

## Minutes of St Martin's Annual General Meeting

**Held on Saturday 12 January 2019 at St John's Hall, Knowle.**

The meeting began at 14.30, the Master, Simon Linford, in the chair.

### **1. Attendance and apologies for absence**

There were 48 members present. The quorum for an Annual General Meeting had not been met, so a General Meeting was declared. Agenda items that were not permissible are noted in the minutes that follow.

Apologies for absence were received from: John Anderson, Christine Barnell, Margaret Burling, Daniel Calvert, Richard Cann, Andy Carr, John Davies, Mark Eccleston, Trish Everett, Don Finnemore, Stephen Harper, Jonathan Healy, Carl Jenkins, Richard Jones, Graham Lanfear, Mike Rigby, Jenny Sunter, Rosemarie Seadon, Sharon Wall and Jeff Webb.

### **2. Remembering members who have died**

The meeting stood in memory of Margaret Hunt and Nellie MacKay.

### **3. Minutes of the business meeting held on 23.9.2018**

The minutes of the business meeting were agreed to be an accurate record: proposed by Andrew Stubbs and seconded by Chris Mills.

### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes**

#### **4.1 Tower Maintenance Workshop**

John Rogers had attended the workshop in Northampton in November. He reported that it had been an enjoyable and informative day and recommended it to others.

#### **4.2 Bell Restoration Fund grants**

Simon reported that projects at Knowle and Harborne had been successfully completed and both had received the grants agreed from the BRF. There had been no further progress with the on going issues at Castle Bromwich.

### **5. Reports**

Written reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

#### **5.1 Financial reports**

##### **5.1.1 Treasurer**

Tracy Stevens (Treasurer) presented the Guild's accounts and a written report. She highlighted that subscriptions for 46 members were still outstanding for 2018. She noted that the grants made from the BRF to Knowle (£250) and Harborne (£500) would be accounted for in the 2019 accounts.

There were no questions for the Treasurer.

##### **5.1.2 Independent Examiners**

On behalf of both of the Independent Examiners, Thomas Horton stated that the accounts were a true representation of the Guild's finances and that they were happy with the way the Treasurer maintains them.

### 5.1.3 **Treasurer's proposals**

The Treasurer was unable to make any proposals, as the AGM was not quorate, therefore:

**Annual subscriptions remain £10.00 (£5.00 for concessions); apportionment of subscriptions to the BRF remained at 25%; there will be a £75 apportionment to the Library Fund, and the peal fee will remain at 0p per rope/seat.**

### 5.1.4 **100 Club**

The Treasurer reported that the 100 Club would be administered differently this year using a dedicated Gmail account, enabling more than one administrator to ensure it runs smoothly.

## 5.2 **Ringling Master**

Arthur Reeves (Guild Ringing Master) had submitted a written report. He reiterated his vision for the Guild was to support its members by delivering support along the pathway from basic bell handling to ringing on higher numbers. His aim was to encourage and provide opportunities and to link what is going on in towers to what is going on in the Guild.

He had reviewed the Post-it notes that members had written their views on at the AGM in 2018:

- More peals and quarter peals – this had been acted upon with more Guild peals rung for many years and opportunities for new conductors to emerge. He proposed two peals for illumination: Scientific Triples on 5 July 2018: <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1238118>  
Spliced Maximus (11 methods) on 29 July 2018: <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1240950>
- Better communication and networking – Arthur had started the monthly digest giving a round up of opportunities available at the beginning of each month. He felt that more could be done to improve engagement and encouraged members to email him.
- More support at local tower level – experienced ringers are travelling to other towers helping them to grow and develop.
- Do more of what you are doing – Arthur felt that the long list of opportunities was evident that this is happening.

Arthur thanked the many members who had facilitated the great number of opportunities on offer. In particular he felt that Phil Ramsbottom stood out for the amount of time and commitment he had given over the year. Arthur presented Phil with a gift as a token of thanks.

### 5.2.1 **The Ledbury approach**

Arthur reported that a recent article in the ART Works magazine had prompted him and Simon to consider trialling a similar scheme within the Guild. They had dubbed it “Swap Week”.

One week a month, all participating towers wouldn't hold their usual local practice, but instead members of those bands would go to one or more different practices focussed at their particular level. More experienced ringers might be asked to help at a practice as well as being able to go to a practice which would benefit them.

Each night of the week there would be one or two practices which might be, for instance, a rounds and call changes practice only, or maybe a practice that focused on Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles and Bob Minor, or an eight bell practice ringing Stedman Triples and Cambridge Major, and maybe even a Pickled Egg focused practice.

Officers would organise the practices, which would be spread around, and at different levels. They wouldn't be the enhancement of existing towers' practices, they would be new practices. A tower deciding to take part would have a week off from their normal practice, but their ringers would go to a different practice (or two) either as a helper or for a particular focus.

The intended benefit of this plan, is that for that one week, participants would get much more practice at things they are specifically learning. They will get to go to another tower or two, meet and ring with other members.

The downside is that one a month the social group of local bands would not meet together, some ringers would need to travel further, and some ringers might feel that this was a good week just to have a rest and

not do any ringing. It was recognised that some ringers don't go to their local practice with the goal of making process, and they may feel they are missing out on their weekly ringing. Alternatively they may see this just as an opportunity to go and ring somewhere different.

Simon said that he and Arthur would be looking for 6, 8 or 10 towers to agree to trial the scheme and it would be run as a 3–4 month experiment. He asked for a show of hands in the room and there was broad support for the idea. An email will be sent out to tower captains to invite towers to sign up.

### 5.3 **Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary**

Jenny Sunter (Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary) had tendered her apologies, but had submitted a written report.

#### 5.3.1 **2020 Chairman**

The Master was pleased to report that Gill Postill had been approached and had agreed to chair the 2019 Dinner. This was met by approval by the meeting and a generous round of applause.

### 5.4 **Archivist**

Mark Eccleston (Archivist) had tendered his apologies, but had submitted a written report. The Master encouraged members to use the library, much of which is in the ringing chamber at St Martin's.

### 5.5 **Safeguarding Officer**

Trish Everett (Safeguarding Officer) had tendered her apologies, but had submitted a written report. The Master noted that the Safeguarding Officer had not had to deal with any actual safeguarding issues during the year – just requests for information and training.

### 5.6 **Central Council Reps**

Richard Andrew and James Ramsbottom highlighted the national success of the Ringing Remembers campaign. They had given a summary of the new Workgroups and their functions in their report. James is a member of the Communications and Marketing workgroup and the Volunteer and Leadership workgroup, which led the Ringing Remembers campaign. James reported that they are hoping to mount a follow-on campaign to encourage retention of the many newly recruited ringers. Richard is a member of the Historical and Archive workgroup.

They reported that the triennial nature of council elections had been abolished which now means that CC Reps can be elected at any time. The issue was debated by members and it was agreed that CC Reps for the Guild would be appointed at the AGM on an annual basis.

Richard sought clarification on membership numbers. Guild membership stands at 289. Guilds and associations are entitled to one Rep per 150 members.

The CC Reps were asked to include information about the work of the workgroups they are involved in in future reports.

### 5.7 **Public Relations**

The post of PR Officer is vacant, however, Simon felt it appropriate to report that the Brumdingers had appeared on Newsround, in an item about ringing for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armistice, to wide acclaim. In addition, an organisation called SPICE UK had approached the Secretary for a bell ringing taster session. A similar session had been held at Kingsbury and places on both had been snapped up within 24 hours of being posted on their website.

## 6. **Election of members**

### 6.1 **Full members**

The following full members were elected:

| <b>Name</b>    | <b>Tower</b> | <b>Proposed</b> | <b>Seconded</b> |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Jonathan Newey | Edgbaston    | Clare McArdle   | Olly Bouckley   |
| Alex Ross      | Solihull     | Clare McArdle   | Olly Bouckley   |

|                    |                       |               |               |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Beverley McAlister | Coleshill             | John Rogers   | Sue Rogers    |
| Tony McAlister     | Coleshill             | John Rogers   | Sue Rogers    |
| Karen Bowley       | Coleshill             | John Rogers   | Sue Rogers    |
| Elaine Cheeseman   | Moseley               | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |
| Annette Seeley     | BSoBR                 | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |
| Kay Foley-Davies   | BSoBR/Sheldon         | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |
| Sandra Wilcox      | BSoBR/Walsall         | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |
| Sara Paulson       | Solihull              | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |
| Emma Clewlow       | Castle Bromwich       | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |
| Jane Morris        | BSoBR/Castle Bromwich | Clare McArdle | Olly Bouckley |

The Master presented certificates to Elaine, Annette and Kay.

## 6.2 **Associate members:**

The following students from BSoBR and Brumdingers had been made Associate Members since September:

Sarah King

David Harrison

Andrew McIlroy

Cian Brophy

## 6.3 **Life members**

Jonathan Healy and Clare McArdle were awarded life membership.

## 7. **Rule changes**

Appropriate notice of proposal had been given for amendments to the rules, however, as rule changes can only be made at a quorate AGM the proposal could not be voted on and it was deferred.

## 8. **Election of Officers**

As election of officers and officials may only take place at a quorate AGM, the following officers, all of who were willing to continue in post will do so:

Master: Simon Linford

Secretary: Clare McArdle

Treasurer: Tracy Stevens

Ringling Master: Arthur Reeves

Archivist: Mark Eccleston

Safeguarding Officer: Trish Everett

Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary: Jenny Sunter

General Fund Trustee: John Anderson

General Fund Trustee: Chris Mills

BRF Trustee: Don Finnemore

BRF Trustee: Andrew Stubbs

Independent Examiner: Stephen Horton

Independent Examiner: Thomas Horton

CC Rep: Richard Andrew

CC Rep: James Ramsbottom

The Master reported that Rosalind Martin has skills in PR and website management. She had been approached to stand for office, but had not felt able to commit. He advised that she expressed a willingness to be co-opted to work on both, but without adopting a formal title.

The vacant post of Recruitment Officer was noted and the question of anyone being willing to stand was asked. The Master stated that no one had come forward, but that recruitment in the Guild is good. There has been a waiting list of people wanting to enroll in Birmingham School of Bell Ringing for six months.

## **9. AOB**

### **9.1 BRF rules**

The Master reported that a knock-on effect of the new Guild Rules was that inconsistencies had been thrown up in the existing BRF rules. Many of them refer to the Guild in its previous format. Andrew Stubbs and the Master had revisited the BRF rules to clear up the anomalies and during the process had discovered some other small alterations which they deem to be necessary.

They had produced document detailing the alterations that they are proposing. Given that rule changes are only permissible at an AGM and that notice must be given at least 4 months prior, they gave notice of the proposed alterations.

Andrew Stubbs advised that the Charity commission might be required to approve the rule changes after they had been made, but did not foresee an issue given the core objectives of the Charity was not changing.

### **9.2 Secular tower**

The Master gave an update on progress towards a secular tower under Guild control. He stated that he was still pursuing options.

He reported that the proposal for the Lock Keeper's cottage on the Birmingham City University campus, which had lain dormant for a while, was now being seen as an attractive one.

The Master had put in a proposal for the Brandwood End Cemetery Chapel. He reported that the proposal had met with support but that the stumbling block that he was working on was that the cemetery is locked after 17.30 severely restricting access.

Witton Cemetery Chapel is another prospect. The Master had speculatively approached the Keltek Trust and been promised a suitable ring of 8 bells. Witton Cemetery is also closed after 17.30. The meeting confirmed that evening access was an important requirement.

### **9.3 Guild assets**

The Treasurer reported that she had compiled a catalogue of the Guild's assets (with photographs) in order to keep track of where they are housed. She appealed to members for help in tracking down the fourth of four striking contest trophies.

### **9.4 Member numbers**

A question was raised about the increase in member numbers and how this may have negatively affected reaching a quorum for the AGM. There had been some other conflicting events and the meeting was being held at an earlier time than had been traditional. However, it was unknown whether this had had an impact on numbers.

Dissent had been noted over moving the AGM around to different towers. The Secretary reported that the move from the central location at St Chad's 6 years ago had not been by choice – St Chad's had ceased to let out The Grimshaw Room on Saturday afternoons. Nowhere else centrally was appropriate or affordable for the purposes of an AGM and ringing meeting. In addition the recent locations for the AGM had been determined by invitations from host towers.

It was suggested that the quorum could be calculated on the percentage of members whose subscriptions were up to date.

Andrew Stubbs stated the need for an AGM in 2019 – citing that the Charity Commission requires that charities (the BRF) hold an annual meeting. The Master said he would take advice on this matter.

### **9.4 Thank you for lunch**

The Master thanked the local ringers at Knowle for providing the lunch.

### **9.5 Birmingham Art Gallery clock chimes**

Nigel Crowther expressed concern that restoration of the clock chimes at Birmingham Art Gallery was not being considered by the council. He appealed to members for support for a restoration campaign. The

Master stated that he does have some direct contact with the leader of the council and that he would try to raise the subject if possible.

#### **9.6 100 Club**

Clare McArdle gave an update on the 100 Club and the switch back to administration by her with support from the Treasurer. She stated that on reflection not enough thought had been given to the operation of the 100 Club by an organiser who was not able to monitor payments into the 100 Club account. She expanded on the Treasurer's earlier statement that the 100 Club would be operated through a Gmail account, explaining that the entire complexity of the administration of Birmingham School of Bell Ringing is administered through a Gmail account, by more than one person (with authorisation to access the account) and it works very well. Multi access by more than one administrator will ensure problems will be picked up and resolved quickly.

#### **9.7 SPICE**

The Secretary gave a more detailed report of the SPICE event alluded to by the Master. Twelve people had visited St Paul's for a bell ringing taster session. They had each paid £10 and after the event gave very positive feedback. SPICE had immediately requested another date for a repeat event, which had been fixed for January. Clare reported that she had received an email requesting another date as it was a popular event. She had declined the invitation but agreed to ask Guild members if any other towers might be prepared to host an event.

#### **10. Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next meeting had yet to be decided. The date would be circulated at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting closed at 16.30