



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2017 AT WHIDDON DOWN VILLAGE HALL

Present: James Steer, Rachel Avery, John Barnes, Stuart Bennie, Victoria Tucker, Barry Osbourne, James Kerslake, Julia Jarvis, Ian Avery, Mervyn Way, Robert Brown, Paul Hext, Lee Avery, Margaret White, Clive Ward, Keith Bavin, Stephen Hernimann, John Lock and Andrew Vincent.

1. Chairman's Welcome

Chairman James Steer welcomed all members in attendance and opened the meeting at 19:30.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Christine Ley, Sam Massey, Jereme Darke, Graham Sharland, Colin Adams, Sam Hext, David Trout, Scott Adams, Gerald Arscott, Jonathan Bint, John Dietz and Frank Pidgeon.

2. Minutes of 16 February 2017 Committee Meeting

It was NOTED that the secretary had made requested amendments prior to the meeting. It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes and the Chairman duly signed them as a true document.

3. Matters Arising

a) Charitable Status

Ian Avery explained that he had spoken to several Guild members regarding the transition to charitable status. He had received useful information and obtained a copy of the rules that govern the Guild as a charity. In conclusion, there is a lot of work involved in transitioning to a charitable organisation but there are many positives to be gained from doing so. He suggested that the Association would benefit from gaining charitable status, in line with other organisations of its kind.

Robert Brown explained that, following on from his recent attendance of the Central Council meeting, most societies have now moved to individual membership. One of the main positives is the increase of revenue through Gift Aid. He explained that the work involved was not insurmountable and could greatly benefit the Association.

It was AGREED that a meeting with the Guild would be organised by Ian Avery, and would be attended by James Steer (Chairman), Rachel Avery (Secretary), Ian Avery and Robert Brown.

Action: Ian Avery to organise meeting and liaise with attendees. Agenda item for next meeting.

b) To consider the purchase of a teaching aid/simulator

Whilst Graham Sharland was not in attendance, Victoria Tucker understood that this would be a useful resource. Ian Avery had spoken to Matthew Hilling (Exeter Cathedral/Devon Guild of Ringers) regarding a joint venture with the Association. Matthew Hilling is investigating a ring of six, as well as a single simulator, which would be transportable. Ian Avery had also spoken to Matthew Higby, who was moving forwards in his branch along with other County associations in a trying to devise a simulator that is attached to a trailer. This would be a piece of equipment that any ringing association could purchase off the shelf; initial price indication was around £25000.

Paul Hext suggested that a single simulator would be useful for very small groups and a set of six bells would only be suitable for relatively competent ringers

Robert Brown explained that it was important to understand why this purchase was being made and how it would be used to benefit the Association. A designated resource was very important.

It was NOTED that the DenMisch simulator is used on a regular basis by Exeter Cathedral School.

John Barnes asked that considerations such as costs and storage must also be carefully considered due to such a large initial outlay.

Stuart Bennie commented that the most important teaching aid are the bells all over Devon.

James Steer stated that the Association must see a return on this purchase, and suggested that proper investigation and costings be undertaken before a final decision is made.

Action: Costings to be obtained. Agenda item for next meeting.

c) Intermediate/training event update

In his absence, Scott Adams had provided a report to the secretary, which she read to the Committee. This report forms part of the minutes.

Scott Adams was thanked for his work on these events.

It was asked if intermediate competitions had taken place before, and whether there was a demand for such events. It was NOTED that Chris Ley has spent a lot of time on this and holds the most information. Events need to be tailored to different needs and varying abilities.

It was NOTED that novice team numbers dropped heavily this year, and towers must be reached out to, with the view to understand their ambitions and requirements from the Association. Lee Avery suggested that events should be regionalised and tailored.

Action: All Committee members to obtain information over the summer. Agenda item for next meeting to devise a plan of action.

d) Central Council AGM 2024

Robert Brown reported that the Central Council is in a state of flux. His initial discussions with John Martin had been left with the Association being supportive in principle of a joint venture to hold the 2024 AGM, but no further information had been received.

Action: Robert Brown to obtain further information and report back to next meeting.

4. Safeguarding

Robert Brown outlined the new requirements with regards to safeguarding and how it could affect bell ringers. The Church of England have advised that anyone involved in the Church would require the basic (C0) course in safeguarding. This could be done online and lasts for approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. Tower captains are required to do a C1 course; this is the responsibility of individual PCCs, who should arrange and organise attendance. This course would be extra to a DBS check.

It was NOTED that the Diocese of Exeter would be willing to undertake a training day, should there be sufficient interest. It was AGREED to support such a training event, and it was requested that Victoria Tucker publicise this offer and the requirements of new safeguarding requirements.

It was NOTED that the Association does not have a safeguarding officer. Ian Avery PROPOSED that this role should be created and that Robert Brown hold the position. This was SECONDED by Lee Avery and APPROVED.

5. Refurbishment of six bell qualifier trophies

James Steer reported that the North Devon Qualifier trophy was now full, and assumed that the South Devon Qualifier trophy would be similar. The silverware has also become tarnished.

There was discussion over how the shield could be changed to create more space.

He asked for approval from the committee to investigate refurbishments and costs. This was AGREED.

Action: James Steer to obtain costings and report to next meeting.

6. To consider and discuss the increase and speed in which communication from Deanery Representatives within the DAR Committee is fed back to individual towers and to Deanery Guilds

Clive Ward explained that he had requested that this item be added to the agenda. This was his second tenure on the committee, and wished to obtain clarification on who the Committee represents and how decisions and plans are fed back to the wider audience.

Julia Jarvis explained that she is the Chair of Totnes Deanery and is in contact with every tower, and is aware of what each tower is doing and feeds back anything of interest from committee meetings. She suggested that there should be a rep from each deanery on the committee. It was NOTED that not all deaneries are on the committee.

The main aim of the committee is to promote bellringing, and it relies on members to feed information back to individual towers.

The encouragement of ringing can be done on both a structured and ad-hoc basis, and each area of Devon will work differently.

Stephen Hernimann suggested that individual membership would allow people to be as involved as they wished and would know exactly what is going.

He suggested that the Association could consider paying somebody to engage Schools and other groups in the art of bell ringing.

Margaret White reported that there are not enough ringers to go around, with many ringers ringing at three of four towers on a regular basis.

Keith Bavin explained that the Committee had come a long way in thirty years, and should be proud of the changes that have been made.

7. Central Council Meeting Report

Robert Brown explained that he had attended the Central Council Meeting in Edinburgh.

Change is afoot and a review group was set up to provide an overall report of the organisation. The report was critical, and after much debate, the document has been agreed in its totality. There will be a transitional period to the new structure, where issues such as costs will be considered.

He urged committee members to look at the website and see what is happening.

8. Treasurer's Report

Thanks were extended to Julia Jarvis for her hard work on the 2017 draw.

Unfortunately, she had been faced with difficulties regarding the selling of tickets. Some towers did not sell any and no longer wish to receive books.

It was NOTED that the loss of money does not affect the Associations financial position, as all proceeds go to the Church Restoration Fund.

The number of towers affiliated this year has decreased. 124 towers were affiliated last year, and there are currently 112. It is not expected that many more towers will send affiliation fees.

There had been disappointment with the change of location for the Minor Final at Ashwater. New certificates had to be reordered at a cost of £104.

Christine Ley had received an £80 donation from Tom Nestor.

It was NOTED that reminders are sent regarding affiliation fees through Devon Calls. Many are paid at the AGM. It was asked if the recent increase in fees had made a difference. John Barnes reported that although the number of affiliated towers had dropped, more money had been taken.

9. Publicity Officer's Report

Following on from Tom Nestor's donation, Victoria Tucker had met him and had discussed his hopes of teaching call change ringing in the north of the country, which was an exciting prospect.

She had attended a 'PR Matters' day, which had been organised by the Central Council. There had been a range of excellent speakers and advice of managing public relations.

She reported that there were still places available for the Mendip Trip. She had provided members with leaflets to give out.

She thanked the committee for approving the Appreciation Awards.

The Major Final had been broadcast online for the first time, via Facebook. At one point, 40 people had been watching. She had received some great feedback. The Facebook page now has 200 likes.

A bell ringing carnival float is being entered at Combe Martin Carnival.

It was NOTED that the next information email would be sent in early July and asked that any details for the email be sent to her for inclusion.

10. Recruitment

In her absence, Christine Ley's letter had been circulated. There was further discussion around ensuring all ringers are provided with opportunities to attend workshops and events.

It was NOTED that it is the responsibility of Committee members to ensure that all ringers are catered for and that their views are heard.

11. Correspondence

It was NOTED that Jereme Darke had resigned as South Secretary. It was NOTED that this position would need to be filled at the AGM. It was NOTED that the 8 Bell Competition and 6 Bell finals would be held in the South this year and the search for towers to hold these events would need to start shortly.

In his absence, Colin Adams' editorial piece for Devon Calls had points for consideration, with further comments made by Colin Barnes via email. These were NOTED.

It was NOTED that whilst costs had been cut, the publication needs to be online. If individuals want a hard copy this can be requested, but it is generally felt that there is no real necessity for the publication of hard copies.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting.

12. Competitions Update 2017

Stuart Bennie reported that the North Qualifier had been successful and there had been an increase by 1 team, meaning that all available positions had been filled.

At the Minor Final, all 10 slots were filled. In the round ring section, St Giles had been the only team to compete.

It was NOTED that there had been some issues with the results at the Major Final, and a standardised results form should be created for all Association competitions.

It was NOTED that a team had backed out from the Major Final at short notice. It was NOTED that these circumstances had been unforeseen and disappointing for the team. Thankfully, all positions were filled on the day.

It was NOTED that plans for the 8 Bell competition were in progress. A team has asked permission to use a strapper on the 7th bell. It was NOTED that the rules state that the use of strappers are at the discretion of the committee. There were no objections to a strapper being used for the seventh bell in this instance, should it mean that more teams may enter.

It was NOTED that John Dietz had offered to be scrutineer at the competition, with the use of an Excel spreadsheet, which had worked well previously.

Stephen Hernimann reported that the National Competition had been well supported. The next National Competition is set for Saturday 19 May 2018 at Bampton.

13. Any other Business

David Trout had asked that the Association consider its participation in International Music Day, which is on the 21st of June every year. Victoria Tucker reported that she would start publicising this at the start of Autumn, with the view to hold an event in 2018.

John Barnes reminded the Committee that he intended to retire from the position of Treasurer at the AGM.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting.

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Thursday 28 September 2017 at Whiddon Down Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:26.

Rachel Avery

Honorary Secretary