

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Association of Church Bellringers held at Bletchingley on Saturday 14 May 2022

1. Welcome

The meeting started at 5.45pm. Noel Gibbin, Association Master, welcomed everyone to the Association's first in-person meeting for three years, saying how good it was to be back together again. He thanked everyone at Bletchingley for hosting the meeting, the Rector and Organist for the service and Caterham, Merstham and Bletchingley for making their bells available.

2. Remembrance of Association members who have died since the last AGM

The meeting stood in silence to remember those who have died since the last AGM:

- Jenny Clarke, Newdigate (Life member)
- John Munton, Epsom Common (Life member)
- Tim Pryke, Ockley
- Jim Shepard, Bermondsey (Life member)
- Sally Sayce, Buckland (Life member)
- Anne Tuppen, Putney
- Peter Tuppen, Putney

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Jo Drew (non Resident), Andrew Fisher (East Molesey), Malcolm McAlister (Mortlake), Mike Shelley (Clapham Common), Kate Wills (Bletchingley), Patrick Wills (Bletchingley), Richard Harris (Battersea), Jane Wilcock (Merstham), Jules Shopton (Dorking), Charlotte Kirwan (Battersea), Geoff Strawbridge (St John the Devine Merton & Colliers Wood), Jennifer Meade (Esher), Michael Rogerson (Cheam), Kate Corney (Kingston), Christine Day (Putney), Oli Thompson (unattached), Monica Trow (Barnes), David Sayce (Buckland), Linda Wood (Beddington), Russell King (Beddington), Anthony Vere Hodge (Leigh), Helen Vere Hodge (Leigh), Jenny Heyworth (Epsom St Martin), Deborah Bishop (Kingston), Tony Bishop (Kingston), Lawrence Davies (Wimbledon), Nick MacMahon (Unattached), V J Williams (Nutfield), Shirley McGill (Croydon Minster), Trisha Hoverd-Hughes (unattached), Valerie Muller (Bletchingley).

4. Minutes of the AGM held via Zoom on Saturday 8 May 2021

The minutes had previously been circulated via the website and were unanimously agreed as a true record of that meeting, proposed by Jackie Harrison, seconded by Simon Beirne.

5. General Master's Report

All the reports to be considered at this meeting had previously been published on the website. Highlights mentioned at the meeting are recorded here.

Noel commented that his four year term had been odd, mainly because of Covid, meaning there had not been as much ringing and visiting as he had hoped for, but there had been a lot of work done in connection with ringing recovery, recruitment, teaching and planning. He thanked everyone for ringing when they could and looking after their bells. He also thanked the district committees and leaders and the Membership Development Committee, who used the time to work on the introduction of MemberMojo. Particular thanks were given to John Coatsworth and Martin Crick, who had led this work. Good stats are now starting to become available. Thanks were also given to the Recovery Committee, who had worked hard to negate the effects of Covid on ringing. And particular thanks to Ann for all her work. In turn Noel was thanked for his leadership at such a difficult and unusual time.

6. General Committee Report and Approval of General Fund Accounts

Ann reported that there had been good virtual meetings during 2021, including the AGM and the quiz. The 2022 annual report was now available online and printed copies could be ordered. MemberMojo had successfully launched and was now able to collect online payment for subscriptions. She thanked Noel for his time and commitment to the Association.

Regarding the accounts, there had been a major spend on belfry maintenance grants – some £4000 in total. This had led to a reduction in overall funds. We continue with a healthy bank balance of £33k. Spend on the legacy fund was £5416 leaving a balance of £24k. The accounts had been reviewed by the Independent Examiner, Gavin Collins (Kingston). In answer to a question about the raised level of donations in 2021 Ann explained that there had been some anonymous donations. The accounts were adopted, proposed by Martin Crick, seconded by Susan Gibbin. Noel again thanked Ann for all her work on keeping the accounts in order.

7. Officer reports

Northern District Report

Pam had nothing to add to her previously circulated report.

Southern District Report

Paul said that events will re-start on 1 July, with a trial practice at Newdigate on 28 May.

Communication Officer's Report

Jackie Harrison has been working with Chris Baldwin on communication matters over the last year and has re-started production of the newsletters. She urged everyone to submit Facebook items to Alan Cooke. Chris Baldwin was thanked for all his work as Communications Officer. He is remaining as web master.

Training Officer's Report

Ian stressed the need for future training. He is keen on the ART system of training ringing teachers and on 6 August there will be a course at Oxted to convert the M2F (Teaching from rounds to Plain Hunt) to M2C (Teaching elementary Change

Ringings). There are still places available and anyone wishing to attend should sign up through the ART website. There are also to be "Listen & Strike" courses in the Southern District, which are also to be rolled out to the Northern District.

BRF Officer's Report

In Malcolm's absence Noel highlighted recent payments to Croydon Minster and Lingfield. Income has reduced. More requests for grants are expected from Croydon, Betchworth, Egham and Roehampton. Noel invited Bob Cooles to tell the meeting about Roehampton. Bob explained that there is a new vicar who is keen to have a light 6cwt ring of 6 or 8 installed and for the adjacent church school to become involved in ringing. The total cost is around £70,000 and the faculty has been applied for. An appeal is to be launched later this year, but the scheme is very dependent on a substantial grant from the Surrey Association.

A collection was made for the BRF.

The deadline for clothing orders was to be extended beyond the end of this meeting and members were urged to place their orders quickly. Noel requested that an email be sent to all members to let them know about this.

The numbers club draw was made as follows:

Monthly prize £25 number 144 held by Chris Clementi of Caterham

Quarterly prize £107.59 number 58 held by David Sayce of Buckland

Annual prize £332.23 number 22 held by Carol Cooles

Jill Wigney was thanked for her work in running the numbers club, which Malcolm McAlister now runs.

Young Ringers

Caroline Prescott reported that we have a team entered for the Young Ringers contest in Exeter in July. There will be open practices in June. Surrey has offered to host the SEECON (South East England Youth Striking Contest) competition on 1 April 2023 (the young ringers version of the Essex Trophy)

Pam Donovan raised the question of the Violet Potter award. The prizes (books) seemed a bit out of date and she wondered if the young ringers themselves might like to update the awards and the amounts. This was agreed.

Noel thanked Caroline for the work she does for our young ringers. He also thanked all officers for the work they do on so many aspects of the Association's work.

8. New honorary life members and welcome to new members

New honorary life membership for 30 years' membership was awarded as follows:

- Susan Bailey, unattached
- Noel Gibbin, Caterham St John the Evangelist
- Susan Gibbin, Caterham St John the Evangelist

- Ian Griffiths, Oxted St Mary the Virgin
- Irene Rich, unattached
- Francis Ring-Davies, Mortlake St Mary the Virgin
- Chris Stanley, Merton St John the Divine
- Gill Tomlinson, Streatham St Leonard

Noel congratulated them on achieving 30 years' membership of the Association.

The following new members of the Association were welcomed:

Northern District

Thomas Ashwin-Siejkowski, unattached, Louis Benne, Battersea, Graeme Booth, Kingston upon Thames, Hilary Browning, Carshalton, Nicholas Cant, unattached, Jenny George, Addington, Edward Gosden, Merton Park, John Hawes, unattached, Elliot Hughes, unattached, James Moore, Mitcham, Bogumila Myers, Rotherhithe, Piers Myers, Rotherhithe, Caleb Saunders, unattached, Heather Wilson, Kingston upon Thames, Helen Wright, Benhilton

Southern District

Ann Battensby, Esher, Emily Cousins, Merstham, Isabel Dudman, Merstham, Morag Hebal, Caterham St John, Janine Herccock, Caterham St Mary, Fred Mills, Cobham, Sophie Mills, Merstham, Sophia Oliver, Betchworth, Morgan Rook, Esher, Dominic Starr, Oxted

9. Election of Officers

Noel thanked all outgoing officers for all their work. He then handed over the chair to Bob Cooles as President to chair the election of the Master. Bob said that Noel's term in office would go down in history both for being a four year term and also for managing all the issues that Covid threw at us, including shut churches and no ringing. He said that Paul Flavell was well-known to most in the Association for the previous roles he has held and Paul was duly elected as Master. Paul thanked Noel for all he had done during his period as Master in challenging times, overseeing the introduction of MemberMojo and the use of the online system Ringing Room to keep practices alive. A presentation was made to Noel and also to Susan Gibbin.

There was just one nomination for each of the remaining officer posts, so those nominated were duly elected as follows:

Secretary	Ann Beirne
Assistant Secretary	Kate Flavell
BRF Secretary	Malcolm McAlister
Training Officer	Ian Griffiths
Communications Officer	Jackie Harrison
Independent Examiner	Gavin Collins

It was confirmed that the Central Council Reps are elected for three years so they remain in post. They are Noel Gibbin, Kate Flavell, Paul Flavell & Jason Hughes

The new Master mentioned that Bob has indicated his wish to stand down as President next year as he is moving out of the Surrey Association area. There is now plenty of time to think about electing a new President at the next AGM.

10. Future Events

- (a) AGM Saturday 13 May 2023, Northern District. An offer was made by Barnes to host this event and accepted by the meeting.
- (b) Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. There are many quarter peals being organised in the Association for this celebration and Noel is still hoping there will be one in every tower over the next period. Central Council guidance is to ring to coincide with the service at St Paul's at 11.30 on Friday 3 June, perhaps ringing before the service, as St Paul's probably will.
- (c) Striking competitions. The Young Ringers competition is on Saturday 2 July. The Essex Trophy is on Saturday 24 September. The Surrey Association is hosting this event and it will take place at Bletchingley. The London 12 bell competition is on Saturday 22 October and is at St Paul's Cathedral. Surrey are hoping to enter a team but will need to see how they get on in practice to see if it is feasible. The National 12 bell final is at Guildford Cathedral on Saturday 25 June and would be a good day out and a chance to hear some excellent 12 bell ringing without having to travel too far. Surrey 6 and 8 bell competitions will start again next year.
- (d) Brockham Bonfire. This will take place on Saturday 5 November and Noel will again be looking for helpers to run the car parking, in exchange for £550 being paid into the BRF.
- (e) Other events. The Northern District is running its usual third Saturday general ringing events. The Southern District is starting monthly practices on the last Saturday of each month. 28 May is Newdigate. The aim is to help learners become Sunday ringers. Paul Beeken urged everyone to get a banner to advertise for recruits as it can be extremely successful. The next Northern District surprise major practice is at Carshalton on 20 May.

11. Membership Development

Martin Crick explained that MemberMojo is now fully online and all Surrey members are listed. Email addresses are included only for those who have consented. This year's annual report tower details and membership lists were generated from MemberMojo. Email distribution for members at all towers can be set up if wished. Contact John Coatsworth if you would like to do this. Membership fees are now being collected through MemberMojo and all were asked to ensure that their ringers use this system to avoid unfair strain on District Treasurers to collect outstanding fees. Approximately 75% of subscriptions are paid up as at now. The online shop can now be used to pay subs for others if desired and it was confirmed that subs for entire towers can be paid this way if wished. Other associations are interested in what we have done here and are asking for information and advice as to how to do similarly. Great thanks were again expressed to Martin & John for all their work on this.

12. Ringing Recovery

As the new Master, Paul said he wanted to continue Ringing Recovery and for us all to work together on:

- Innovative recruitment, including the use of banners
- Training, including training trainers, training courses and consideration of New Tower Captain/Succession Management
- Conductors
- Collaboration between towers, including:
 - Support and visit other towers
 - Tower Clusters / Pairing Up with struggling towers
 - Social
 - Jubilee Quarter Peals
 - Communication, including Newsletter, Facebook, emails
- Encourage, positive support for all

13. Any Other Business

- Noel announced that badges had been purchased for all members to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee and would be given out to towers today.
- Noel also announced that he is keen to offload some old CDs of ringing around Surrey – please take them, make a BRF donation for them if you wish. Also Surrey leaflets about ringing are available and are very good.
- Susan Gibbin spoke about safeguarding. A poster has been sent out and should be displayed in all towers. Everyone needs to know what is needed and to liaise with their own parish safeguarding officer for precise advice.
- Fraser announced that the Middlesex Association have a 12 bell practice on the second Friday each month at St Magnus and everyone is welcome.
- The next Northern District event is Saturday 21 May at Barnes in the morning with a quarter peal at West Hill in the afternoon.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm and was followed by ringing at Bletchingley.