



**Minutes of the North East District Annual Meeting
held at St Edmund's Church, Southwold IP18 6JA
on Saturday, 9th November 2024, commencing at 5.20pm**

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair, Dave Goldstone (**DG**), welcomed 26 other members to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from 12 members of the District.

2. Approval of the minutes of the previous ADM held on 11 November 2023

DG reminded members that the draft minutes of the ADM held on 11 November 2023 at Reydon had been circulated with the agenda and asked whether anyone present wished to propose any corrections. None were proposed and the meeting approved the minutes as a true record of the business transacted at the previous ADM.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

DG asked for any matters arising from the minutes of the previous ADM but none were raised.

4. District Ringing Master's Report (*copy attached at the end of these minutes*)

The District Ringing Master, Philip Gorrod (**PJG**), referred to his written report presented at the meeting and invited questions.

In response to a question about the striking competition from DG, PJG explained that the Guild had asked the District to host the Guild's 6-bell and 8-bell striking competitions in 2025 in addition to the District's own. The Guild's events are likely to be held on the third Saturday in May. The District Committee will meet in January to decide on the towers at which these will take place.

Mike Sage (**MS**) asked about the threat of church closures, whether any in the District were likely to close and whether there were instances of bands combining due to shortages of ringers. PJG commented that, as far as he knew, no District churches had been earmarked for closure as yet but, when assessed against the apparent criteria being used, there were some possible candidates. He added that the Guild's General Management Committee (**GMC**) is looking at the risk of church closures across the four Districts. As for the sharing of ringers, this is not uncommon. Kate Gill (**KG**) added that there are some closed churches, such as Bungay, where ringers are still permitted access to the bells for practice nights and to ring on other occasions.

5. Election of new Members

Sue Child (**SC**) reported that there were three new membership applications from the Sole Bay area as a result of a collaborative training project between Southwold, Reydon and the Hub. The names of the applicants and their respective proposer and seconder are set out below:

Applicant	Proposer	Second
Elle Heywood	SC	Julia Johnson (JJ)
Tania Brawn	SC	Caroline Guthrie (CG)
Ian Watson	SC	CG

KG confirmed that each applicant had paid their subscription to the Guild.

The meeting voted in favour of all three applicants' elections.

6. Election of District Officers

DG explained that, as he was offering himself for re-election as District Chairman at this meeting, he would step down from his role as Chair for the purposes of the next item of business which was the election of the District Chairman. It was noted that all appointments approved and any consequent changes in the composition of the Committee would take effect at the end of the meeting.

a) District Chairman

KG took the Chair at this point and invited any other nominations for this role in addition to DG's (whose re-election was proposed by Tom Grady (**TG**) and seconded by Chrissie Pickup (**CPP**)). No other nominations were received and DG was duly elected as District Chairman.

b) District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary

On retaking the Chair DG reminded the meeting that, given the workload of the role of District Secretary, a decision had been taken two years ago to divide the duties between a District Secretary and an Assistant District Secretary. DG explained that KG was stepping down as District Secretary this year and Marie Owen (**MO**) was willing to stand for election to this post. Erika Clarke (**EMC**) confirmed she was willing to continue in the role of Assistant District Secretary. DG invited other nominations for the respective roles of District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary but none were received. CPP proposed and Lizzie Wood (**LW**) seconded the proposal that MO be elected as District Secretary and that EMC be re-elected as Assistant District Secretary. The meeting voted in favour of MO's and EMC's election to these respective roles en bloc.

c) District Treasurer

DG reported that Julie Rapior (**JJR**) was willing to continue in office as District Treasurer and invited other nominations. No other nominations were received. JJR's election as District Treasurer was proposed by KG and seconded by Sal Jenkinson (**SJ**) and the meeting voted in favour of JJR's election.

d) District Ringing Master (**DRM**)

DG reported that PJG was willing to continue as DRM and invited other nominations. No other nominations were received. PJG's election as DRM was proposed by MO and seconded by JJ and the meeting voted in favour of PJG's election.

e) Guild Management Committee representatives (5 places)

DG reported that the District is entitled to elect five representatives to sit on the GMC and that all of the current four representatives (the fifth place being unfilled currently) namely, PJG, Sarah Plummer (**SP**), Joanna Wilkinson (**JW**) and EMC were willing to stand again for re-election. TG offered to stand for election

to fill the remaining fifth place and no other nominations were received. Michelle Golding proposed and SC seconded each of PJG, SP, JW, EMC and TG for election as the District's representatives on the GMC and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

f) Recruitment and Training Committee Representatives (2 places)

DG reported that the District is entitled to elect two representatives to sit on the Guild's Recruitment and Training Committee (**R&T**) and that the two current representatives, PJG and SC were willing to stand for re-election. There being no other nominations, PJG's and SC's election as the District's representatives on the R&T was proposed by LW and seconded by EMC and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

g) Other District Committee members

DG explained that others can be elected to serve on the District Committee. He reported that Richard Rapior (**RTL**R), KG and Keith Dennis (**KEJ**D) were happy to continue as District Committee members. No other nominations were received. The election of RTL, KG and KEJ to the District Committee was proposed by CPP and seconded by JJ and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

7. Planning for 2025

DG explained that the Committee had been working on a programme of events for next year and these would appear on the Guild website in due course. He added that a list of potential towers at which events might be held was being circulated at the meeting and invited members to indicate which of these they would like to visit and return their lists before they leave. He added that members were free to add their own suggestions for towers to visit should they wish to do so.

CPP offered to organise an outing in Spring/Summer as part of the 2025 programme.

8. Reports

a) R&T *(copy attached at the end of these minutes)*

DG referred members to the written report presented to the meeting. No comments or questions were made or received.

b) GMC *(copy attached at the end of these minutes)*

DG referred members to the written report presented to the meeting. No comments or questions were made or received.

c) Belfry Advisory Committee *(copy attached at the end of these minutes)*

DG referred members to the written report presented to the meeting. No comments or questions were made or received.

9. Safeguarding

DG reminded members of the importance of Safeguarding to the Guild which aims to protect all ringers including vulnerable adults and children. He reminded the meeting that everyone should undertake the relevant training and gain the appropriate certificate (sending this to the relevant Parish Safeguarding Officer direct or via their tower captain) and referred members to the Guild's website for further information. He reminded everyone that we all had a responsibility to look out for each other, particularly for those who are more vulnerable.

PJG and SJ endorsed DG's comments.

10. Any Other Business

DG invited members to raise any other items of business.

CPP reported that, following discussions with PJG, she was hoping to reinstate a 10-bell practice at Beccles on a bi-monthly basis. She emphasised that it was important for enough ringers to attend these to ensure they can continue. The aim would be to provide a range of 10-bell ringing experiences from ringing rounds to methods. The practices would take place on the **third Wednesday** of alternate months **beginning in February 2025**.

SC reported that an ART Module 1 course will be held at Reydon on Saturday, 11th January 2025 between 9.30am and 5pm. There were 5 or 6 places remaining and open booking begins next week.

DG ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending, SC for all her hard work at the Hub, the Southwold ringers for use of their tower, the Reverend Russ Grant for conducting the service, Jason Busby for playing the organ and MO for reading the lesson. He also thanked KG and her husband, Robert, for the organisation of the event and all their hard work with District events in the past. On behalf of the District DG presented KG with a gift upon her retirement as District Secretary and KG thanked the meeting.

MS thanked PJG for leading the ringing.

The meeting closed at 6.05pm.

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Chair

ATTACHMENTS:

SUFFOLK GUILD NE DISTRICT RINGING MASTER'S REPORT to ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING 2024

Following the success of the Coronation Quarters in 2023, 39 ringers took part in our Quarter Peal "Weekish" and 14 were scored out of 16 attempts. This is not something I would like to do every year (it takes a lot of organising and I don't want it to become a chore), but it can provide a focus for our ringing from time to time. Well done to everyone who took part.

Congratulations are due to Helen Mower, Lizz Wood and Georgia Harris on ringing their first quarter peal during the year. 48 quarter peals have been rung by District bands, just a handful fewer than last year, the total for which had been boosted by the coronation. No peals have been rung this year by the District, although there is an attempt at Aldeburgh by a Guild band most months, and occasional peals are rung by visiting bands.

The Sole Bay Hub at Reydon continues to provide intensive tuition on most Saturday mornings and I would encourage anyone who feels that their handling could be improved to come along and try it. There is no need to book in advance – just turn up. Tower Captains would do well to encourage and preferably accompany their learners: they may well pick up some tips too.

The District Striking Competition at Theberton saw nine bands entering, an encouraging attendance. Halesworth again won the Trevor Hughes Trophy, by a whisker from Beccles, with Yoxford picking up the Call Change Trophy and Reydon the Harry Archer Trophy.

I said this last year: "I am always happy to arrange quarter peals or special practices on request and I am disappointed how infrequently I am asked to do so. If you are not sure how to progress to the next stage in your

ringing career, do please feel free to have a chat with me about it.” Only Chediston have taken me up on this, and five quarters have been rung before the normal first Thursday practice, all in simple methods, but aimed at improving striking and concentration.

PJG

November 2024

REPORT TO NE DISTRICT ADM 2024 ON GUILD RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee is made up of the Guild Master and two representatives from each District (one usually, but not necessarily, being the District Ringing Master). Sue Child and Philip Gorrod have been the NE representatives over the last year, during which the Committee has met several times, ostensibly to discuss matters relating to recruitment and training, but the most useful aspect is the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Recruitment, we have learned from experience, is something best done at a local level. We do organise the occasional larger event but these tend to be more of a PR than a recruiting exercise.

We are also charged with advising GMC on the training aspects of projects for which a Guild grant is being sought. In the last year we have been asked to comment on three exciting projects.

1. Drinkstone provided us with a comprehensive training plan in respect of their restoration project and we were pleased to confirm that this met the requirements for a successful grant application.
2. St Mary le Tower (Ipswich) are installing 6 Higby training “bells”, and we recommended that the GMC should make a substantial grant towards this.
3. Henley is the centre for the “Bellsashen” Teaching Hub and we have recommended that some of the unused money (about £1,000) from the Golden Bottle Fund be devoted to this.

We also approved a smaller grant for the proposed work on the bearings etc. at Blythburgh.

PJG

November 2024

REPORT TO NE DISTRICT ADM 2024 ON GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND BELFRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The GMC has met three times since the beginning of the year, with focus on the usual business of ensuring financial probity and Guild governance. An important element of its work is reviewing and approving grant applications after recommendation from the R&T committee, as outlined in PJG’s report above.

The Guild has welcomed a new Treasurer, Tim Hart, and a new Secretary, David Everett, who were both elected at the Guild AGM in Stowmarket in April this year.

The General Management Committee (GMC) considered matters including:

- The outcome of the survey of members during 2023. This threw up no real surprises, but reinforced the fact that many towers might benefit from a greater number of experienced ringers at practices.
- How to streamline the Guild safeguarding procedures, in conjunction with Diocesan requirements.

- The significant number of church closures likely to happen in the medium term and how this will impact on any rings of bells. This issue is to be considered nationally at the next AGM of the Central Council for Church Bell Ringers.
- It was pleasing to hear that almost 20% of the Guild membership has joined in the last two years, spurred on by the Platinum Jubilee and 'Ring for the King'.

The Belfry Advisory Committee (BAC) has continued with its programme of providing advice and carrying out work to various towers across the Guild. It has also been closely involved in bell restoration projects.

The BAC ran two 3 hour bell maintenance courses at Framlingham in May, with 22 members attending. A further two courses were held in September, again well attended by 23 people. The courses received excellent feedback and reinforce the desire of members to know more about maintaining their bells.

KG

November 2024