

THE WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

Founded 26 June 1879 as the Winchester Diocesan Guild

Presidents: THE RIGHT REVD THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER
THE RIGHT REVD THE LORD BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10 MARCH 2007 AT ST. BARNABAS' CHURCH HALL, LODGE ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON

1. Opening Prayer & Master's Welcome

The Master Andrew Craddock, supported by the Honorary General Secretary Steve Castle, the Honorary General Treasurer Michael Bubb and Minute Secretary Francis Mitchell, opened the meeting at 10.22 a.m. by asking Canon Barry Fry to say a prayer.

He welcomed everybody, especially those attending for the first time.

The others attending were:

Anne Bailey, Andrew Banks, Roger Barber, Marie Boniface, Andrew Byford, Terry Collins, John Davey, Mark Esbester, David Forder, Barry Fry, Gill Gardener, Keith Gillings, Theo Johnson, Maureen Kelly, Adrian Lewis (for Basingstoke District Secretary), Wendy Ling, Sue Park, Hugh Routh, David Strong, Mary Tester, Barbara Townsend, Jack Walters, Phil Watts, Mike Winterbourne.

2. Apologies for absence

Val Cleaver, Sue Craddock, Michael Church, Adam Greenley, Jon Hetherington, June Mitchell, Margaret Patterson, Tony Smith,

3. Loss of Members from death since the last Meeting

The meeting stood to remember Ann Hunt of Catherington, Reg Cockle (LM) of Bishops Waltham and Hazel Mitchell of Sherborne St John.

4. Minutes of the last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2006 were amended to show item 7 as Budget Bids for 2007. Due to lack of evidence as to whether the Striking competition dates minuted were those given at the meeting, they were changed to the dates on which the competitions were now due to take place. The amended minutes were accepted by the meeting and signed by the Master as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

i. Revised BSC Budget Bid

The BSC requested a budget of £150 for 2007 instead of the £100 previously approved. This is to cover expected additional expenditure including several site visits on the IOW and safety equipment. Approval of this request was proposed by John Davey, seconded by Mary Tester and passed with no votes against.

ii. Welcome Leaflet

Wendy Ling and Barbara Townsend had prepared a draft which was presented to the meeting. Barbara Townsend requested any suggestions and corrections be emailed to her.

6. Life Members

i. 50 Year's Membership

It was confirmed that Alan Buswell of Southwick will achieve 50 years membership in 2007.

ii. For services to the Guild

There were no proposals.

7. Reports for 2006

i. Honorary General Secretary

Steve Castle's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed after correction of some minor typographical errors.

ii. Honorary General Treasurer

Mike Bubb's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed with a minor correction.

iii. Honorary Librarian & Archivist

Tony Smith's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed unchanged.

iv. Honorary Peal Recorder

Jonathan Hetherington's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed after correction of minor typographical errors.

v. Belfry Stewardship Committee

The BSC and Restoration Activity reports had been circulated with the agenda and were agreed with some minor amendments.

vi. Education Committee

Mike Winterbourne's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed after correction of minor typographical errors.

vii. Communications Committee

David Forder's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed unchanged.

viii. Social Committee

Sue Craddock's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed after amendment and subject to resolution of a query on the balance handed to the General Treasurer.

ix. Striking Competition Committee

Adam Greenley's report was distributed at the meeting and was agreed unchanged.

The Guild Master thanked all officers and committee convenors for their reports. He is writing an article for the Guild Newsletter outlining roles of officers to attract more volunteers as many current officers are not intending to stand for re-election. David Strong requested help in finding someone to take over the role of Report Editor.

8. Bell Restoration Fund

i. Report and Accounts for 2006

The Trustee's report had been circulated with the agenda and was agreed

ii. Grant Proposals

An urgent request for a relatively small grant was presented for consideration by this meeting. All other requests would be considered at the AGM in the normal manner.

Mark Esbester on behalf of the Bell Restoration Fund, proposed a grant of £350 towards work at Abbots Ann costing £2,800. This was seconded by Roger Barber and passed unopposed.

Phil Watts was assured that the BRF Trustees were aware that faculties should already have been granted for all projects given grants.

9. "Bells of the Channel Islands" by Rev David Cawley

This publication is almost ready for printing, which the meeting agreed should be done professionally. The Bishop of Winchester is writing a foreword. Jack Walters displayed five cover designs for comment. The Guild Master thanked Jack for his efforts regarding this publication.

10. Proposals

i. William Rayner's Tomb

William Rayner was a leading ringer around two hundred years ago who was influential in the establishment of the Isle of Wight as a centre of change ringing. His tomb at Arreton was restored by the Guild in 1925 and a further restoration was accepted as a suitable project for the Guild's 125th anniversary in 2004. Initial cleaning of the tomb has greatly improved its appearance. Further restoration by a stonemason has been deemed feasible and desirable. It has been costed at £1,500, of which £630 is still to be raised.

Mary Tester proposed that the Guild make a donation of £300 towards the restoration of William Rayner's tomb. This was seconded by Keith Gillings and carried by 13 votes to 3.

11. Date and place of future Meetings

The AGM will be held on Saturday 7 July at Bishop's Waltham. Marie Boniface outlined the day's programme. The November 2007 Executive meeting is set for 17 November at St Barnabas' Church Hall, at 10.15 am. March Executive meeting is Saturday 8 March 2008.

The venue location and hire cost for future meetings was discussed. Sincere gratitude was expressed for the free use of St Barnabas Church Hall over many years. The Guild Master proposed from the chair that Guild officers discuss with Canon Barry Fry possible payment for the future use of facilities at St Barnabas as it is in an ideal location for attendance from all of the Guild Districts.

12. Any other business

i. Alan Buswell's report and analysis of Quarter Peals rung at Guild towers and published in the Ringing World was approved in principle for publishing in the Guild Report if there was space, subject to David Strong's editorial judgement after clarification of some points.

ii. The Guild Public Liability Insurance does not at present cover maintenance, just ringing. Michael Bubb informed the meeting that the brokers were trying to find other insurers to cover BSC activities and perhaps general tower maintenance. Another possibility being investigated was Personal Accident cover for Belfry Stewardship Committee members when working in Guild towers.

13. Child Protection.

After a short break the meeting reconvened and the Master introduced Jane Fisher, Winchester Diocese Director of Social Responsibility & Child Protection Officer and John Markham, her equivalent for Portsmouth Diocese.

Jane Fisher gave a short presentation on the Church of England's policy on Child protection as formulated by the House of Bishops in 2004 and its implementation in the two Diocese.

Of particular interest was the application of the policy in mixed age groups such as bands of ringers:

- Ringers are regarded as voluntary Church workers and are asked to fill in job application forms;
- All ringers under 18 must have completed parental permission forms;
- All ringers to be CRB checked unless all the band are over 18 in which case only the tower captain and one other need CRB checks.

These measures are designed to prevent offenders joining bands of ringers to befriend potential victims. This is believed to be a very real threat, though no cases have been reported of child abuse by ringers in the two diocese.

In 2008 a new law will mean that churches cannot employ anyone who has not been CRB checked. It will also make CRB checks transferable to avoid the need for multiple checking of the same person. The diocese already requests 100% CRB checks as it sees that as a deterrent to child abusers who will seek softer targets.

The presentation also covered the legal responsibilities of PCCs in implementing the child protection policy and their need to follow best practice in order not to invalidate their Church insurance.

Much discussion ensued over the bureaucracy involved and the difference from the CCCBR guidelines which reflect the current law - not all ringers need CRB checks and the age limit is 16. At present, ringers at some towers have chosen not to complete the application forms or to submit to CRB checks, with dramatic effect in some cases. Mandatory CRB checking of all bell ringers is the biggest single point of controversy.

Questions were raised and information given on various points:

- If PCCs require all ringers at each church to be CRB checked, what about new recruits, visiting ringers, ringers outings and assistance at weddings? How can the fraternity of ringing be preserved within the new law? *Answer: One off visits will be allowed, but regular visitors will need to be CRB checked.*
- If all persons entering a Church to ring its bells have to be CRB checked, what about those that just go to worship? *Answer: The congregation will not have to be CRB checked.* This led to the comment that the concept of an inclusive, welcoming Church does seem to apply to worshippers, but not bell ringers even if they do worship there as well.
- At present someone signing the CRB check form gives permission for a Standard CRB check, but the result is often an Enhanced disclosure. *Answer: It is Diocesan policy to always get an Enhanced check. The forms will be changed to clarify this.*
- The process for handling positive CRB checks was described. It is designed to be sensitive and confidential, but does rely on implementation of these principles by the local PCC.
- The Diocese trains PCCs in the Church's general Child Protection Policy and gives more detailed training to each Parish's designated Child Protection Officer including risk assessment as to who actually needs CRB checks.

The question of how to get the correct level of Risk Assessment for ringing was considered important enough by all concerned to warrant the formation of a sub-group to progress the creation of a procedure specifically for assessing the Child Protection risk relevant to individual bands of ringers.

14. The Master thanked all those attending, especially the Diocesan representatives and others who contributed to the discussion on a difficult though extremely important subject, and closed the meeting at 1.22 pm.