



**MINUTES OF THE 86<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS**  
**SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2020 via Zoom hosted by the Chair**

**1. Chair's Welcome**

Chairman Mr Ian Avery informed all present that the meeting was to be recorded and welcomed all to the Meeting at 14.30.

**2. Prayers led by the Reverend Nick Weldon**

Reverend Weldon reported having heard many positive comments about how lovely it had been to hear the church bells ringing again in the summer. He spoke in memory of those ringers who had passed away since the last AGM and then led prayers on behalf of the Association.

**3. Apologies for Absence**

The secretary and chairman had received apologies from Jeremy Darke, Margaret White, Julia Jarvis, Tim Jones, John Staddon, Paul Hext, James Grant, James Kerslake, John Dietz, Johnny Lagdon, Ryan Trout and Colin Adams.

Apologies were received from the floor from Gerald Arscott and Joe Stoneman.

**4. To approve the following minutes and to discuss any matters arising:**

- **AGM – 9th November 2019**

There was an unfortunate error made when preparing for this AGM and the wrong minutes from the last AGM were sent out. The error was rectified as much as possible prior to this meeting with the correct minutes put the website. To this end the only correction needing to be made was a typo under item 17: centenary year is 2025, not 2020

- It was PROPOSED by Mrs Sue Ashton that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record. This was SECONDED by Lee Avery and APPROVED.

- **Committee meetings – 20 February 2020, 18 June 2020, 17 September 2020 (in draft form)**

The minutes of the committee meetings were NOTED.

- There were no matters arising.

**5. Treasurer's Report**

Mrs Christine Ley reported that there were 37 towers affiliated so far this year and having presented the annual accounts (which form part of the minutes) with the AGM pack sent out to all towers and on the website declared herself happy to answer any questions from the floor.

?? PROPOSED that the accounts be accepted. This was SECONDED by ?? and APPROVED.

Ian Avery pointed out the repairs to the two shields constituted £57 of the competitions expenses.

Mrs Christine Ley PROPOSED that in lieu of the usual Draw proceeds, the Association donate £500 to the DCBRF. This was SECONDED by ?? and APPROVED.

Ian Avery also suggested that individuals might like to contribute some funds to the DCBRF taking into account the money they have saved by not attending competitions this summer and Rachel Avery reminded all of the smile@Amazon scheme which allows customers to donate ½% of their spend to the DCBRF.

## **6. Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund Report**

Mr Ian Smith provided the following report:

During 2020 the Fund has again been actively involved with 13 towers at some stage in their restoration projects. In addition to these, seven further towers have requested a grant application form, though have not as yet completed and submitted them. Interestingly this exactly mirrors our activity in the previous year.

Due to the coronavirus restrictions we have been unable to carry out any quinquennial bell inspections this year, our only tower visits having been to check out the finished works at Kingskerswell, Holbeton and Bradford.

Again due to the restrictions we were unable to hold our usual two face-to-face meetings this year. Instead, all urgent business for our meeting planned for April 6<sup>th</sup> was dealt with by exchanges of emails between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> April. Our meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November was a virtual meeting using the “Zoom” facility. Similarly we have not met with our financial advisors this year, though have kept in touch by letter.

The bulk of our financial assets remain in the form of the investment portfolio purchased from the William Smale Bequest, and continue to be managed through the Discretionary Portfolio Service of Cathedral Financial Management Ltd of Exeter, the value of the portfolio currently standing at £326,993 having hit a low of £302,618 at the end of March. The continuing benefit of the investment portfolio is in the dividends received which have amounted to £7,882 for the first three quarters of the year, unsurprisingly significantly lower than in the previous year.

Our other income has been much reduced when compared to last year as was to be expected, and indeed would have been even less had not the proceeds from the 2019 Annual Draw and the Doddiscombsleigh/Dunsford Competition been received too late to be included in the previous year’s accounts.

At the beginning of 2020 the liquid assets of the Fund stood at £44,928. Since that time two grants totalling £7,750 have been paid. £6,000 went to Holbeton for turning, tuning and rehangng the six bells with mainly new fittings; also maintenance of the bell-frame and replacing the supporting steels of the upper frame; and £1,750 to Bradford towards replacing the cracked treble side-frame and some of the steels, and overhauling the bearings, clappers and pulleys.

(Between the Devon Association AGM in November 2019 and the end of that year, the following grants had also been paid: £2,200 to Northam for scraping down and repainting the bell-frame, treating all woodwork with preservative, servicing bearings, and overhauling and re-bushing the clappers; £7,500 to Kingskerswell for recasting the old third bell (now the fifth) and rehangng the six bells in a new frame with all new fittings – augmentation to eight and the provision of a new ringing floor lower in the tower did not form part of the grant; and £5,500 to Woodbury for rehangng the fourth, fifth, sixth and tenor on new canon-retaining headstocks, work to the clappers, chiming hammers and pulleys, re-ropeing the second, fourth and seventh bells, and painting the bell-frame.)

We had expected to see the completion of at least three other projects this year, though delays caused by the coronavirus restrictions have clearly had an impact on this.

Income during the year (excluding that from the investment portfolio) has amounted to £8,576, including £3,453 from the Guild and its Branches, £916 from personal and miscellaneous donations, £564 in memory of John Stook of Plympton and Roy Berry of Topsham, £3,050 from the Association following the 2019 Annual Draw, £200 from the 2019 Doddiscombsleigh/Dunsford Competition, £235 from various individual towers, and £150 following tower inspections and talks. Tax refunds following gift-aided donations and bank interest make up the balance.

At present the liquid assets of the Fund stand at £54,043.

Grants agreed this year include £9,000 to Milton Abbot towards a complete rehang of the six bells in a new fabricated steel frame, and £900 to Shaugh Prior towards cleaning down and repainting the bell-frame and sub-frame, dismantling and galvanising some of the steels, refurbishing the clappers and repairing a cracked bell-pad. An application for financial help with installing external sound control at another tower was declined.

At our Zoom meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> we agreed grants of £5,700 East Anstey for a complete rehang of the six bells, £2,400 to Butterleigh for the conversion of the derelict ring of three into an electronically-operated fixed chime, and £1,900 to Dunkeswell for repairs to and repainting of the sub-frame and improving access to the ringing room.

Assuming that all of the agreed grants are taken up, the uncommitted liquid balance of the Fund stands at £13,043.

## **7. Officer Reports**

**Chairman** Ian Avery:

I would like to welcome you all to this our 86th Annual General Meeting of the Devon Association of Ringers. Due to the coronavirus and government restrictions we are not able to meet in the usual way so the meeting will adopt quite a different style from the norm.

We have all experienced a year never experienced before. It has been unfortunate that our annual competitions have been cancelled, but more devastating that we have not been able to keep our weekly Sunday service ringing going due to the temporary closure of Churches. It is gratifying to know that when services have been allowed (albeit with restricted numbers) that some towers at least have found a way of ringing for these services. Sadly, not all have been able to and we can only hope that these unprecedented times comes to an end very soon allowing us all back to what will be perhaps, a new normal.

As a result of the inactivity brought about by the pandemic, it has, however had some positivity in that the committee have continued to meet throughout the year via zoom and been able to discuss numerous projects that will hopefully move the Association forward when the climate allows.

Potential projects for the future include:-

- Deaneries being replaced by areas
- Expanding and amalgamating posts within the Association including Development and Safeguarding Officers
- Production of one Devon Ringers' magazine
- Individual membership

I, like you I am sure, look forward to some positive outcomes for us all, in so many ways, in 2021.

**Honorary Secretary** Joanne Tucker

I can echo the same words as many have spoken in the last seven months and say 2020 has been an unprecedented year, it's quite likely to go down in history as the year that never was, certainly as far as ringing goes. And I'm not sure, but I can't imagine there ever having been a time in the history of full circle ringing when churches were completely closed, even to the clergy.

The newly appointed committee starting out in the first year of a their triennium have had a quiet start but not necessarily an easy one – even outside of having to learn how Zoom works. Certainly for me that hasn't been a bad thing as a week after lockdown I began a new job, and working that from home to boot.

Far from what I feel many may think, working from home is not 'an easy option'. Much as I prefer it, it does tend to involve a much more concentrated and often longer working day, especially when everything you're doing is for the first time and with colleagues many of whom you've not so much as met yet. This makes for a big learning curve and so work has unfortunately for many other aspects of my life, had to take precedence.

This is not given as an excuse for my tardiness in all things Devon Association but as a reason. I can apologise for it, and I do, but I'm not in any position to make promises for the future.

**South Secretary** Will Carew

In what has been a very strange and unusual year for us all, unfortunately, there isn't a great deal to report on regarding competitions.

I would, however, like to congratulate Andrew Steer on his appointment as North Secretary, and the excellent way in which his first competition (the novice) was run. I think everyone present would agree it was a fantastic day with lots of the younger generation showing off their skills at High Bickington. If we can keep these young ringers interested and engaged, the future of the Association could be very bright indeed as there are some very talented ringers coming through. Thanks again to High Bickington for hosting the novice and providing an excellent tea.

Sadly, the novice is where this year's competition season ended. However, I have been encouraged to hear that lots of towers are still meeting online, continuing with the social side of things and trying to learn the art of "digital ringing" on the ringing room platform. I sincerely hope we may be able to get back to some sort of normality next year and perhaps, at least, to ring fully at our local towers as a starting point.

On a personal note, this will be my last year as competition secretary as regrettably, I am standing down as of today (14<sup>th</sup> November). I wish Andrew and my successor the best of luck with future competitions and I will of course be on hand in the interim to support them as required.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as competition secretary. It has been a real privilege and fantastic to see the planning and commitment from local ringers and their helpers that make our competitions such a success. I'm sure with Andrew and my successor, the Association competitions will be in good hands going forward.

**Training Officer** Graham Sharland

Looking back there is little of note to report on the training front over the last year, for obvious reasons, with teaching of new ringers curtailed owing to the restrictions. However, it gives us the

chance to consider how we can provide new opportunities for the recruitment and training of learners when we are able to get back in to our towers again.

One positive which must be reported, and which ably demonstrates the kind of forward thinking we need to encourage to bring on new ringers, is the excellent work that Jon Bint has done at Chagford to provide not one, but two training bells, and hopefully you will have read the article about it featured on the front pages of our latest edition of Devon Calls.

In these uncertain times we don't yet know how many of our parish churches here in Devon may be under threat of closure in years to come, so it is important that training 'hubs' such as the facility that has now been established in Chagford, are developed at strategic points around the county in order to provide a focal point for training in their respective areas.

Hopefully it won't be too long before we can get back to the important work of recruitment and teaching, please do get in contact if your tower requires the support or assistance of the Association with any aspect of training or recruitment.

### **Colin Adams** Devon Calls

Devon Calls is circulated three times a year. These editions are designated "Early," circulated in the Spring. "Mid," circulated in the summer and "Late" which is circulated in the Autumn; in advance of November's AGM. Documents appertaining to the association are included with the magazine whenever necessary; this is particularly the case prior to the AGM.

<b>Month 2020</b>	<b>Copies printed</b>
March	167
July	155
October	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>484</b>

The magazine contains seven advertisements.

Figures detailing the postal charges for the year can be obtained from the Treasurer.

Encouragingly more people are coming forward with articles but we are not yet in a position to be able to draw from material in reserve. The aim is to be able to fill at least 12 pages each time; 16 if we can.

Feedback from the readership, although welcome, is sparse. The small amount that has been received is however positive.

I provided a report to the last committee meeting which covers most of what I wanted to say. I would have elaborated on these had anyone raised any questions.

I would like once again to thank Elinor and Colin (neither of whom are as young as they were) for continuing to act as proof readers, and also to James our technical editor for his support. The three of us get on very well together and I feel we work as an efficient and harmonious team.

Chris our treasurer does a lot of work towards ensuring the magazine reaches everyone. After I collect the magazines from the printers in Dawlish arrangements are made to pass them across to Chris. She journeys down from North Devon and I meet her at Crediton. The magazines are then taken back to her house where she and her husband Tony do all the packaging, which is quite a considerable task to undertake. Posting is then done by Chris.

Why do I make these points? Well, because getting the magazine together, and distributing it three times a year across Devon, would not be possible without a considerable amount of goodwill.

### **Fundraising Officer** Julia Jarvis

I am sorry but I will be unable to be on the zoom AGM as I am moving on this day.

As you are probably aware the Annual Draw was not held this year. After emailing with the chairman it was agreed that I would not continue with it as I did not want to put pressure on everyone to try and sell tickets when they should all have been staying home due to covid. I had paid for the printing of the books but due to the situation I have not passed this on to the Association. The printers that I use have said they will print next year's free of charge, so I will put a bill in to the Association when there will be an income from sales. I am prepared to carry on the position of Fund Raiser for one more year, unless of course there is somebody who can't wait to take up the position. Hopefully we will be up and running again in 2021 and I look forward to seeing you all again then.

#### **Central Council Church Bell Ringers** Joanne Tucker and Tim Jones

Following the findings of the Central council Reform and Action Group (CRAG) the Council are busy with the process of change and working hard to be what their name suggests – a central resource and representative body for ringing the world over.

I attended the AGM (via Zoom) at the beginning of September and came away very impressed with the fact that they do recognise all types of ringing and indeed are now showing a particular interest in Devon call change ringing

#### **8. Election of President and President Elect 2020/21 & Association Trustees**

Having been discussed at the last committee meeting there was unanimous AGREEMENT that due to the events of this year the current President and President Elect would remain in office for 2020/21

It was NOTED that Mrs Elaine Grant, Mr James Steer and Mr **Graham Sharland** are existing trustees to DCBRF. It was AGREED by the meeting these positions remain unchanged for the 2020/21 year.

#### **9. Formal Approval by the meeting (second year of Triennium) of elected officers:**

**Committee Chair, Vice Chair, General Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretaries (North and South), Publicity Officer, Devon Calls, Training Officer, Fund Raising Officer, Guild Liaison Officer, Web Master, Safeguarding Officer, Bell Advisors**

It was RESOLVED that the elected officer positions for 2020/21 are:

Chair: Mr Ian Avery

Vice Chair: Mr James Steer

Honorary Secretary: Mrs Joanne Tucker (intending to stand down no later than Nov 2022)

Treasurer: Mrs Christine Ley

Assistant Secretary (North): Mr Andrew Steer

Assistant Secretary (South): It was NOTED that due to Mr Will Carew's resignation as South Secretary, the position was vacant. There was consideration given to the offer of Mr Johnny Langdon to take on the role of South Secretary. Mr Johnny Langdon was PROPOSED by Mr Will Carew, SECONDED by Mr Graham Sharland and APPROVED.

Publicity Officer: John Staddon (PROPOSED by James Steer and SECONDED by Andrew Steer following an email from Mr Staddon offering his services)

Devon Calls: Mr Colin Adams

Training Officer: Mr Graham Sharland

Fundraising Officer: Mrs Julia Jarvis

Guild Liaison: Mr Ian Avery

Webmaster: Dr James Kerslake (intending to stand down Nov 2022)

Safeguarding Officer: Vacancy

Bell Advisors: Graham Sharland, James Steer

CCCBR Reps: Joanne Tucker and Tim Jones

#### **10. Committee Membership**

A review of committee membership and how that relates to representation of affiliated towers will be undertaken in the next twelve months as part of the bi-annual Constitution review.

Mr Gerald Arscott sent his apologies to this meeting and his resignation.

All other committee members remain in post

#### **11. Association Bell Advisors Update Graham Sharland**

The post of bell adviser to the Association was established to provide towers with a point of contact for help and guidance on any issues of Bell maintenance, restoration or fundraising, and where necessary direct the enquiry to the appropriate authority or professional adviser.

Several towers have already sought guidance on matters of repairs, restoration and fundraising, so please don't hesitate to make contact with the Association if any advice is required, we will be happy to help in any way that we can.

#### **12. Competitions Review 2020**

Andrew Steer reported on a good start to a short season. He congratulated the teams that took part in the Novice Competition at High Bickington and thanked the Judges and the tower for the teas.

#### **13. Invitations to Association Competitions 2021**

As only one competition ran in 2020 and most of the other towers were still willing to host in 2021 the competitions will (hopefully) be:

North Devon Qualifier (8th May 2021): Burlescombe

Minor Final (22nd May 2021): East Ogwell

South Devon Qualifier (8th May 2021) ??????(East Portlemouth can no longer accommodate)

Major Final (12th June 2021) Molland

8-Bell competition (18th September 2021) Plympton

Consideration will be given to the South Devon Qualifier, the National and Novice Competitions at the February meeting when perhaps the Covid situation will be better understood.

#### **14. Constitution Review**

The Association's Constitution is due for review in 2021. An invitation to take part will be sent out with the next issue of Devon Calls

#### **15. Correspondence**

An email from Ryan Trout regarding the Association competitions asking had the committee considered alternative dates for them in 2021. The view was that it was difficult to plan in light of the current pandemic and that there wasn't a Saturday available that wouldn't impede on at least one tower's plans.

#### **16. Any other business**

James Steer reminded everyone that the Association celebrates its centenary in 2025 and celebrations must be had. Ken Down of Zeal Monochorum offered the tower there as a potential venue for the celebrations.

Ian Avery reported that the Annual Carol Service would take place on Sunday 12th December via Zoom at the later time of 6pm. It will be hosted by the Guild who will be inviting people attending to make a donation to the DCBRF. As Zoom generally has a limit of 100 participants it was AGREED that the Association should share the £100 cost of extra licences for the event which will also be recorded. See the web site for the meeting details.

**17. Date and Venue of AGM 2021**

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Venue tbc

Chairman Mr Ian Avery declared the meeting closed at 15:46

**Joanne Tucker**

**Hon Secretary**

**Devon Association of Ringers**

**December 2020**