



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 20 JUNE 2019 AT WHIDDON DOWN VILLAGE HALL

Present: James Steer, John Barnes, Rachel Avery, Clive Ward, Graham Sharland, James Kerlake, Ian Avery, Lee Avery, Barry Osbourne, Gerald Arscott, Keith Bavin, John Lock, Adrian Walthoe and Margaret White.

1. Chairman's Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Chairman James Steer welcomed all members in attendance and opened the meeting at 19.30.

Apologies had been received from Victoria Tucker, Christine Ley, William Carew, Julia Jarvis, Michael Adams, John Dietz, Paul Hext, Stuart Bennie and Andrew Vincent.

No apologies had been received from Robert Brown, Sam Hext and Mervyn Way.

2. Minutes of 21 February 2019 Committee Meeting

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

3. Reports

a) Treasurers Report

A copy of the accounts forms parts of the minutes.

It was NOTED that the account is approximately £2500 down due to some large spends including the simulator and new laptops.

There are currently 99 towers affiliated. At the end of the last financial year, a total of 110 towers had affiliated. Clive Ward requested that each deanery representative advises him on each tower being represented and he could then advise on who had affiliated within their area.

b) Publicity Officer Report

In her absence, Victoria Tucker had reported that plans for the Association's stand at the 12-Bell were going well. Anyone around on the day and willing to spend some time on the stall would be most appreciated.

Victoria had tendered her resignation from 01 July 2019, and she had requested that somebody undertake the running of the Chagford Open Practice. It was NOTED that the date for this would be confirmed, but Clive Ward offered to run the event.

It was NOTED that the secretary had offered to maintain the social media outlets and the mailing list.

Barry Osbourne stated that Victoria had undertaken a huge amount of work in her time as publicity officer and she would be missed, and it was AGREED that the Association write her a letter of thanks.

c) Training Officer Report

Graham Sharland reported that he is looking forward to getting the simulator up and running and taking it to interested towers; it will be a good resource at events and for individuals.

He also reported that he and William Carew were looking to restart the intermediate competition in order to build a bridge between the Association's Novice and main competitions.

d) Devon Calls

It was NOTED that Colin Adams had obtained quotes from other printers. After discussion with the secretary and treasurer, it had been agreed to use Swift Print who were almost half the cost of the current company.

Adrian Walthoe reported that he is currently providing a Microsoft licence, but the subscription runs out in January and will not be renewed. **Action: Agenda item for September.**

e) Bell Advisor Post Update

The guidance notes had been received from the Guild and circulated to members.

Lee Avery stated that there was no advice regarding insurance, liability or health and safety.

It was AGREED that those interested in holding this post should discuss this and report back to the next meeting. **Action: Agenda item for September.**

Graham Sharland went on to state that there may be lots of installations in a bad state of repair around the county. He has spent time working with Diptford, which were rehung in 1950 but now require work. There may be many peals in need of maintenance, otherwise they will become unringable.

At the last Bell Restoration meeting, he had brought forward a proposal for an additional layer of overseeing when projects come forwards. Although Ian Smith, Ian Campbell and James Clarke do an excellent job as Guild Advisors, there is a void.

4. To note and discuss post holders for the forthcoming triennium

It was NOTED that there were several positions becoming available at the AGM, and it was recommended that these positions and committee posts be advertised now and over the next few months in the hope that people will come forwards. This was AGREED.

Thanks were extended to the secretary for the work she had undertaken during her term.

5. Competitions 2019

James Steer wished to apologise to William Carew after events that took place at the Major Final. He had taken up an issue at the end of the Major Final but had not meant to offend him in any way.

There was disappointment expressed at the number of teams entering the 6-Bell competitions this year and it would be important to encourage teams to enter. A lot of work is going on with the novice and intermediate competitions in the hope that there will be more entries in the future. There are many teams in the county perfectly capable of entering the qualifiers, but don't feel that they are. It was integral to communicate with these teams.

James Kerslake stated that some 8-Bell towers have a 6-Bell team and would enter, but this had been voted down at the 2018 AGM.

The 6-Bell North Qualifier had gone well. It was a good venue, and all were well looked after. The vicar forgot the service sheets, but this was no fault of the organisers. There had also been an issue raised regarding the giving of gifts to the judges, but it was understood that these were given from an individual and not from Association funds.

The 6-Bell South Qualifier had also gone well, but the list of teams added to the church door was seen by the judges.

Clive Ward stated that some sort of protocol should be created for people running competitions; both the hosting towers and competition secretaries.

Concerns were also raised regarding comments, queries and concerns regarding competitions being made to the secretary. It was generally accepted that all comments or complaints must be made in writing, and not anonymously. This would require advertising but shouldn't be down to the secretary to deal with alone.

It was NOTED that the Competitions Secretaries work hard on the day and in the period before the competitions. As a committee, it is important to learn from mistakes and support post holders.

There had been disappointing numbers in the Minor Final, although this worked well due to the delayed start time. The day went very well otherwise.

There had been a ring off at the Major Final, which was requested by the judges. There was an agreement that a protocol should be created to decide whether a ring off or a different way of deciding (ie. team that rang the longest) should be used.

It was AGREED that ring offs should take place in the Major Final for first and second place, fifth and sixth in the Qualifiers and second and third in the Minor Final.

Other scenarios such as teams not all in attendance would have to be considered on a case by case basis. There are usually lots of committee members at competitions, and no post holder should be expected to make decisions on their own. **Action: Agenda item for September.**

It was NOTED that all venues for the competitions so far had been superb.

It is understood that all preparations for the 8-Bell are going well. **Action: Secretary to check that South Secretary will run the event.**

6. Trophy Refurbishment

James Steer reported that the Minor Final shield is full and Major Final shield is nearly full.

It was NOTED that the top ringing trophy has plaques on top. The trophy was first given in the 1990s, but one plaque is missing.

It was NOTED that the Minor Final shield could take another wooden back without making it too large.

It was requested that anyone at the 12-Bell on Saturday look at the shield and bring ideas back for refurbishment/space to the September meeting. **Action: Agenda item for September.**

7. Constitution Review

a) Minutes of Constitution Review Group meeting

The minutes were NOTED.

b) To discuss proposals from the meeting

The proposals were considered as follows:

Point 1 – It was generally agreed that whilst individual membership was a good idea, the feasibility of this would require careful consideration and whether the increased administration would provide an increase in income. The addition of a new membership secretary may not be required if the treasurer felt that the extra work involved in this was negligible. It was also recommended that an increase in affiliation fees should also be considered by the committee.

Committee discussion centred around the requirement to know how many ringers there are in the Association, and in Devon. It was NOTED that the Association was possibly the only organisation that did not have individual membership. It was NOTED that the constitution states that members of affiliated towers should be presented at the AGM (or when membership is paid) and that this point should be adhered to.

There was a general agreement that a type of census should be conducted in order to know how many ringers there are throughout Devon.

Point 2 – Additional role of Safeguarding Officer should be included, and Assistant Secretaries be renamed Competition Secretaries.

This was unanimously accepted.

Point 3 – Whilst it was accepted that the constitution should be amended to remove the CCCBR points, concerns were raised regarding the decision to unsubscribe. It was suggested that affiliation of one committee member would be acceptable, without the need for them to attend meetings and events. The Association would remain affiliated to the CCCBR and have their support and resources in difficult situations, should they arise.

It was RESOLVED that re-affiliation to the CCCBR would be considered at the September meeting.

Point 4 – It was agreed that the recommendation from the February committee of recognition for years' service should be accepted. There was discussion around additional awards for exceptional service, which have been presented in the past. Action: Secretary to liaise with Publicity Officer regarding awards.

This had been approved at the February meeting.

Points 5 and 6 – It was agreed that affiliated towers should be entitled to one vote on tower locations for Devon Festivals, with any additional votes at the AGM being undertaken on an individual basis.

It was NOTED that this links to point one, and affiliation requires consideration prior to a decision being made on voting at the AGM.

Point 7 – It was agreed that the date and location of the next AGM should be considered and that the AGM should move around the county.

It was AGREED that this would be considered at the September meeting, as the date and location is an agenda item at the AGM each year, and the location remains the same. It was NOTED that a decision on future meetings should be made at committee level prior to the AGM.

Point 8 – Amended wording was agreed to bulletins instead of newsletters and to remove Publicity Officers requirements to support the Web Master with the website.

This was unanimously accepted.

Point 9 – It was agreed that the constitution should be reviewed annually by a sub-committee.

It was PROPOSED by Clive Ward that reviews take place annually. This was SECONDED by Margaret White.

It was PROPOSED by Lee Avery that reviews take place bi-annually. This was SECONDED by James Kerslake and APPROVED (8:3:).

Points 10 and 11 – There was consideration given to practices for some competitions such as the Major 6-Bell not being allowed, however this suggests that all competitions are not equal in terms of prestige which is not the case. It was also stated that towers must be informed on whether practice is allowed prior to nomination. It was noted that information on the website contradicts this and needs amending. Action: Secretary to contact Webmaster.

It was proposed that all towers should be open for practice for all Devon Competitions until 1st May.

Constitution wording will depend on the approval of these points.

The issue of practice was discussed, and it was generally felt that no practices should be allowed for all Devon competitions.

Point 12 – It was agreed that all competition rules should form part of the constitution document.

This was unanimously accepted.

Point 13 – It was agreed that all placed teams should receive a certificate.

This was unanimously accepted.

Point 14 – It was proposed that should a team enter the call change section of the Novice competition and come first or second, the same team shall not be entitled to enter with the same ‘novices’ again. The teams should also not proceed to the Minor Final, as they are not included in the main competition. There was discussion regarding allowing novice teams to enter the Minor Final and be judged alongside the other teams, however this was discouraged as it could lead to teams entering the Novice competition in a guise to reach the Minor Final. All competing teams in the Novice competition should be encouraged to enter the appropriate qualifiers. It was also agreed that an intermediate competition would require additional organisation for the Competition Secretaries, with diary dates already filled with invitationals and other Devon Competitions between March and June.

It was AGREED that novice teams should not be entitled to enter as the same tie on more than one occasion should they be placed first and second, but an intermediate competition would bridge the gap between the novice and main competitions.

Point 15 – It was agreed that the 8-Bell peal time should be reduced to 18 minutes.

This was unanimously accepted.

Point 16 – It was agreed that affiliation to the Association should only be open to church towers within Devon.

This was unanimously accepted.

Point 17 – It was agreed that the amended wording should be that all competitors should be regular ringers of the tower that they represent.

There was debate around the way that regular ringing is interpreted. Concerns were raised regarding how ‘regular’ ringing checks would be enforced and that this rule may not be fit for purpose given that many people

ring at more than one tower for Sunday services. It was also NOTED that some people are unable to attend Sunday services due to work commitments but attend weekly practices.

It was suggested that borrowing ringers has changed greatly as teams used to borrow on the day in emergency situations. The Association is a tower-based organisation, and the annual competitions are special and prestigious, and it is unfair that some teams are not genuine. It was NOTED that tower captains must be trusted when they say that their team are regular service ringers, but there is nothing more that can be done with the current rules. It was AGREED that this item would be given further consideration at the September meeting.

Additional points made by review group

Stopwatches (6v)

It was requested that stop watches should be provided by the Association to scrutineers for Association competitions, which should be calibrated prior to the first competition of the year.

It was NOTED that electronic stopwatches are provided to scrutineers.

Committee member term

It had been requested that consideration be given to a maximum time for representative to sit on the Association Committee. It was suggested that a maximum two terms' (six years) would be appropriate.

Clive Ward PROPOSED that a maximum of three terms' (nine years) would work more productively. This was SECONDED by James Kerslake and APPROVED (6:0).

Deanery Representation

It was noted that the number of representatives relates to the number of deaneries within Devon. It was proposed that should a deanery not elect a representative to sit on the committee, the seat would remain vacant. There had been an additional recommendation that the vacancy could be filled, an additional committee member could be co-opted, however it was agreed by the review group that it should remain vacant, with regular reminders that the deanery can elect and send a representative.

This was unanimously accepted.

Duties of Committee Members

It was suggested that all representatives should be held accountable to their deaneries and should participate at meetings.

A handbook could be created for representatives for guidance, and should representatives not adhere to the requirements, they should be removed from the committee.

This was unanimously accepted.

Deanery Representatives/Post Holders

It was noted that committee meetings are attended by both committee members (deanery representatives) and post holders (Devon Calls, Fundraising etc). It was recommended that anyone in attendance at a meeting who holds a post or is a member, should be entitled to voting rights.

This was unanimously accepted.

Borrowing

Concerns had been raised around the use of borrowed ringers. It was suggested that should a team be short on one ringer on the day, a ringer from the hosting tower could be used. However, it was accepted that the issue of borrowed ringers may be dealt with by the changes around the term of 'regular ringer' and the constitution did not require amendment.

This would be further discussed at the September meeting.

c) Additional comments from committee

There were no further comments, and all outstanding issues would be considered at the September meeting.

8. Correspondence

a) Request for annual calendar detailing all annual competitions held in Devon

It was NOTED that any events should be made known to the Publicity Officer to add details to the calendar. It was requested that a form be added the calendar page on the website to make it easier to contact the correct person.

9. Committee Members Reports

Gerald Arscott reported that there is a new captain at South Molton and it is hoped that ringing will take place regularly for Sunday services.

It was also NOTED that Christine Ley is organising maintenance and splicing courses at South Molton.

President John Barnes reported on his attendance of the American Embassy event, where he had represented the Association. The Ambassador, Woody Johnson, had been blown away by St Pauls Cathedral bells and wished to arrange a reception for bell ringers, which the CCCBR supported.

The event took place on 9 May, at Winfield House. There was a wonderful hand bell ringing peal on 12, and the event was a wonderful opportunity and he was so pleased to be able to represent the Association.

Thanks were extended to John for attending on the Association's behalf.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting would be held on Thursday 26 September 2019 at Whiddon Down Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.37.

Rachel Avery

Honorary Secretary