

Annual General Meeting Saturday 13th January 2024

Held at St Peter & St Paul Coleshill

The meeting began at 13:36. The Master, Eleanor Linford, in the Chair. Standing committee also present were Mark Eccleston (Archivist and Webmaster), Phil Ramsbottom (Ringing Master), Rachel Mitchell (Public Relations Officer), Sand Cooper (Secretary) and Tracy Stevens (Treasurer).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Eleanor began by thanking the Coleshill ringers for their welcome, lunch and the bells! She welcomed all present, in particular anyone who had not attended a meeting before. 45 attended including officers.

Apologies were accepted from:-

Adam Knight-Markiegi	Alison Hodge	Chris Mills	Christine Barnell
David Hull	Emma Harris	Emily Tamhne	Gillian Stead
Jeffrey Carr	Jeffrey Webb	Jenny Sunter	Keith Whitehead
Lucian Lupsan	Malcolm Paulson	Margaret Griffin	Richard Postill
Rosemary Seadon	Sharon Wall	Sonia Field	Tim Sunter
Trish Everett (Safeguarding Officer)			

2. Remembering members who had died

Eleanor gave some background before The Guild stood in silence for the members who had died since the last meeting, Muriel Higgs and Brian Woolley.

3. Approval of minutes of the AGM 7th January 2023

The minutes were proposed by Arthur Reeves, seconded by Tony Daw. They were accepted by members as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Officer Reports

Written reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting in a document entitled Officers Reports.

5.1 Financial Reports

The Treasurer explained why the expiry date for Membership Mojo had been set as 31st January allowing for the subscription fee to be agreed at the AGM before emails were issued. She advised that the 100 Club funds had been used to pay for Ring for The King badges and £200 towards St Anne's Moseley's simulator. The remaining funds had been passed to the Bell Restoration Fund (BRF). She thanked the generosity of Andrew Stubbs who had left a substantial amount in his will, now held in the BRF. We anticipated supporting St Chad's and Aston. If other towers would like support from the BRF they were asked to approach the standing committee.

5.2 Independent Examiners

Steve Horton advised that he and Thomas Horton had examined the accounts. The Treasurer had answered all their questions, a small amount of advice had been given and they recommended that we agree the accounts as satisfactory.

Proposed by James Ramsbottom, seconded Luke Daniel and agreed by members.

The Treasurer proposed that the subscriptions to The Guild remain unchanged, £10 full members, £5 concessions, and associate membership also remains the same. Nothing had been apportioned to the library or the BRF but an application could be made to the standing committee if necessary. Peal fees to remain the same and tower fees to stand at £15.00 unless a tower specifically requests more.

Proposed by Tracy Stevens, seconded Steve Horton and agreed by members.

5.3 100 Club

Clare McArdle advised that the 100 Club had raised £1,298.50 which will transfer to the General Fund, ringfenced for the standing committee to use as appropriate and any remaining after 12 months to be passed to the BRF as previously agreed. Clare thanked the 2023 members and encouraged them to renew their membership. 60% of those sent an email reminder had already responded and Clare asked that if we wish to stop our membership, we advise her. We can go over 100 numbers so new members are always welcomed.

Eleanor thanked Clare for her hard work last year.

5.4 Ringing Master's Report

Phil thanked all those that had helped and supported him both in the events that he had organised or through their own towers during his time as Ringing Master which had been tremendous fun. He said his three years as Ringing Master had been an absolute pleasure. Eleanor acknowledged that there had been a lot going on in The Guild.

5.5 Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary's Report

We do not have a dinner secretary but that the standing committee had been co-opting people for support and Eleanor thanked Clare McArdle for her hard work and Simon Linford who has been the main point of contact with the Burlington Hotel. Last year's dinner was very successful. This year's dinner will also be at the Burlington, Saturday 24th February, tickets are £46.50, £35 concessions, available via the Participant website. Tickets must be purchased at the latest by noon 10th February, details are on The Guild website. Eleanor will be in the chair this year.

5.6 Archivist and Webmaster Report

Mark thanked Clare McArdle on behalf of the Guild for donating her copies of the Ringing World. He reminded us that the library is available for all to use and details are on the website or he members can speak with him.

Mark also asked for any feedback about the website and its functionality as we would like to increase traffic. Eleanor thanked Mark for all his hard work in both roles over the last year.

The last update to The Guild peal books was in 2000, completed by Simon Linford, Michael Wilby and Steve Jones. Eleanor agreed that the standing committee would consider updating, at their next meeting.

5.7 Safeguarding Officer’s Report

Eleanor noted that Trish is very assiduous in her role as Safeguarding Officer. Included in her report was the Central Council’s code of ringing which we should individually, as Towers and as a Guild be considering.

It was noted that compared to other ringing societies the detail of the report was outstanding with many useful links and resources. Eleanor agreed to pass on this note of thanks.

5.8 CCCBR Representatives’ Report

The representatives James and Richard brought to our attention the 3 Stewardship Group documents, Belfry Upkeep, Belfry Projects and Running a Tower which are now available online and will continue to be updated. Richard also raised the Peal Board project and encouraged towers to participate. He described the process including the email address of Pealboard@CCCBR.org.uk. Eleanor thanked Richard and James and agreed that these details be shared with The Guild.

Whilst James was looking to step away from the role, Richard and James had both been active in the work of The Council.

6. Election of Members

6.1 Full Members

Name	Tower	Proposed	Seconded
Lucian Lupsan	Moseley	Simon Linford	Tony Daw
Jan Phillips	Boldmere	Clare McArdle	Tony Daw
Alex Rivas	Selly Oak	Kirsty Gifford	James Mundy
Zoe Rippengal	Harborne	Clare McArdle	Tracy Stevens

Members elected these new full members.

6.2 Associate Members

There were no new associate members.

6.3 Life Members

Life membership is often considered for long standing members and those that have made a significant contribution. Eleanor gave the background to both nominations.

Name	Tower	Proposed	Seconded
Sarah Jones	Harborne	Eleanor Linford	Clare McArdle
Tracy Stevens	Harborne	Rachel Mitchell	Steve Horton

Members agreed.

Tracy said it had been an honour and a privilege to be on the standing committee, noting the Masters she had worked with. The Guild is seen as forward thinking and she felt this was due to the drive of the Masters, standing committee and members. She had been grateful for the support of the Independent Examiners who had given invaluable guidance and encouragement.

7. Election of Officers and Officials

Standing committee roles where current role holder was standing down

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Treasurer	Malcolm Paulson	Tracy Stevens	Rachel Mitchell
Ringling Master	Rachel Mitchell	Phil Ramsbottom	Tony Daw
Public Relations Officer	Kirsty Gifford	Phil Ramsbottom	Graham Kelly

The Chair checked that there were no other proposals from the floor for the PR role. Individual votes were taken for each role and members agreed.

Remaining standing committee roles

Office	Name
Master	Eleanor Linford
Secretary	Sand Cooper
Archivist	Mark Eccleston
Safeguarding Officer	Trish Everett
Webmaster	Mark Eccleston

Proposed on block by Jonathan Townsend, seconded by Margaret Burling and agreed by members.

Other Guild roles

Office	Name
General Fund Trustee	Arthur Reeves
General Fund Trustee	John Fielden
BRF Trustee	Tony Daw
BRF Trustee	Don Finnemore
CC Rep	Richard Andrew
Independent Examiner	Steve Horton
Independent Examiner	Tom Horton

Proposed on block by Luke Daniel, seconded by James Ramsbottom and agreed by members.

CC Rep (previously James Ramsbottom), no proposals were forthcoming. The role was discussed, the Central Council had voted to continue to have more than one representative from each associated guild. However, it was agreed that it was not necessary to elect someone at the meeting. Interested parties were encouraged to talk to James, Richard or Simon Linford, as well as looking at the CCCBR website. It was confirmed that the role is no longer for a three year period.

Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary. No proposals were forthcoming however, the standing committee has been co-opting people to help organise the event. The dinner is at a difficult size and cost point and we will need to consider what format it will continue in. Though, anyone that would like to be involved was encouraged to approach the standing committee.

Eleanor wanted to specifically thank Phil Ramsbottom. Whilst he had been Ringing Master for three years he had been heavily involved for many years previously. In particular she referenced the Moseley mid-week practices, his support to the Higher Numbers practices, the pandemic online Ringing Room events, online workshops, his involvement in the Ringing School and his support of special practices at Sheldon. Eleanor thanked him for everything he had done to support the Guild.

8. Rule Change Proposals

Eleanor took the rule changes in three blocks as circulated before the meeting. She read from the commentary which had been shared. Amendments to rules 4.7, 2.4, 2.5, 4.8 were proposed and 4.9 adjusted accordingly, regarding general meetings. This year's proposed calendar showed that the Guild Challenge Day in May will include a business meeting and an online business meeting in September. These business meetings won't have a quorum so will not conduct major business.

Proposed Eleanor Linford, seconded by Arthur Reeves and agreed by members.

Block 2 related to meetings being quorate – rules 4.3 and 4.8. Eleanor quoted the numbers at recent AGMs. It was suggested that so long as meetings continued to be well advertised a reduced quorum from 40 to 30 would be acceptable. A question was asked about making the number a percentage of the membership however, it was felt that with membership now across the country a percentage would not be workable. The feasibility of live streaming AGMs was also raised with real time interaction however, this would be difficult to set up and run though, it could be considered for the future. As a welcoming and inclusive guild without minimum standards of ringing, members don't necessarily want to attend meetings. It was reflected that the reason for a quorum is to avoid small groups overly influencing meetings and reducing the quorum to 30 would not make a significant difference to this requirement.

Proposed by Eleanor Linford, seconded by Tom Horton and agreed by members.

Block 3, 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 relating to aligning Guild wording to the CCCBR when describing peals, Eleanor read from the commentary. Simon Linford spoke further to the proposed changes. Simon referenced our proud history of peal ringing. We discussed the point at which a peal is published and ratified by the Ringing World through BellBoard.

Proposed by Eleanor Linford, seconded by Simon Linford and agreed by members.

9. 2024 Programme of Events

A calendar of events had been circulated with the meeting papers. Eleanor urged towers to print and put on their notice boards. She also summarised the events of the year. She commented how successful the City Centre Ringing Day had been and said that it is loosely proposed that we alternatively have a local outing and an outing elsewhere. This year we are planning an outing to Wellington and Shrewsbury which can be reached by train.

10. Henry Johnson Dinner 2024

Details are on the website and the closing date for tickets is noon 10th February. The three main areas of feedback had been resolved - real ale will be available, wine can be ordered in advance and the main course will have both a vegetarian and vegan choice.

11. Any other business

11.1 100 Club funds

Bursaries for people attending or helping at residential ringing courses. Courses are still very popular, an opportunity for ringing and social activities but they do require good helpers. It was proposed that the circa £1,200 available from the 100 Club be used to make up to 12, £100 bursaries available for Guild members who either want to attend a course as a student or as a helper. The standing committee will prepare a list of likely opportunities and an application form. They will prioritise on the basis of people doing something they have not done before, the basis of need and, assisting people to become helpers.

11.2 Peal records and other events

We have no peal recorder but Eleanor noted the 85 peals rung for SMG in 2023, 65 tower bell and 20 in hand. By this measure the Guild is in good health. Whilst quarter peals were difficult to count a significant number had been rung by Elliot and Luke Daniel on narrow boat, Thistle, for which they were congratulated. The Birmingham band once again won the 12 bell striking competition, The Cathedral band organised and won the Robert Smith Trophy, The St Paul's band were second in the National Call Change competition and were complimented by the judges for the quality of their lower. The Birmingham School of Ringing had gone from strength to strength though more helpers were welcomed and those interested in doing the ART training.

11.3 Certificate level 5 Learning the ropes, Birmingham School of Bell Ringing Graduation Certificate

Awarded to Elliot Daniel (age of 12).

11.4 Bank Signatories

Signatories were confirmed as Malcolm Paulson Treasurer, Arthur Reeves Guild Fund Trustee and, Sand Cooper Secretary. Clare McArdle remains a signatory for the 100 Club and Tracy will be removed once Malcolm is established in the role and has full access.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The 2025 AGM will be the second Saturday in January 11th January and the 2024 general meetings Saturday 11th May 2024 and Sunday 15th September 2024.

13. The meeting closed at 14:53 before general ringing.