

EACR – Northern District

MINUTES of the District Meeting held at Great Bardfield on Saturday 3rd March 2012

Present: Peter Smith (PS) District Master
Ian Hamilton (IH) Deputy District Master
Vicky Le Fèvre (VLeF) Treasurer
Annemarie Adams (AA) Secretary

Members Present: 9

1 Welcome

PS welcomed the small group to the meeting, extending it especially to Vicki Bennett's children.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from D Carpenter, K Champness, P Darkins, M and K Downs, T and W Earle, J Elliott, D Hill, B Hill, N and S Holland, E Jolley, P Kelly, D Learmonth, R and L Ould, A Taylor, R and C Threadgold.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, which had been circulated, were accepted as a true record.

Proposed: P Wood
Seconded: A Cansdale

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5 Nominations for Membership

Four new ringing members were unanimously accepted as follows:

Margaret Blackman – Ridgewell

Proposed: P Darkins
Seconded: V Darkins

Michael Estcourt – Colne Engaine

Proposed: VLeF
Seconded: IH

David Newton – Pebmarsh

Proposed: V Darkins
Seconded: P Darkins

Tim Potter – Great Dunmow

Proposed: G Potter
Seconded: S Gilbert

New member's packs need to be provided to them.

Action: AA

PS reminded the meeting that new members had to complete a membership form which would be presented at the District meeting. They should be encouraged to attend the meeting at which they were to be elected. The question of the standard of ringing required for membership was raised and PS confirmed ringers needed to be able to ring competently for Sunday services and that this was at the discretion of the tower captains.

PS reiterated the new rule that ringers who had been members of the Association for fifty years continuously were automatically eligible for life membership and did not have to pay the annual subscription. However, it was incumbent on the individual member to inform either Colin or Vicki Chapman of their entitlement to such membership. Ringers achieving this status would be invited to attend the AGM at which they would be issued with a certificate confirming their life membership.

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6 Report from Executive Committee – 4th February 2012

The report had been circulated and a copy would be lodged with the Minutes of this meeting. It would also be placed on the Northern District website. Any comments regarding the report should be passed to a member of the Committee so that they could be raised at the next Executive Committee meeting in October.

7 Public Relations

PS pointed out that the District did not have a contact for Public Relations who could receive information from the Association PR Officer, Tracey Southgate, and also feed back to her details of events in the District. The meeting was encouraged to discuss this in their towers and give the Committee names of possible candidates for the role.

8 Achievements

The achievements listed in the Ringing World up to 2nd March had been circulated. PS highlighted the most notable ones, namely P Darkins' 100th Quarter Peal and VLeF's Peal of Most Surprise Minor (14). He asked that any Quarter Peals missing from the list should be notified to him. PS also suggested that these lists should be displayed in the local towers to encourage others to ring more Quarter Peals. It was noted that Angela Pannell should be listed as an Unattached member and not as a Halstead member as listed.

Action: AA to amend list

9 Bell School

Following the last meeting the Committee had visited most of the towers in the District to ascertain what help was needed to develop their ringing. The results indicate that a different format was required. Using Ridgewell, where there is a new band, as an example, PS felt that a concentrated course of say four to six weekly sessions with experienced helpers would enable them to progress to method ringing. Currently with more than one learner in the band each time, it was very difficult to make much progress.

Another scenario might be where two or three towers in the same area need help. Again a short course at one tower in their area would help the ringers move forward. Such short courses would also be less of a burden on the helpers as they could be gathered from other local towers, rather than using helpers from more distant locations.

Short courses could also be used for ringers wishing to work on a particular method.

PS asked for names of people who would be prepared to help with this project. It was hoped that these tailored practices could be held during the week but may have to be on a Saturday.

A co-ordinator for the project would be required and PS would approach D Learmonth in the first instance to see if he would wish to do this.

Action: PS

10 Future Events

There were two major events in the coming year, namely the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics. PS felt the former was the more important as it would be remembered long after the Olympics had passed. He wanted every tower in the District to ring for the Jubilee and hoped that at least one peal would be rung, possibly involving past Masters and Officers of the District. V Darkins said that

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Pebmarsh had plans to ring for this occasion and, as a peal was already planned at Gestingthorpe for that weekend to recognise Captain Oates' centenary, this could also be used to mark the Jubilee. V Bennett stated that Kelvedon also planned to ring for the Jubilee. PS was happy for towers to ring whatever they were capable of and it did not need to be a Quarter Peal.

IH discussed the Olympic ringing saying that it was again for the towers to ring whatever they felt they could ring well. There had been a suggestion that ringing should take place at 8.00 am on the first day but this had not met with a positive response either from the Central Council or the Association. It was felt that this would not be popular with people living around the towers, nor was it necessarily going to be easy to provide ringers for this.

A Five-rings Doubles and Triples practice had been held but those ringers attempting it did not feel that it was particularly musical or that, indeed, there would be sufficient interest from enough ringers in the District of the standard required to ring it successfully.

IH felt that, given the athletes in the Olympics would be performing to the absolute limit of their abilities, it would be an opportunity for towers to push their boundaries in terms of what they could ring for the occasion.

He suggested that bands wanting London Olympic themed methods might look at London Surprise, London Bob and Olympic Doubles (variation of St Martin's Bob Doubles with Old Singles), which might well be within the capabilities of several towers.

V Bennett mentioned that a Plain Bob Triples peal attempt at Kelvedon was planned for 10th March 2012 and this would be the first peal on the refurbished ring there.

There was to be a BBQ, again to be held in Vic and Wendy Turner's garden as it was such a success last year. PS hoped that it would be well attended.

PS currently had no further information about a group of youngsters from the District taking part in the National Youth Competition at the end of June.

PS mentioned the Ringing for England initiative and encouraged towers to ring on 23rd April 2012 to celebrate this. K Champness had organised St George related ringing last year and PS hoped to be involved in it again this year.

PS mentioned the Essex Course to be held in April and said that all the members of Northern District, of whom he was aware had applied, had gained places. Helpers were still required for the various courses. It was not necessary to commit to helping every day of the course; help for any of the sessions would be much appreciated and members were asked to contact Hilary Donaghue at ringingcourse@aol.com to let her know their availability. He asked that District members already involved in helping should try and encourage others to take part. P and M Wood said they had already told H Donaghue that they would help.

Arrangements for the May meeting had had to be altered and PS asked for volunteers to make cakes, sandwiches or scones for this. He asked the tower correspondents to display the Quarterly Programme indicating the change prominently in their towers.

Action: AA to distribute Quarterly Programme

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9 AOB

PS informed the meeting that Ted Tennant had a supply of ash stay blanks and encouraged towers requiring such material to contact Ted.

Northern District was responsible this year for supplying sidesmen for the service at the AGM in Chelmsford. A minimum of four were required – two to distribute books prior to the service and four to take the collection. V Bennett said she would be happy to help with the books and P and M Wood were available to help with the collection. Any other members who intended to be at the service were asked to let the Committee know if they could help.

There was also an opportunity to take over the tea and coffee preparations prior to the service. Any tower wishing to undertake this and thereby use the monies gained for fund-raising in their own tower were asked to contact V Chapman direct to arrange this.

A Cansdale queried the payment of subscriptions by members over 65 and PS and VLeF confirmed that all members over 65 now had to pay subscriptions, unless they were a Life Member.

M Wood said the cost of the tea was £3.00 per person. The meeting raised £38.00 for the Bell Restoration Fund.

10 Votes of Thanks

Rev Dr Robert Beaken was thanked for taking the service. PS thanked P Wood for playing for the service and leading the singing so well. M Wood and A Boon were thanked for reading the lessons and also for providing the delicious tea. PS also thanked the Great Bardfield ringers for organising the day.

Following this the meeting was closed with members being encouraged to go on and ring at Great Easton.