

# GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

*held virtually on the Zoom teleconferencing service on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022*

- CO22/1 Alison Waterson (President) opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members and outlining how the virtual meeting would be conducted; she thanked James and Lynne for helping with the administration for the meeting. There were 39 members present.
- CO22/2 Apologies for absence were received from Harry Andrews, Michael Cannon, Don Roberts and Lester Yeo (VP).
- CO22/3 Losses by death: Heather Appleby (Sidmouth), John Adams (St Marychurch), Geoff Williamson (Kingskerswell), Neville Wright (Littleham), Gwen Farmer (Feniton), John Lidstone (Stokeinteignhead), Mike Winter (Staverton). A short period of silence was observed to remember them.
- CO22/4 Minutes of the January 2021 meeting One small correction was notified to the draft minutes previously circulated and with this change the minutes were approved and signed as a true record. (p: Lynne Hughes, s: John Foster; 35 in favour, 1 abstention).
- CO22/5 Matters arising from the minutes: Alison Waterson reported that a member had kindly agreed to provide funding for the new David Willis trophy which would be in place ready for the 2022 novice 8-bell striking competition.
- CO22/6 Secretary's report: John Martin (Secretary) had circulated his report prior to the meeting. Alison Waterson invited comments and questions.
- CO22/7 Membership records update: John Martin provided an update on the steps taken to bring the recording of personal data for members into line with the General Data Protection Regulations, including the introduction of a membership form. He thanked all Branch officers for their help with this which had resulted in forms being completed by over 450 members and explained some of the benefits which had gained, including an increase in the number of members completing a Gift Aid declaration and a reduced cost of printing Guild reports only for those members requesting one via the subscription form. He spoke briefly about a trial of an online membership system which would allow members to keep their own membership information up to date and make their subscription payments online. Committee members were invited to get in touch with John if they wished to take part in that trial.
- CO22/8 Treasurer's report: Draft accounts, a financial report and a forecast including several proposals had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Charlotte Boyce (Treasurer) presented a summary of the key items from the draft accounts including a reduced number of subscription payments received when compared to 2020. Will Carew (Guild Insurance Officer) recommended the addition of Employer Liability Insurance to the Guild insurance policy which had increased the annual premium. After some discussion it was agreed to ask Will Carew to provide some explanatory comments for circulation to Committee members.

Charlotte thanked all members who had donated over £950 to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund via the new subscription form process.

Charlotte also thanked all members who had donated to DCBRF after participating in ringing during the Guild Ringing Festival and Alena Wardle (SW Branch Chairman) explained how

their approach had been to invite donations from attendees for each performance during the event rather than a “per rope” charge for those taking part.

Moving on to recommendations for the Guild AGM Charlotte Boyce presented a forecast of key items of expenditure for 2022 and 2023 and the proposed subscription fee for 2023. Mark Heritage (NE Branch Chairman) questioned whether the split of subscription fees between the Guild and Branches could be reviewed. Charlotte Boyce noted she had received no comments from Branches indicating a lack of funds and that some Branches had considerable financial reserves. A proposal could be tabled for debate at a future meeting if desired though.

Mark Heritage also noted that now members can make a voluntary donation to support the work of the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund when making their annual subscription payment he did not consider it appropriate that a proportion of each member’s annual subscription fee be transferred to the DCBRF. Charlotte Boyce responded that one of the Guild objectives is to financially support the maintenance and improvement of bell installations which is carried out through the annual transfer to the Bell Fund.

Catherine Saunders (Mid Devon Committee Rep) asked whether it would be possible for a breakdown of how the subscription is spent to be published in Ringing Round Devon and Charlotte Boyce agreed to revise and republish the information she had previously prepared.

Charlotte Boyce proposed recommending to the Guild AGM that a donation of £2,035 be made to DCBRF. 32 votes were cast in favour, 2 against and 3 abstentions.

Charlotte Boyce proposed earmarking up to £500 to provide financial support to Young Ringer Activities in preparation for raising a Guild team to enter the 2022 Ringing World National Youth Contest being held in Exeter. 36 votes cast in favour, 2 abstentions.

Janet Deem (Aylesbeare Deanery Secretary) proposed that the Young Ringers Co-ordinator should be co-opted as a member of the Guild Committee; seconded by Charlotte Boyce. 38 votes cast in favour, no abstentions.

Charlotte Boyce proposed a transfer of £90.25 to top the Education Fund up to £500. 38 votes cast in favour, no abstentions.

There was a short discussion about the potential use of Guild reserves to support the Recruitment and Retention workgroup activities. Such activities might include making use of varied advertising media on a regular basis.

Charlotte Boyce reported she had consulted with our Central Council representatives about their estimate of expenses needed to enable them to travel to the September meeting in Nottingham and proposed a budget of £800 for this year. 36 votes cast in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

CO22/9

Subscriptions: Charlotte Boyce recommended that subscriptions should remain at £10.00 for 2023 and invited comments; 38 votes were recorded in favour, no abstentions. Members at the Guild AGM will be asked to endorse a subscription rate of £10 for 2023.

Charlotte Boyce noted that peal fees continue to cover the costs associated with preparing and printing records in the Guild Annual Report and the peal book and so proposed that the peal fee for 2023 remains at 60p per ringer. After some discussion a vote was conducted between three options, with the votes cast as follows: £1 - 10 votes, 60p – 27 votes, nil – 1 vote. This will now be published in the Guild report.

CO22/10

Expenses for Central Council Representatives: Recorded under item CO22/8 above.

- CO22/11      Production of Guild annual report: John Foster (Report Secretary) had already circulated his report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations.
- CO22/12      Reports by other officers:
- (a) Peal Secretary: Mike Mears (Peal Secretary) had already circulated his report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations.
- (b) Quarter Peal Secretary: James Kirkcaldy (Quarter Peal Secretary) had already circulated his report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations.
- (c) Librarian: Leslie Boyce had already circulated his report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations.
- (d) Towers and Belfries Advisers: Ian Smith and Ian Campbell had already circulated their report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- (e) Education Officer: Tim Bayton advised that a report had been included in the Recruitment and Retention workgroup report.
- (f) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: Ian Avery (DRC Clerk) had already circulated his report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations.
- (g) Ringling Round Devon Editor: Ian Campbell had previously circulated his report as RRD Editor and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- (h) Central Council Representatives: A report written by the Guild Representatives from the 2021 Central Council meeting had been circulated and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- (i) Webmaster: Matthew Hilling had previously circulated his report as webmaster and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- (j) Safeguarding officer: Wena Mansley had previously circulated her report who advised that one question had been received prior to the meeting which needed further work before a reply could be circulated to Committee members.
- CO22/13      Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund: A report had been circulated prior to the meeting, although the accounts had yet to be finalised. Members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- CO22/14      Frank Mack Bells Report: Ian Avery had already circulated a report and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- CO22/15      DenMisch bells management committee: Ian Campbell and Oliver Coldrick had circulated a report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- CO22/16      Young Ringers co-ordinator: Elena Brake had circulated a report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
- CO22/17      Guild 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning workgroup: James Kirkcaldy spoke briefly about the activities planned during the Guild 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2024 and invited ideas about how levels of interest could be assessed for the celebration weekend activities on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March. There was some discussion about using polling technologies and communicating via branch officers and Janet Deem noted that if we wish to secure a location for a formal dinner on our chosen date this needs to be done during the next 12 months. Rodney Horder expressed

reservations about how many members might travel to a central location for a dinner and noted the likelihood of requiring an overnight stay but was supportive of the plans for a celebratory day of ringing and service. Michael Cannon supported the idea of a formal dinner and also expressed his wish to see a Guild presence at agricultural shows, including the Devon County Show. Martin Mansley reported that Mid Devon branch members had indicated their interest in a dinner at the branch AGM. While Matt Hilling supported the idea of holding a dinner he wondered whether a Friday night would put some people off. Alena Wardle reported that the idea of a formal dinner would be put forward at the South West branch AGM and noted that members would be able to stay over after a Saturday night dinner and still return to their local tower in time for Sunday ringing.

Les Boyce reported that work was already underway on the 2024 Ringing World calendar and that the proofs will need to be ready in early 2023. The calendar would feature Devon towers including some with relevance to both Guild and Association as a reference to the Association's centenary which will take place in 2025.

- CO22/18      Recruitment and Retention workgroup: Workgroup members had circulated a report prior to the meeting and members were invited to make observations or ask questions.
  
- CO22/19      Proposals for new Vice-Presidents: Prior to the meeting a proposal had been circulated from John Steere that John Michelmores (s:Alena Wardle) be nominated as a Vice-President. 37 votes cast in favour, 1 abstention.
  
- CO22/20      Vacant Guild posts: Alison Waterson reported that those serving as President and Education Officer would be stepping down at this year's AGM and also that the Publicity Officer post is vacant. Committee members were encouraged to consider whether they knew of someone who might be interested in one of these roles.
  
- CO22/21      2021 first peal certificates: Daniel Copestake and Harry Fowler rang their first peal in 2021; certificates would be awarded at the Guild AGM in June.
  
- CO22/22      Ringing World National Youth Contest 2022: Matt Hilling outlined arrangements for the RWNYC which would be held in Exeter on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Around 180 youth contestants were expected to take part in the competitions and there would be other activities in and around Exeter including an opportunity for all the contestants to ring at the Cathedral. Volunteers would be sought to help with stewarding and other arrangements during the day and Matt advised branch Secretaries that a call for those volunteers would soon be circulated.
  
- CO22/23      Arrangements for 2022 Guild Festival and AGM – 18 June (Exeter Branch): A proposal had been circulated prior to the meeting and Rob Neal (Exeter branch Secretary) confirmed Crediton as the venue. Alison Waterson invited comments and questions.
  
- CO22/24      Guild Striking Competitions – 15 October 2022 (Mid Devon Branch): Preliminary information had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Nigel Birt provided an update confirming the 6-bell contests would be held at Bishopsteignton and Stokeinteignhead. Alison Waterson announced that the method choices for the inter-Branch 8 bell competition would be Grandsire Triples and Plain Bob Major and invited comments and questions.

Rodney Horder provided feedback from the Mid Devon branch indicating that striking competitions were considered demotivating by many members and suggested that a striking workshop might instead be more motivational. Janet Deem noted that Aylesbeare Deanery branch had found that entering the striking contest had been highly beneficial and provided development opportunities for members. Alena Wardle and Michael Cannon spoke positively about the workshop that had run alongside the 2021 striking contest at Laira. Martin Mansley,

Charlotte Boyce, Michael Cannon and Alison Waterson spoke in favour of considering running similar workshop sessions at future striking contests.

CO22/25      Fund Raising for DCBRF : Ringing Festival: John Martin reminded Committee members of some of the examples of Ringing Festival performances which had been mentioned during the meeting and encouraged members to submit many different types of ringing performance as part of the Festival fortnight. Also to use social media and other channels to spread awareness of what is going on beyond ringing circles. Janet Deem offered to assist with publicising this event nearer the time if we do not have a Guild Publicity Officer by then.

CO22/26      Date and venue of next meeting: Alison Waterson announced that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June after the Guild AGM.

CO22/27      AOB:

(a) John Martin advised the Central Council had made contact about plans for a new mobile belfry and asked the Guild if we could support the project financially. After consultation with Alison Waterson and Charlotte Boyce it was determined that the project does not fit with our Objectives. The Guild will however consider hiring the mobile belfry when it becomes available.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.07pm.

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Alison Waterson (President)

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Date