

THE WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 18th MARCH 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN ST. BARNABAS' CHURCH HALL, LODGE ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON

1. Welcome

The Guild Master - Rachael Barber, supported by the Hon. Gen. Secretary - Steve Castle, Hon. Gen. Treasurer - Robin Milford and Minute Secretary - Tony Smith, opened the meeting at 10.23 a.m. and Barry Fry said a prayer.

The other members attending were Roger Barber (A&P Exec Rep.), Martin Barnes (Belfry Stewardship), Ian Carey (Peal Recorder), Michael Church (CC Rep.), Nici Collins (Basingstoke Sec.), John Croft (Winchester Exec Rep.), Margaret Downer (IoW Exec Rep.), Barry Fry (BRF Trustee), Daniel Graham (Safeguarding), Lucy Hopkins Till (Andover Exec Rep.), Mike Hopkins Till (CC Rep.), Andy Ingram (Education, Teaching Hubs), Sallie Louise Ingram (C&S Sec.), Pete Jordan (Immediate Past Master, Striking Competitions), Steve Lutener (Basingstoke Exec Rep.), David Mattingley (BRF Trustee), John Palk (Report Editor), Richard Paxford (Andover Sec.), Simon Poyser (A&P Sec. proxy), Bruce Purvis (Librarian & Archivist), Matthew Wilks (Portsmouth Exec Rep.), Edmund Wratten (Winchester Sec. proxy) and Allan Yalden (CC Rep.).

2. **Apologies for absence** had been received from Charlotte Colliss, Lizzie Colliss, Andrew Glover, Micki Nadal, Peter Niblett and Viv Nobbs. Further apologies were received from Mary Tester.

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

The Hon. Gen. Secretary read the following names and the Master asked members to stand while Barry Fry said a prayer.

Martin D Bishop	formerly of Ringwood
Ann Cattermole	formerly of Winchester College
Dorothea Drummond	formerly of Bournemouth, St. John
Joan Stevenson	formerly of Brighstone
Colin Vickers	formerly of Whitchurch

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The [minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2022](#) were proposed by Michael Church, seconded by Bruce Purvis, approved *nem. con.* and signed by the Master as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

6. Life Membership

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

7. Reports and accounts for 2022

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

- i. **General Secretary.** No comments.
- ii. **General Treasurer (and accounts).** The Hon. Gen. Treasurer said there was a difference of £26.51 on the Central Fund Balance Sheet.
- iii. **Peal Recorder.** No comments.
- iv. **Librarian and Archivist.** No comments.
- v. **Public Relations Officer.** No comments.
- vi. **Education Committee.** No comments. In reply to an enquiry from Tony Smith, Andy Ingram said that Sallie Ingram and Anne Tautz had resigned from the Committee.
- vii. **Striking Competitions Committee.** No comments.
- viii. **Belfry Stewardship Committee.** No comments.
- ix. **Communications Committee.** No comments.
- x. **Teaching Hubs Committee.** No report. In reply to an enquiry from Tony Smith, the Master said the principal officers would consider whether the Committee should be dissolved.

Apart from the Central Fund accounts, the reports were accepted *en bloc* on the proposition of Bruce Purvis, seconded by Pete Jordan. It was agreed on the proposition of Tony Smith, seconded by Simon Poyser that the Central Fund accounts should be accepted by the principal officers once they balanced.

8. Bell Restoration Fund

- i. **Reports and accounts.** The Hon. Gen. Treasurer said £800 on the Balance Sheet had been moved from “Amounts falling due within one year” to “Amounts falling due after more than one year”. With this correction the report and accounts as distributed had been approved by the Trustees that morning.
- ii. **Report on Trustees’ meeting.** David Mattingley reported that the grants to **Ecchinswell, Twyford** and **All Saints, Basingstoke** had been paid since the last meeting; and provided updates on the outstanding grants: **Brading, Ropley, Andover** and **Porchester** no comment, **Hawkey** completion expected end of April and **Netley Abbey** completion possibly this Autumn.

One new grant application had been received: **East Tisted**, a historic ring of three including a 16th century bell, being rehung with new fittings by Nicholson Engineering at a cost of £18,613, reduced by local labour to £15,400. On behalf of the Trustees, David proposed a grant of £2,000 which was seconded by Bruce Purvis and agreed *nem. con.*

9. Safeguarding update

Dan Graham introduced himself as a ringer in Southampton for 15 years and a GP familiar with safeguarding issues. He had made contact with the Winchester Diocesan, Portsmouth Diocesan and Central Council Safeguarding Officers. Discussion followed. Some parish safeguarding officers and vicars have been asking for character references for new and transferring ringers. The requirement seems to come from the **Winchester Diocese Guidance for Parishes** which apparently states that “A ‘church officer’ is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid, for example a priest, church warden, bell-ringer, organist or youth activity leader”. Other parishes have taken a more reasonable interpretation and Dan said it was important for ringers to appoint their own safeguarding officer to work with their parish safeguarding officer. Andy Ingram said his church officers were trying to combine Safeguarding with Health &

Safety. Tony Smith pointed out that the Diocesan guidance was self-contradictory as, with the possible exception of Tower Captains, bellringers are neither appointed nor elected and cannot be considered “church officers”. In answer to a question from Andy Ingram, Dan confirmed that the church was responsible for the secure maintenance of any personal information such as references. In answer to a question from Richard Paxford, Dan said he could be contacted in the event of problems. The Master invited Dan to write an article for the next Guild Newsletter. Michael Church thanked Dan for the clarity of his explanations.

10. Public Relations update

A paper from Viv Nobbs had been distributed (See [Annex](#)).

11. Future dates

1st April 2023	SEECON Youth Striking Contest - Caterham
5th April 2023	Education course - Calling for beginners & First steps in conducting, Bishopstoke
29th April 2023	Education course - Plain Bob Doubles & Minor, Awbridge Village Hall
20th May 2023	Inter-Tower 6-bell & Novices' striking competitions - Basingstoke District
10th June 2023	Inter-District 8-bell striking competition - Andover District
	AGM - Andover District
8th July 2023	RWNYC - York
9th September 2023	Essex Trophy - Walthamstow
16th September 2023	Inter-Tower 8-bell striking competition
7th October 2023	Education course - Kent & Oxford Treble Bob / Maintenance day, Holybourne
4th November 2023	Education course - Plain hunt, Swanmore
18th November 2023	Executive Committee Meeting

12. Any other business

- i. **Ring for the King.** Roger Barber asked why the W&P Guild were not involved in the ‘Ring for the King’ initiative and therefore appeared to be unwilling to train new recruits? It appears that we were the only Guild that the CC and ART did not recognise as willing and able participants. So any new recruits appear to have been directed to ART-accredited teachers via Roger Booth.

The Master read the following response:

After the national “Ring for the King” publicity was aired on TV/Newspapers, I became aware that we were the only Guild/Association where Ring for the King website enquiries were not being sent to Guild/Association Officers. Instead, I was informed, that these were being handled by Roger Booth on our behalf. I became aware that Roger Booth was sending these to selected individuals, and he did not attempt to keep Guild or District Officers informed/updated. This resulted in the bizarre and very unhelpful situation where these selected individuals were being overloaded with requests to learn to ring, whilst District Officers were being excluded from the process. In our District (A&P), one ART-accredited teacher who no longer actively teaches was being contacted to receive the enquiries, but the 9 or so very experienced teachers who are actively training multiple new recruits for multiple Towers received no enquiries!

I spoke to Simon Linford, the President of the Central Council, on the phone directly about this, and was very surprised to be told that because we had not replied to an email to an old generic email address in January, they had reached the rather alarming conclusion

that we were not interested in receiving these enquiries. He then told me that the W&P had an “anti-ART” problem that I needed to “get to grips with”, and implied that being bypassed like this was the inevitable consequence.

I would like to confirm that both the Hon. General Secretary and myself made contact with the President (Simon Linford) and the Secretary (Ernie de Legh-Runciman) of the Central Council last July and September to introduce ourselves, so they had received our up-to-date email addresses. I’m aware that Roger Booth also knows both our email addresses. But the excuse was that we couldn’t be contacted.

After confirming to Simon Linford that we were indeed very interested, he agreed to send the enquiries to the Guild, which he confirmed was very easy to do. From that point onwards Ring for the King enquiries were passed to District Officers, via the Guild. Most Districts are now successfully managing these, and organising special sessions to introduce these new people to ringing, with the Guild able to offer support and share experiences etc. From a Guild and District perspective, it’s been very unhelpful to be kept out of the loop, and we have had to make arrangements unnecessarily quickly to accommodate people coming forward to learn. Other Guilds & Associations were included in the planning process, and had time to organise and make arrangements.

Subsequently, I’ve asked Simon Linford to further explain why we were viewed so negatively by the Central Council/ART Management Committee that they concluded that we were not interested in any “Ring for the King” enquiries. Because to me it seems a very extreme conclusion to draw, when it was much more likely that there was just a problem with the generic email address.

I expressed to Simon that we were very willing to work with the Central Council on things like this, but to date I have not received a similar expression in return (only a wish to draw a line under the matter), and so far he has declined to comment further on the things he said to me by phone.

I find it very concerning that the Central Council have taken this stance, and I can only conclude that we are being portrayed very badly by someone at the Central Council/ART Management level. And I am not aware of any circumstance where the Winchester & Portsmouth Guild has demonstrated an unwillingness to work with the Central Council on things such as National Recruitment Campaigns.

Discussion followed. Lucy Hopkins Till said at a recent Oxford Diocesan Guild meeting it appeared that enquiries were only being passed onto the branches where there was no ART-accredited teacher available. Mike Hopkins Till was sorry the Guild’s CC Reps were not approached when there was a communication problem. In answer to a question from Edmund Wratten, the Master confirmed that the obsolete email problem had now been fixed. Michael Church was concerned about possible escalation and suggested a meeting between the Master and Simon Linford. Edmund thought personal rather than organisational contact could exacerbate communication problems. Richard Paxford thought we should make written representation to the Central Council.

David Mattingley proposed and Matthew Wilks seconded that the Master and Central Council Representatives take the matter forward as they consider best and this was agreed *nem. con.*

- ii. **Social Committee flower vases.** Tony Smith said the now-defunct Social Committee acquired fifteen flower vases for use at Guild Dinners and Mrs Smith would now like them cleared out of their garage. They are clear glass cylinders, 2.5 inches diameter, 8 inches tall. The Master said the A&P District are holding a Fundraising Dinner for their Youth Ringers in June, it would be great to be able to use the vases at that event and she would be happy to hold on to them on behalf of the Guild.

There being no further business, the Master closed the meeting at 11.51 a.m.

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

8 Mike Winterbourne £25.00; 4 Rob Hatch £10; 14 Rosalind Brandwood £5; 9 Margaret Winterbourne £5; 29 Aila Peacock £2.50; 3 Alexander Gray £2.50.]

ANNEX

Update for the Executive Committee from Viv Nobbs - abroad from 11th January to 23rd April 2023.

1. As Caretaker P.R.O. I will be chatting with The Master to ensure that a Press Release is issued shortly before the Coronation.
2. At the beginning of March, I sent the usual regular emails and newsletters to all the Senior Clergy and Communications Officers of both Dioceses. These are the responses to date:

WINCHESTER DIOCESE

P.A. to The Bishop of Winchester

Lynda Mumford thanked us very much for sending the newsletter to Bishop Debbie and commented “There is so much going on!” She was intrigued to see the article on the mobile belfry and said she had never imagined such a thing. (In my formal response I sent invitations to Bishop Debbie and Lynda saying we would be pleased to arrange a visit to the mobile ‘ring’.)

Assistant Archdeacon of Winchester thanked us very much for the update and hoped 25th March (12-bell eliminators at Hursley) goes well, and also the plans for the Coronation.

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE.

The Bishop of Portsmouth sent his best wishes and was very pleased to read of our various activities, and to hear the bells marking important occasions in our nation’s history.

Archdeacon of Isle of Wight replied saying it was great to hear from us, that his previous church had a great band of bell ringers who were an important part of their church’s life and he would read the newsletter and email with interest.

Archdeacon of Portsdown, via P.A.

Archdeacon Jenny is away until late March but we received an encouraging response from her P.A. inviting us to send a representative to the various Archdeacons’ Visitations to parishes between 29th June and 13th July. She indicated that as guests we would have a table to display material and could “talk/mingle/present to Churchwardens informally”. She advised that guests in the past had enjoyed the occasions and got contacts or simply promoted their activities and felt it had been worthwhile.

3. As ever, I encourage all to engage as much as possible with church and community to raise the profile of ringing and ringers’ activities. I continue to offer support accordingly where possible. **Please use the email on the website until my return on 23rd April ... no 'phone is available until that date.**

15th March 2023