ling £6; 16 Graham Nobbs £3; 26 Wendy Smart £3.]

APPENDIX A

1. Ongoing Work: - final bullet point - “Review areas of Guild administration and responsibilities to improve effectiveness and remain accountable, including to third parties”

Please, fellow E.C. members, might I encourage you all to consider and fully discuss this with your own District Officers and ringers so the Executive Committee can continue to strive to be very relevant for our members.

We have seen positive results since the first Action Plan in two specific areas, for example:

- the reduced cost of producing the hard copy of the Annual Report and
- the increased amount in central funds as a result of reducing the proportion of our subscriptions going directly to the B.R.F. This has provided for more flexibility for members to decide how they wish their funds to be used.

Both these measures were taken in response to members’ feedback.

So, how do members feel the funds, including those in the B.R.F., might be best used to support ringers and ringing in their own areas? This might well be particularly relevant post-Covid. **Might I respectfully request that this specific item is included on the 2021 A.G.M. agenda and that members are positively encouraged by us all to submit their feedback as soon as possible for consideration at the A.G.M.**

APPENDIX B

A specific item for E.C. members to consider, expanding on what I am saying, above, at Review of Action Plan (Ongoing Work):

Post-Covid there will be many pressures on our ringers and churches. One of the areas will be in ensuring bands have bells and fittings ready and safe to use. Not every tower has a Steeple Keeper in ‘ordinary’ times even; I’ve been aware for some time that regular maintenance can be challenging for towers to carry out, it

can be neglected unfortunately and towers are not always comfortable asking neighbouring ringers to do the maintenance work for them.

I am keen still to promote churches considering having an annual Professional Maintenance Contract, if all involved locally consider it appropriate, for the benefit of the bells, the band and the church. Three or four neighbouring towers could arrange for the visits to be carried out on the same day for cost-effectiveness. **I would very much like to see churches, where there is a regular band, considering applying to our B.R.F. for financial support for this specific purpose,** not necessarily ongoing year on year. **Members might consider it appropriate to grant 50% of the costs perhaps. I believe this would be of great support to our ringers and churches and in a very meaningful way.** Members would see direct benefits from the financial contributions they have been making to our Guild over the years through their membership subscriptions and our B.R.F. Trustees will be able to use some of the funds in the B.R.F., a registered charity, to provide financial assistance for 'maintenance' (one of the Aims).

I ask my fellow E.C. Members to consider this idea and discuss with their members and P.C.C. with a view to submitting applications for grants in time for the 2021 A.G.M.