

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Association of Church Bellringers held by Zoom call on Saturday 8 May 2021

The meeting started at 5.05pm with 52 zoom participants (several included more than one person) joining the call, most of whom were Association members. The AGM was preceded by a short Extraordinary General Meeting of the Northern District to elect Pam Donovan as their new Master.

Noel Gibbin, Association Master, welcomed everyone to the Association's second virtual AGM, caused by the country still being in lockdown due to the COVID-19 virus. He explained how the meeting was going to work, with most people being muted to avoid unnecessary noise diversions during the meeting. People would need to unmute if they were due to speak and comments could be made by all on the Group chat section of the website at any point. Everyone was asked to ensure their first and second names were showing so a record could be kept of who was there. Everyone was also asked to record any apologies for absence on the Group Chat list. Where voting was needed votes against could be recorded on the Chat list. The meeting was being recorded. No one objected so recording began.

The meeting opened with prayer led by Association member Father David Pennells from Mitcham.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Michael Rogerson (Cheam), Suki Edge-Partington (Redhill), Lawrence Davies (Wimbledon), Rosalyn Dale (Oxted), David Gilmore (Reigate), Sarah Gilmore (Reigate), Linda Wood (Beddington), Margaret Zandona (Ockley), and Caroline Prescott (Battersea)

The Master requested a few moments' silence to remember those of our members who had died since the last meeting:

Ron Diserens, Dorking and Ranmore

Margaret Lewis, Kingston

Doug Weeks, Limpsfield and Limpsfield Chart

Geoff Foster, Camberwell [as stated on chat by Trisha Shannon during the meeting]

Eric Callow, Ashted

Bill Taylor, Kingswood

Malcolm Pitstow, Ewell (Life Member)

Jean Shelley, Charlwood

Ken Tidy, Caterham St John's (Life Member)

Brian Parnell, Cheam (Life Member)

Bill Johnson, Caterham St John's

Marjorie Wardle, Reigate

2 Minutes of the AGM held via Zoom on Saturday 16 May 2020

The minutes had previously been circulated via the website and were unanimously agreed as a true record of that meeting, subject to the following corrections, proposed by Russell King, seconded by Martin Crick. There were no matters arising.

Corrections:

Second paragraph line 6 change “there” to “their”

Item 1, Apologies, delete David Hardcastle

Item 6, Election of Officers, add election of Chris Baldwin as Communications Officer.

3 General Committee Report and approval of general fund accounts

All the reports to be considered at this meeting had previously been published on the website. Highlights of this report included:

- Association numbers for 2020 were 579, down from 598, although this included several new members which is encouraging
- One of the last actual tower events in 2020 was the peal weekend in February with 3 successful peals with 5 firsts, 3 of these in one band
- The virtual AGM last year was held with trepidation and lots of practice. Since then this type of meeting and online events and ringing have kept us together as an association, committees and bands
- Lots of progress has been made by the sub committees for development with the major achievement of MemberMojo and the ringing recovery planning
- The Christmas meet-up was well received and attended and included a quiz
- The legacy fund remains healthy. Only one contribution was made although a commitment has also been made to St John’s Caterham for their simulator setup

General fund accounts

Income was down on previous years and expenditure was also down, mainly due to little legacy spend but also the Annual Report costs reduced by 65%. No fellowship grants had been made. There had been additional expenditure for MemberMojo fees. This resulted in a gain of £274 to the overall general fund. The accounts were unanimously approved on a proposal from John Coatsworth, seconded by Barbara Taylor.

Noel expressed the Association’s thanks to Ann for all her hard work in preparing the annual report and accounts and over the year as General Secretary.

4 Officer reports

4.1 Northern District Report

Pam Donovan, the new Northern District Master, proposed the report, which had been prepared by Paul Flavell. She introduced herself and said that a District Committee meeting had already been held to start work on future plans as soon as we can start ringing again. Noel thanked Pam for stepping up to take on this important role.

4.2 Southern District Report

Paul Beeken, Southern District Master, reported that the Southern District Committee had also been working on plans for the future. He encouraged members to email him with their requests and needs for help so that he and the Committee know where to focus their help once ringing re-starts. He stressed that everyone can help others, not only those who can ring more complicated methods.

4.3 Communication Officer's Report

Further to the published report, Chris Baldwin reported that the Surrey Association had been among the first to hold a virtual AGM and he had received many requests for advice as a result and he had helped Association members with queries about Zoom, Ringing Room and other matters. He thanked Martin Crick and John Coatsworth for their enormous help in setting up MemberMojo. Yahoo groups had closed shortly after we had moved to MemberMojo, demonstrating the advisability of having made that move.

Noel asked about the intended future of the Newsletter. Chris said that we will want to return to sharing news as we come out of lockdown so he wants to keep it going. We will need to think about the style, format and frequency for the future.

Noel thanked Chris for all his hard work as Communication Officer over the many years he has done it and in particular for his idea of leading us into changing to MemberMojo.

4.4 Training Officer's Report

Ian Griffiths referred to the published report and the fact that very little had happened over the past year, although there had been some virtual events. Training is included in the Ringing Recovery events, to be discussed later.

Noel thanked Ian for his work this year. He said that the general thought about training days is that they are not as beneficial in their traditional format as they might be and districts are intending to continue arranging regular focused practices for their members so that they are able to make progress in the areas needed.

4.5 BRF Officer's Report

Further to the published report, Malcolm McAlister highlighted that income had halved over the last year but there had been no outgoings. He encouraged members to make online donations in lieu of the usual meeting collections. The numbers club had reached record numbers of members.

Kate Wills reported that she is happy to accept orders for clothing at any time – just go to the Association website and follow the instructions. In answer to a query she confirmed it is possible to have additional logos added to the clothing if you wish – just let her have the design and she will get a quote for you. The prices are quite reasonable.

Bob Cooles reported on a plan to install a light peal of bells in Holy Trinity Roehampton, possibly next year. A 6 cwt ring of 8 is planned. The project is moving forward rapidly.

Noel thanked Malcolm for his work on the BRF and invited Russell and his Mother to conduct the numbers club draw. The winners were:

Monthly draw for £25, number 97, Monica Trow, Barnes
Quarterly draw for £103.46, number 176 John Verity, Redhill
Annual draw for £289.01, number 94, Sally Sayce, Buckland
Everyone was encouraged to join the numbers club. The form is on the website and has to be sent to Jill Wigney.

4.6 Surrey Strikers (Young Ringers)

In Caroline Prescott's unavoidable absence due to a work emergency, Chris Ridley reported that the young ringers are not planning to re-group until June. They are intending to take part in the Young Ringers' competition in Worcester in September. Noel thanked Caroline and Milica for the work they do for our young ringers.

5 New honorary life members and welcome to new members

New honorary life membership was awarded as follows:

Madeline Johnston (Holy Trinity, Clapham Common), Marion Prideaux (Holy Trinity, Clapham Common), Linda Georgiades (Kingston upon Thames), Adrian Wheeler (Kingston upon Thames), Helen Noble (Battersea), Kevin Perkins (Battersea), Sir David Beamish (Holy Trinity, Clapham Common), Brian Boustred (Buckland), Vivienne Boustred (Buckland), Yvonne Cooper (Bletchingley), Diane Grose (Godstone), Angela Price (Bletchingley), Anthony Vere Hodge (Leigh), Helen Vere Hodge (Leigh) and Phil Watkins (Stoke d'Abernon).

Noel congratulated them on achieving 30 years' membership of the Association and confirmed that certificates will be forwarded to them in due course.

Michael Uphill proposed that Irene Rich, formerly of Clapham Common, should be awarded honorary life membership. She has a total membership of over 31 years and does not think she has missed any subs. If she has, she is happy to meet any shortfall. Noel said it is difficult to decide on this at this meeting but the **General Committee** will consider it.

The following new members of the Association were welcomed:

Northern District: Melanie Powell (Rotherhithe), Clem Richards (Colliers Wood), Maggi Chick (Merton Park), Beverley Blanning (Barnes), Louis Wild (Wandsworth HT), Patrick Hughes (Southwark Cathedral).

Southern District: Martin Burke (Coulsdon), Jill Cox (Walton), Jo Ann Harvey (Outwood), Patricia Hoverd-Hughes (Unattached), Lynda MacClean (Dorking), Nick MacMahon (Unattached), Michael Willans (Leigh).

6 Election of Officers

Noel proposed a motion to amend Rule 18 and extend the Master's term of office for a further year due to absence of ringing caused by the COVID situation. There were no votes against this proposal.

Noel thanked those officers standing down at this meeting, in particular Chris Baldwin as Communications Officer and Andrew Robinson as Independent Examiner. He noted there was still a vacancy for a fourth Central Council rep, who

could be elected today if nominated. Martin Crick proposed Noel for this vacancy, and Chris Baldwin reluctantly agreed to stand for one further year as Communications Officer. There was just one nomination for each officer post so those nominated were duly elected as follows:

Master	Noel Gibbin
Secretary	Ann Beirne
Assistant Secretary	Kate Flavell
BRF Secretary	Malcolm McAlister
Training Officer	Ian Griffiths
Communications Officer	Chris Baldwin
Independent Examiner	Gavin Collins
Central Council Rep	Noel Gibbin (Kate Flavell, Paul Flavell & Jason Hughes previously elected.)

Noel welcomed Gavin Collins to his new role. Kate Flavell mentioned that Gavin is a ringer at Kingston and a Ringing Remembers recruit, also an accountant.

7 Future Annual General Meeting and events

It was agreed that next year's AGM would be held on Saturday 14 May 2022. Next year we plan yet again for the meeting to be in the Southern District. Noel asked the **Southern District Committee** to identify a suitable location. Other future activities will be arranged as soon as we know that ringing can re-start, but meanwhile the following are already known:

- 11 September – Young Ringers' competition in Worcester
- 11 September – Essex Trophy, to be held at Ashford, Kent
- 23 October – London 12 bell competition, location currently unknown
- National 12 bell competition – cancelled this year, to take place next year on 25 June in Guildford.

8 Membership Development

Martin Crick gave a presentation on this topic, which will be available on the website. Key points were:

- Reminder of the objectives of moving to MemberMojo and the need for everyone to register on it – many have, but there is further to go and towers must encourage their members to sign up
- Use of MemberMojo to collect subs from 2022
- How to use MemberMojo for communications and what it tells us about our members

Noel thanked all those involved in this work for all the huge effort they had put into making it happen, especially Martin, John Coatsworth and Chris Baldwin.

Also other members on the committee – Ann Beirne, Sue Dixon, Noel Gibbin, Richard Harris, Trisha Hawkins and David Whitehead

9 Ringing Recovery Plan

Noel gave a presentation on this topic which will be available on the website

Key points were:

- Activities during lockdown
- Central Council and Association of Ringing Teachers plans for survival and recovery
- Survey carried out of Surrey towers of their concerns and what the Association can do to help
- Action plans for districts and Training Group
- Possible need for tower maintenance
- Help for recruitment and those with lost confidence or out of practice
- Support for towers
- Events and communication

Noel thanked those who had worked with him on the Recovery Group – Paul Beeken, Paul Flavell, Ian Griffiths, Wendy Archibald, Ann Beirne and Pam Donovan and invited other interested members to join to help out. Jackie Harrison expressed an interest on the chat box.

In discussion Paul Beeken asked that the presentation could be made available on the website. Agreed.

Pam Donovan stressed that everyone's circumstances are different. Not all towers can re-start at the same time as their rope circle is too small. Also we need to take care when asking for help from experienced ringers – best not to use this term perhaps. People will take it to mean those who can ring fancy methods rather than those who can handle a bell without needing assistance and want to help out.

Martin Crick pointed out that towers with a small rope circle might be able to ring alternate bells and just ring a small number to help the band get back into ringing. It was also agreed that there will be no pressure to persuade people back into ringing if they are reluctant.

10 Any Other Business

- Noel thanked everyone for attending the meeting and all those who have helped in any way during such a difficult year, especially all the officers and particularly Ann as Secretary.
- John Young asked how the ND EDM would have been run if there had been a need for any elections. Noel said we knew there was only one nomination for District Master so the issue did not arise. Where voting was needed members were able to indicate if they wished to vote against any motion.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.