

Minutes of St Martin's Guild Annual General Meeting

Held on Saturday 8th January 2022 via Zoom.

The meeting began at 10.00 with the Master, Clare McArdle, in the Chair. Standing Committee Officers also present were Phil Ramsbottom (Ringing Master), Arthur Reeves (Secretary), Tracy Stevens (Treasurer), Mark Eccleston (Archivist and Webmaster), Trish Everett (Safeguarding Officer), Jonathan Townsend (Public Relations Officer).

1. Attendance and apologies for absence

There were approx 46 members present, including the Officers. Apologies for absence were received from: Sand Cooper, Stephen Shipley, Rowena Shipley, Jane Morris, Gillian Stead and Clare Townsend. Jeffrey Webb's apology was received following the meeting by email.

2. Remembering members who have died

To the knowledge of the Standing Committee and those present at the meeting, no Guild members had died during 2021.

3. Minutes of the business meeting held on Saturday 9th October 2021

Clare highlighted two amendments. In Item 2, the minutes should read "Minutes of the Business Meeting held on the 15th May 2021". Also in Item 2 the line which reads that the minutes were "approved" by Phil Ramsbottom should read that the minutes were "proposed" by Phil Ramsbottom.

With these amendments, the minutes of the business meeting held on the above date were agreed as an accurate record. This was proposed by Tracy Stevens and seconded by Phil Ramsbottom.

Matters arising from the Minutes

4.1 Cadbury Barn update

Clare, who sits on the group involved in this project, reported that there were no current updates.

4.2 Young Change Ringers' Association:

Clare was pleased to report that the association has been formed. The association are holding their first event in Birmingham on Saturday 15th January with some support from Guild members where required. Clare stated that she was very pleased Birmingham would be hosting the first event of the association.

5. Reports

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

The meeting heard first from the Safeguarding Officer, because Trish Everett had notified the meeting that she would have to leave early.

5.1 Safeguarding Officer's Report

Trish Everett (Safeguarding Officer) had submitted a written report.

Trish reported that there had been no safeguarding incidents reported to her over the last year.

Trish advised members that she plays an active role in safeguarding both within the Guild and the wider Diocese. She is part of the Safeguarding Training Reference group and has been involved in supporting leadership training sessions.

Trish reported that the Church of England had continued to make safeguarding a priority during the year by moving training online via zoom as well as updating material on their portal.

The Church of England's national safeguarding team is in discussion with the Central Council about specific requirements for bell ringers.

The current position is that the following training is required:

Basic Awareness - for all bell team members

Foundation - additional for Tower Captains and also for bell ringers who teach children and young people

Leadership - additional for Tower Captains who take a lead role in shaping the culture

The latest update from Claire Wesley (Diocesan Safeguarding Lead) is that it is for individual churches to decide who should enrol on the Leadership courses.

The Guild had organised Leadership training in November 2020, which a number of Tower Captains and members of the Standing Committee engaged with. Those completing the Leadership level do not need to do the Foundation training,

Trish highlighted to members that she is available for any queries. Trish signposted members to the link to access the Basic Awareness Safeguarding course.

Clare thanked Trish for her report and for taking on the role of Safeguarding Officer, especially in participating with the Diocese. Clare highlighted the importance of safeguarding training and that ringers should take this on board.

Clarification was sought from one member over whether Basic Awareness was compulsory for all ringers or whether this was a St Martin's Guild directive for St Martin's Guild members. Trish responded that it is a requirement for all bell ringers.

5.2 Financial reports

5.2.1 Treasurer

Tracy Stevens (Treasurer) presented the Guild's accounts and a written report.

Tracy highlighted the fact that 44 members have not renewed their membership. The treasurer was confident that many would renew their membership. Some members had chosen not to renew their membership. Other members had not paid and, in spite of several reminders, had not been in touch to indicate whether they will be continuing membership. For those members who have not paid for two years, the Standing Committee will be removing them from the membership and communication lists.

Tracy also thanked members for additional donations over the year, for example to those who donated at the online Henry Johnson Dinner in February 2021.

Tracy drew members attention to the very generous gift bestowed by Andrew Stubbs in his will. The Guild is also expecting a further gift from Andrew's estate.

5.2.2 *Independent Examiners*

Steve Horton reported that both he and Tom Horton had reviewed the accounts for the year in detail. Steve reported that all questions and queries were answered adequately and that both Independent Examiners were satisfied with the accounts. Steve Horton and Tom Horton therefore confirmed their assessment that the accounts were a true representation of the Guild's finances and commended the accounts to Guild members.

Thomas Horton proposed that the accounts be accepted and this was seconded by Graham Kelly. The accounts were carried by those present.

A question was raised from a member over whether it was appropriate to have two family members as Independent Examiners. Whilst there was no suggestion that either Independent Examiner was acting inappropriately, the member questioned whether the Standing Committee had taken this into account.

Clare replied that this had been discussed and in part was a reflection that there had been no willing volunteers to take on the role. Tracy reassured members that Tom Horton was a qualified accountant and had conducted a very rigorous scrutiny of the accounts, supported by the longstanding expertise as an Independent Examiner of Steve Horton. Guild rules allow for nominations for vacant Offices at the meeting without prior notice. Steve Horton offered to stand down as an Independent Examiner if such a nomination were put forward. Clare encouraged members to consider standing when the meeting elected officers and officials.

5.2.3 *Treasurer's proposals*

Membership

- Annual subscription to remain at £10 with 50% concession rate as per rules.
- Associate membership currently equivalent to the annual subscription.

Apportionments

- To continue, as agreed at last year's meeting, not to apportion any of the membership subscription to the BRF

Peal fee

- To remain at zero.

The proposal was seconded by James Ramsbottom and the motion was carried.

Clare thanked Tracy for her work throughout the year as Treasurer in support of the Guild. Clare encouraged members to pay their subs on time.

5.2.4 *100 Club*

Clare McArdle had submitted a written report.

Clare thanked all those who contribute towards the 100 Club which now has 108 members. Clare was very encouraged by this and noted that it was not a problem that the 100 Club had more than 100 members (though it would continue to be called the 100 Club)

In total, £1441.70 had been raised during 2021. Clare proposed that for 2022, the 100 Club proceeds is ring fenced in the General Fund for events and projects as had been agreed in 2021. This gives the Standing Committee greater flexibility with using the funds. However, any funds which were not used for designated projects or events would be transferred to the BRF after 12 months.

This was seconded by James Ramsbottom and the motion was carried.

5.3 ***Ringling Master***

Phil Ramsbottom (Guild Ringing Master) had submitted a written report.

Phil highlighted the regular Wednesday evening practices and workshops he had organised. The aim of these workshops was not to ring more complex methods but to develop greater understanding of method structure and consolidate known methods so they are rung well. Phil expressed that he was pleased that upcoming workshops were fully booked or close to being fully booked, especially given that some workshops had to be cancelled due to a lack of attendance when the programme first began. Phil explained that he felt this was due to concerns with returning to ringing following Covid. Phil asked members to come forward should they have a request. He also highlighted that theory sessions could be arranged.

Clare highlighted the positive feedback that had often been received for the Wednesday evening workshops and thanked Phil for his work. She emphasised that Phil has put together the most comprehensive series of ringing events the Guild has arranged in many years.

5.4 ***Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary***

Jenny Sunter (Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary) gave a verbal update.

Jenny reported that the 133rd Henry Johnson Dinner in 2021 had been online due to the Covid pandemic. She reported that the event had been successful and well received.

Jenny and Clare had put forward a survey to members seeking views on the approach for 2022, given the uncertainty around Covid. Jenny reported that the steer from members was very clearly in favour of an in-person event.

Jenny reported that the 2022 event would be held at the Horton Suite at the Burlington Hotel. The Burlington Hotel had reduced the required numbers booked, which offers some flexibility to us if numbers are lower than usual due to concerns over Covid. The dinner is planned for Saturday 26th February, with Steve and Janet Horton acting as joint chairs.

Jenny reported that the ticket price was set at £40 (with a £30 concessionary rate for young people, those in full time education and members of BUSCR)

Jenny highlighted that the Burlington was accessible by public transport and that there were reductions in costs available at nearby car parks. Information was available on the Burlington website.

Jenny reported that bookings would be done again using Eventbrite. Adverts had been placed in the Ringing World. Information is forthcoming in the next newsletter and will be circulated by email to members.

Clare thanked Jenny for her work as Dinner Secretary in what must have been the most challenging two years. Clare also highlighted the ease of using Eventbrite and thanked Jenny for co-ordinating this.

Clare further updated the meeting that Julia Cater has been invited to be Chair for the 2023 dinner, which she has accepted.

5.5 **Archivist**

Mark Eccleston (Archivist) had submitted a written report.

Mark highlighted that a significant reorganisation of the archival material had been undertaken in 2021. Approximately half of the archival papers are now stored appropriately in acid-free storage.

Mark further reported that the Guild now has a sizeable digital archive available free online.

Mark advertised to members that the Guild Yearbook for 2020 is available free on the website. The Yearbook for 2021 would also be created in the coming months and available for members either to purchase as a hard copy or download free.

Clare thanked Mark, highlighting the national significance that the Guild's library and archive hold. Clare also highlighted the huge amount of time Mark has put into creating and maintaining the digital archive, which has also received national recognition. The Guild website is considered to be one of the best association websites because of Mark's hard work and attention to detail.

5.6 **Central Council Reps**

James Ramsbottom and Richard Andrew had submitted a written report.

Richard Andrew advertised the CCCBR AGM and roadshow on Sunday 4th September at Nottingham, making particular note of the close location and highlighting that the day should be an excellent opportunity for members to participate in.

Clare gave thanks to both James and Richard not only for their involvement in the CCCBR but also for their role in CCCBR workgroups. Clare highlighted that being representatives of the CCCBR is not simply a case of attending the AGM but required active involvement over the year. Both James and Richard proactively participate in additional CCCBR workgroups. Clare outlined that members did not have to be a member of the Central Council to be a member of the workgroup and encouraged members to get involved. Simon shared a link for volunteering posts.

6. Election of members

Full members

The following full members were elected:

Name	Tower	Proposed	Seconded
Rachel Mitchell	St Philip's Cathedral	James Ramsbottom	Vicky Wilby
Michael Parker	St Philip's Cathedral	James Ramsbottom	Gill Postill

Sonia Field		David Smith	Simon Linford
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Associate members

The following associate member was elected:

Name	Tower
Steve Moore	BSoBR

9. 7. Election of Officers and Officials

All officers of the Standing Committee were willing to stand for re-election.

The following officers were elected en bloc, proposed by Oliver Bouckley and seconded by Adam Lubin.

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded
		Oliver Bouckley	Adam Lubin
Master	Clare McArdle		
Ringing Master	Phil Ramsbottom		
Secretary	Arthur Reeves		
Treasurer	Tracy Stevens		
Archivist	Mark Eccleston		
Safeguarding Officer	Trish Everett		
Webmaster	Mark Eccleston		
Press Relations Officer	Jonathan Townsend		

The following officials were willing to stand for re-election and were elected en bloc, proposed by Sue Rogers and seconded by Adam Knight-Markiegi

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded
		Sue Rogers	Adam Knight-Markiegi
General Fund Trustee	John Anderson		
General Fund Trustee	John Fielden		
BRF Trustee	Tony Daw		
BRF Trustee	Don Finnemore		
CC Rep	Richard Andrew		
CC Rep	James Ramsbottom		

Independent Examiners:

In response to the question raised earlier in the meeting about the appropriateness of two independent examiners coming from the same family, a member had checked the information given from the Charity Commission. The commission suggests that whilst two independent examiners is preferable, it is not a requirement. The guidance does not specifically talk about family members not being able to share the independent examiner role but does detail conflicts of interest with the charity itself.

Clare reported that it was clearly preferable to have two independent examiners. Given that Steve Horton has offered to resign, Clare said that we could elect an independent examiner if a member

<http://www.stmartinsguild.org>

was willing to stand. Should no members wish to stand, she felt it was preferable for Steve Horton to continue to stand as independent examiner with Tom Horton given that there were no concerns that either represented a conflict of interest with the Guild.

No members came forward to stand as Independent Examiner.

Tom Horton and Steve Horton were thereby proposed by Christine Barnell and seconded by James Ramsbottom as Independent Examiners. Both were elected.

Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary:

Jenny Sunter has indicated her wish to stand down as Dinner Secretary following the February 2022 dinner. The new post would thus begin after February 2022, with ideally the new secretary shadowing Jenny for the next two months. Clare highlighted that the aspects of the role which may worry people (for example inviting speakers and the chair) is the responsibility of the Standing Committee and the role was well supported by officers of the Guild.

As no nominations had been received, Clare invited nominations from the meeting. No nominations were forthcoming. The Standing Committee would therefore need to consider next steps and the role is currently vacant from March 2022 onwards.

Newsletter Editor:

After 5 years, Andy Clark is standing down as the Newsletter Editor. Clare outlined that Andy has been an outstanding editor producing excellent newsletters. Clare invited Andy to speak about the role. Andy highlighted how enjoyable he had found the role and that his initial worries about finding content had not materialised as many members provided regular content. Andy outlined that each newsletter took about 4-5 hours, with 4 newsletters per year, so the role was not onerous.

Clare invited members to volunteer for this role but no one came forward. The Standing Committee would therefore need to consider next steps and the role will be vacant following the publication of Andy's next newsletter in January 2022.

Clare thanked all of the officers and officials for the work they did, giving particular thanks to the outgoing officials Jenny Sunter and Andy Clark.

Clare further highlighted that the leadership team had been in post for a relatively long time and encouraged members to think about whether they could take on any position. Clare reminded members not to become complacent and that there were positions and responsibilities which needed filling.

8. Proposal of the rule change

This had been pre-circulated and Clare shared on her screen the proposal for changing Rules 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 (Enclosure 1)

Clare outlined the rationale for the rule change. The main purpose of business meetings is to share information to members. However, given modern communication this role is no longer required. The group email ensures all members are kept informed of events and notices. Likewise, members are encouraged to contact officers via this email address to seek advice or raise concerns. Clare further raised concerns that business meetings were not reaching members, since very few members turn up to the meetings. For example, only 17 members attended the October Business Meeting.

Clare further highlighted that it was the Standing Committee which drove action for the Guild and the Committee had the power to co-opt members with specific skills as required. The Standing Committee wanted to focus on ringing events. Urgent business could be conducted through a Special General Meeting if needed and this proposal did not change the AGM, where major decisions would still be made

Clare had sought views from members by email. A few comments had been received, most in support. Two comments had been received outlining concerns around how the Guild would communicate to those without email. Clare's response, on behalf of the Standing Committee, was that it is incumbent on members and towers to convey Guild information in the same way it always has been. Before email, notices were shared by tower contacts and often on tower noticeboards. This should still remain the case. Clare reported that she believes 9 members are not on email. Clare also reported that she does not think these concerns impact on the proposed rule change.

A question was raised over the quoracy of annual general meetings or special general meetings. Clare confirmed the rules stated that quoracy would be 40.

Clare reported that with this rule change, some terminology would also need to be changed in earlier rules of the Constitution (i.e. taking out the term "business meeting").

The rule change was thus proposed by the Standing Committee and seconded by Eleanor Linford. The membership voted in favour of the rule change with no votes against.

10. 2022 planned events

Commonwealth Games:

Jonathan Townsend reported that he has been in contact with the organising committee of the Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham in July and August 2022. There was a keenness for ringing to be part of the Opening Ceremony on 28th July at the Alexandra Stadium in Perry Barr.

Jonathan has been in touch with Perry Barr (being the closest tower to Alexandra Stadium), St Philip's Cathedral and St Mary's Moseley (being the home of Brumdingers) to arrange ringing which may be televised. Jonathan outlined that this was an opportunity to promote ringing in general and to promote the St Martin's Guild.

Jonathan also outlined that we now have 350 followers on Twitter and Tweets often get over 500 likes and tweets, so if there are events to promote do send them to Jonathan.

Clare thanked Jonathan for his work with the social media accounts and for co-ordinating work with the Commonwealth Games. Clare promoted the sale of Guild T-Shirts for events which may be televised.

Platinum Jubilee

Clare advertised the Queen's Jubilee over the first weekend in June where ringing is likely to play a prominent role. The Standing Committee will make recommendations for ringing in line with national guidelines, though the promotion of local ringing was likely to be at the heart of events. The Guild would probably support co-ordinating ringers between towers, as previously in 2016 with the Queen's ninetieth birthday. The Standing Committee intend to write to Buckingham Palace outlining ringing taking place.

10. Three Events Challenge Presentation

<http://www.stmartinsguild.org>

Phil outlined the rationale behind the Three Events Challenge, which is to promote as much ringing organised by individuals as possible. Phil promoted the challenges to members; information is on the website and is open to all members.

Some members are beginning this process. Jonathan Townsend has successfully achieved the Three Events Challenge and has been presented with a certificate (the first recipient). Jonathan encouraged all members to take part in the full range of activities which are eligible for the challenge.

Clare congratulated Jonathan and thanked Phil for organising the challenge.

11. 11. AOB

Mobile belfry

Clare advertised a request from the CCCBR for a donation towards a mobile belfry. Part of the specification was that it should be able to be erected within 30 minutes without a specialist team, giving it a unique specification unlike other mobile belfries. There was a shortfall in funds of £28,000 and the CCCBR had contacted associations asking for considerations of funding

The Standing Committee had requested the Business Plan which had been received. Initial discussions had occurred, though further talks were required. Clare was keen to seek views from members to help inform further decision making.

A question was raised as to the storage location for the mobile belfry. Clare responded that she thought Loughborough was the proposed location but she did not know how concrete this plan was.

Clare asked members for their views on whether there was an appetite to donate to the project. There was a strong indication from members to support the project.

Towers and Covid

A member questioned how many towers were ringing in light of the current situation with Covid. Clare replied that she did not know the situation over the whole Guild, though she knew from her local tower and the BSoBR which had both been closed early for the Christmas break. They were planning to return in mid-January. Clare felt that ringing would be resuming shortly where it had been suspended, but she was aware of a couple of towers which had not returned at all following Covid.

12. 11. Date of the next meeting

This will be held on Saturday 7th January 2023. Time and details to be confirmed.

13. 12. Meeting close

14. The meeting closed at 11.36

Addenda to Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 8 January 2022

Rule Change to the Constitution:

Meetings

- 4.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Guild shall normally be held on the second Saturday in January for the following purposes:
- 4.1.1 the election of Life Vice Presidents, Life Members, Officers and Officials of the Guild,
- 4.1.2 the presentation of the accounts and reports from Guild Officers,
- 4.1.3 the determination and apportionment of subscriptions and fees,
- 4.1.4 other appropriate business including the election of Central Council representatives.
- 4.2 Special General Meetings shall be held at a venue to be decided by the Officers within four weeks of either:
- 4.2.1 such a meeting being called by the Officers, or
- 4.2.2 receipt by the Secretary of a written notice specifying the business to be transacted at the meeting signed by at least one tenth of the Full Members of the Guild.
- 4.3 The quorum at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting shall be forty Full Members of the Guild.
- 4.4 All motions and proposals, unless otherwise provided for by the rules, shall be decided on a simple majority of those members voting. The Chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

4.5 Full Members, Life Vice Presidents and Life Members unable to attend an Annual or Special General Meeting and having tendered a written apology may register their views on the business of the meeting and vote by writing to the Secretary prior to the meeting. The number of such voting members shall not count towards the relevant quorum but their votes shall count equally with those of the members present.

4.6 In the absence of either the Master or Secretary from an Annual or Special General Meeting the members present shall elect a substitute for that meeting.

4.7 There will be at least two other General Meetings a year to review and organise ringing activities and conduct the regular business of the Guild.

4.8 Quorum for a General Meeting shall be ten, two of whom must be either the Master, Secretary, Ringing Master or Treasurer.

4.9 For the purpose of interpretation of these Rules, a 'Meeting' refers to a General Meeting, Special General Meeting or Annual General Meeting of the Guild.

Revised rule 4

4.7 The Officers will form a Standing Committee and hold Meetings during the year to conduct the business of the Guild.

4.8 Quorum for a Standing Committee Meeting shall be five, three of whom must be the Master, Secretary, Ringing Master or Treasurer.

4.9 The Officers shall transact urgent business and deal with matters referred to them by Meetings of the Guild, or by individual members.

4.10 The Officers can co-opt members to perform specific functions including organising events.

4.11 The Standing Committee shall consider and ratify all applications for Membership.

4.12 For the purpose of interpretation of these Rules, a 'Meeting' refers to a Standing Committee Meeting, Special General Meeting or Annual General Meeting of the Guild.