



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT WHIDDON DOWN VILLAGE HALL

Present: James Steer, Christine Ley, Rachel Avery, John Barnes, Stuart Bennie, Victoria Tucker, Julia Jarvis, Graham Sharland, James Kerslake, Ian Avery, Paul Hext, John Dietz, Sam Hext, Barry Osbourne, Scott Adams, Lee Avery, David Trout, Gerald Arscott, Margaret White, Clive Ward, Keith Bavin, John Lock, Andrew Vincent and Mervyn Way.

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 Robert Brown, Colin Adams, Sam Massey, Stephen Hernimann and Frank Pidgeon.

2. Minutes of 29 June 2017 Committee Meeting

It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes and the Chairman duly signed them as a true document.

3. Matters Arising

a) Purchase of a teaching aid/simulator

Ian Avery reported that there had been some concerns raised at the last meeting regarding this. Whilst he agreed that there are benefits with regards to teaching and publicity, it would be difficult to make the purchase financially justifiable. For those not present at the last meeting, it was reported that a simulator bell would cost approximately £1500-2000. There had also been a brief discussion about the purchase of six bells on a trailer, which is something that Matthew Hilling is looking at with the Guild; the cost of this is upwards of £25000. John Dietz asked what benefit the Association would get from a portable arrangement. A simulator would seem to provide the biggest benefit in the early stages of teaching, but having one on an irregular basis isn't useful. He suggested that the Association purchasing several simpler simulators would be better, allowing towers best placed within the county to have them set up on a more permanent basis.

Ian Avery suggested that there appears to be confusion at what the Association may consider purchasing and what individual towers may like to consider. The original idea was to take this purchase to places like the Devon County Show. It was NOTED that the Frank Mack mini ring is hugely popular but it is extremely difficult and unrealistic to ring. Several people have been put touch with local towers and captains after such events and whilst it is unknown if this comes to fruition, it is positive publicity for the Association.

Christine Ley reported that there had been a lot of interest generated at Combe Martin and Ilfracombe carnivals. Clive Ward suggested that the only justification for purchasing a teaching aid or simulator is for recruitment. Graham Sharland suggested that the idea is to offer a chance to have a go at bell ringing outside of a tower environment.

James Steer explained that the committee would have to weigh up the cost factor against the ease of transportation and rewards of investment, and there is currently not enough information to decide.

Lee Avery asked if there would ever be enough information to make an informed decision, and the only way to find out if the investment would be worthwhile was to make the purchase and monitor afterwards.

David Trout reported that computer aids are widely available, along with single bell simulators. He stated that the more expensive trailer was a luxury and could be an expensive, rarely used mini ring. Whilst it may generate interest, he expressed doubts that enough people would take up bell ringing because of it.

Christine Ley suggested a single bell would be a more worthwhile investment to the Association.

Ian Avery said that consideration would need to be given to where the apparatus would be kept and transported, along with insurance of the item.

Clive Ward suggested that a small working party should look at this. This was AGREED and volunteers were asked to join a working group.

The working group would consist of Graham Sharland, Paul Hext, Ian Avery and John Dietz. They would liaise and meet to discuss.

Action: Agenda item for AGM and next meeting.

b) Intermediate/training event update

Christine Ley had organised maintenance workshops. Splicing workshops have also taken place with the help of Mervyn Way. These have been fully booked and more will be arranged. John Dietz has offered to support her should she wish to undertake similar events in the South.

She also reported that there are people interested in judging workshops- she would endeavour to organise a date and venue for this. It was NOTED that she would liaise with Graham Sharland on this.

She reported that there has been a lot of interest in these workshops, especially from new captains. It was NOTED that some of the towers are affiliated to the Association and some aren't. These courses are for anyone who is interested.

Clive Ward suggested that the website would be a good way of submitting enquiries for these workshops.

Upcoming dates should be displayed on the website and on social media to make these opportunities more widely known. It was NOTED that so far, events have been tailored to those interested and people have been contacting Christine Ley for information.

Clive Ward explained that he would like to be able to give this information to his deanery, but the communication is not structured. He asked if there is a plan to cover all the deaneries that are interested, and if there is a systematic way of ensuring that this continues.

Christine Ley reported events such as this, which have come about from working so closely with individual towers, had not been taking place so regularly until she took over as President. She explained that it is the responsibility of every committee member to go back to each deanery and tell them what the Association is providing.

She offered to start these workshops when she became President and she intends to continue doing so.

Graham Sharland agreed that the success of deaneries is reliant of people working to keep things going and to keep people interested.

James Steer asked what further structure could be offered by the Association to feed more information to the deaneries. It was NOTED that training, social events and competition dates are on the calendar of events, which is on the website calendar.

Victoria explained that there is already an established programme for competitions. This branch of training events is growing and not yet established. The question of systems being in place is far too early as the structure is not yet there.

Lee Avery suggested that there will be localised requirements and these will be different in each deanery.

Christine Ley reported that more people are needed to lead these events.

Scott Adams reported that the Young Ringers was last held at Eggbuckland. There was a good turnout of around 25 people. The standard of ringing was high and there seems to be a real demand for more events, perhaps monthly. There is a Young Ringer Facebook page, which is now up to 40 members.

He explained that he needs assistance in terms of taking this forward, or even a younger person to lead it. He would be happy to continue to help and provide background assistance.

It was NOTED that Sam Hext, Stuart Bennie and Lee Avery would be happy to help with this event.

It was AGREED that the event would increase to monthly, on the last Thursday of each month. Scott Adams would book the next tower and leave with those who had offered to help.

c) Central Council AGM 2024

Robert Brown had reported to the secretary that he is still awaiting information from Central Council and hoped to be able to provide a report at the AGM.

d) Safeguarding update

Robert Brown had emailed the secretary, who would forward the email to committee members.

4. To discuss plans for the Association to gain charitable status

Ian Avery reported that a meeting had not yet been arranged.

Action: Agenda item for the next committee meeting.

5. Refurbishment of six bell qualifier trophies

James Steer reported that he had contacted several people regarding the refurbishment of the shields, but companies had asked for the shield before providing a quote.

It was NOTED that the 6 bell qualifier trophies are full and shields are now being added in odd places. The silver work is also very tarnished too.

David Trout offered to ask the trophy engraver that he uses if he would be interested in undertaking this work or advise on who could do work such as this. This was AGREED and he would contact James Steer regarding the outcome.

6. To consider the proposal of a 'trophy amnesty' at the AGM

Christine Ley reported that there are lots of trophies in towers which don't belong there! They could be brought to the AGM be returned to the correct owner. It was AGREED that this was a good idea and would be advertised for the AGM.

Action: AGM agenda item.

7. To note and discuss the upcoming vacancy of Treasurer

It was NOTED that John Barnes would stand down at the AGM and he hoped that somebody would be available to take over. He would be happy to provide a full hand over to the next incumbent.

8. To consider the proposal to create positions of 'Association Advisors'

Graham Sharland explained that there are guidelines in place (provided by the Central Church Council) regarding the provision of specialist advice when towers require work to be undertaken on bells. These guidelines state that PCC are expected to obtain information from their local Guild or Association.

He explained that it is important for towers to understand the information that they are given and should be fully informed on what can be done with regards to work that needs to be undertaken.

He suggested that two roles of Bell Tower advisors should be created, as suggested by the Central Church Council. James Steer approved of this entirely and would be happy to be involved in this. David Trout also expressed an interest in the role.

Action: AGM agenda item.

9. To discuss the keeping of records held by the Secretary

The secretary explained that she had a lot of paperwork in her possession, including historic copies of Devon Calls, historic competition results and a lot of old correspondence.

It was AGREED that all minute books should be held by the Secretary, but most correspondence did not need to be kept. It was AGREED that only results from Devon competitions needed to be kept.

It was NOTED that James Kerslake may require some of the Devon Calls back issues for the website.

Action: Rachel Avery to hand items to James Kerslake.

10. Treasurer's Report

John Barnes circulated up to date accounts to members. The report forms part of the minutes.

The accounts have been sent for audit and there may be slight changes, however final balances will remain the same.

The deficit is only due to the income loss from the draw; otherwise the balance remains healthy.

It was NOTED that there had been an increase in costs for certificates cost due to reprinting requirements. Stuart Bennie suggested that it may be worthwhile printing nearer to the time of events to ensure there are no surplus certificates. Only seven teams entered the 8 bell competition, so three were left over. It was NOTED that the costs are mostly related to designing the certificates.

Devon Calls has increased in cost, but it appears that there is little more than can be done to cut costs in this area.

11. Publicity Officer's Report

Victoria Tucker reported that the carnival float was fabulous. The bell ringing float at Combe Martin and Ilfracombe carnivals was seen by thousands of people and was fantastic publicity. The mini ring was also used, and thanks were extended to Christine Ley and Ian Avery for their help with this. The float won first prize in its category at Combe Martin and were overall winners at Ilfracombe.

She had put up a sound clip of the winning 8 bell at South Molton. The post had received lots of views and positive comments- congratulations were extended to Kingsteignton.

International Music Day will be celebrated in June next year. She hoped to advertise a celebratory, mass ringing event around the county.

She reported that the Central Council are advertising a 'Peal for Pudsey', in aid of Children in Need. Peals can be rung between 5 October and 17 November and can be sponsored, which is a good opportunity to link with the national event.

Her Mendip Ropes trip had been attended by 13 people, and was a very nice day. The trip had been productive and educational, and it is hoped that another event can be held like this.

It was NOTED that the Facebook page now has 109 likes.

12. Recruitment

There was nothing to report and it was AGREED that this item would be removed from the agenda.

13. Correspondence

Rachel Avery had received an email from Andrew Ridgeway regarding a centenary ring for the Battle of Camrai on 23 November. She would circulate the email to committee members.

James Steer read out a letter from Geoff Hill. It requested that the Ian Smith be presented with an Association Appreciation Award. It was RESOLVED that this award should be given to Ian Smith.

Action: Victoria Tucker to order award.

14. Competitions Update 2017 and 2018

Stuart Bennie reported that he and Christine Ley have managed to secure Ashreigney for the Major Final, St Giles in the Wood for the North Qualifier, Sandford for either event and Stoodley for either event.

Julia Jarvis reported that she had contacted Ideford, who were interested in holding either the South Qualifier or Minor Final and she had approached Bishopsteignton and Sherford, who were yet to confirm.

Graham Sharland reported that he had approached Manaton, who would like to host the South Qualifier.

It was NOTED that Black Torrington have offered to hold the novice competition this year.

It was NOTED that Stoke Fleming would be willing to host the 8 bell competition.

Stuart Bennie explained that he had written to South Molton to thank them for holding the 8 bell competition.

Thanks were extended to Stuart Bennie for his hard work.

15. Any other Business

It was NOTED that the South Competition secretary position was still vacant. Stuart Bennie reported that William Carew has offered to take this post and a vote would take place at the AGM.

It was NOTED that President Elect for 2018/19 would need to be sought from the North. Scott Adams PROPOSED Fred White. This was SECONDED by David Trout Stuart Bennie PROPOSED John Barnes. This was SECONDED by Margaret White. It was RESOLVED that these names would be considered at the AGM.

The recent resignation of Jon Bint was NOTED. The constitution was checked and it was NOTED that there are currently 9 North and 9 South representatives. It was RESOLVED that this position would not be filled.

It was NOTED that Frank Pidgeon may be unable to attend any further meetings. This was NOTED.

Details of the Ringers' Lunch were NOTED. Should anyone wish to attend, details should be sent to Christine Ley.

16. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

It was NOTED that the AGM will take place at North Tawton Village Hall on Saturday 11 November, commencing at 14.15

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The next committee meeting would be held on Thursday 15 February 2018 at Whiddon Down Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.09.

Rachel Avery
Honorary Secretary