

Society of Cambridge Youths AGM

Monday 4th February 2019, 8.06pm in the Ringing Chamber with Vicar, The Rev'd Canon Adrian Daffern, in the chair

Adrian opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Megan Bardsley, Oliver Bardsley, Claire Barlow, Will Bosworth, Frank King, Alessandra Learmount, William Learmount, Henry Pipe, Ben Ricketts, Jonathan Shanklin and Catriona Shearer.

2. Minutes of previous general meetings

a. AGM 2018

The minutes were proposed by Richard Smith, seconded by Phillip Orme and accepted nem. con.

b. EGM August 2018

The minutes were proposed by Alison Brooke, seconded by George Unsworth and accepted nem. con.

c. EGM September 2018

The minutes were proposed by Patrick Brooke, seconded by Luke Smith and accepted nem. con.

3. Matters Arising

a. Quark peal board

The board was expected to be ready for the 12-bell competition, however, it still wasn't possible for Richard Law to complete it in time. Richard Law has taken on an apprentice who has been to see the previous peal boards in Cambridge – hopefully this should speed up completion. Michael O'Callaghan asks when the board is now expected to be ready. Frank King is the contact for detailed questions.

b. Rule change for Independent Examiner

Michael O'Callaghan considered whether there was need for further definition of the responsibilities of the Independent Examiner in the Society Rules, no proposal for a rule change was submitted. Michael O'Callaghan comments that he is satisfied with the rules as they stand.

c. Antenna installation

Adrian introduces the most recent developments, including announcing a meeting between NET, the church and members of the DAC on 27th February. Adrian reaffirms that the bell-ringers will be kept involved, and that the purpose of the forthcoming meeting is to review the project history but not to make any decision about the future of the project.

Barry Johnson proposes a vote of thanks to Adrian for taking this important but 'inherited' issue seriously.

d. Report on void floor

As agreed at the September EGM, a report on the void floor was commissioned. The report by Elphin and Brenda Watkin has been made available to members by email and is included in the information pack of this

meeting.

4. Election of New Members

Helen Atkins is proposed by Jonathan Agg, seconded by Cecilia Pipe and accepted nem. con.

Andrew Carlotti asks if there are any criteria for membership. Jonathan Agg confirms that there are no rules on membership, but notes that to have voting rights you must attend for service ringing twelve times in a year. Phil Orme confirms that there are written guidelines for membership which are available on the noticeboard in the ringing chamber.

5. Safeguarding

Updated House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding has been published for well over a year, and practical implications have also been published in the Ringing World. GSM has adopted the guidance and as a result, the officers responsible for organising ringing (the Master and Secretary) have completed enhanced safeguarding training (C1 and C2) and all regular adult attendees have been invited to complete Basic Awareness (C0) training. At the time of the meeting, 27 of 36 regularly attending adults have completed the training.

Adrian is asked for a response to this summary. He thanks the bell-ringers for taking safeguarding seriously and encourages the remaining regular adult attendees to complete C0.

6. Health and Safety

Patrick Brooke is invited to update the meeting on work on the Narthex and the tower staircase. Patrick points out that, in a way, safeguarding concerns have potentially been in conflict with emergency exit routes (with the choir vestry normally being 'out of bounds'). The work which is currently in progress should deliver four new doors with electronically controlled access, including the wicket gate in the West Door. On the positive side, this may allow the choir vestry to be restored as an access route. The mechanism of gaining access is not finalised, but it seems likely that key-fobs will be used.

Dave Richards confirms that we have agreed that all regular attendees to ringing can be issued a key-fob. Patrick Brooke asks us to reconfirm the likely quantity of key-fobs required with Richard Summers and Robert Smyth. Barry Johnson asks whether the ringers will be asked to pay for key-fobs, but there is no indication at this time. It is confirmed that the individual cost is not particularly high.

There is a question about how visiting bands might gain access. Dave Richards confirms that bands are normally met by a keyholder to the church but are often left to make their way out unaccompanied at the end of their ringing (so a requirement from the ringers' side is that no key card is required to exit the building).

It is pointed out that the proposed situation is like the current one, where visitors are not routinely told the code to open the wicket door. Dave Richards says that if we know visitors are arriving, we will typically arrange to meet them. On practice evenings, there is usually sufficient traffic for visitors to tail-gate someone in. Hannah Campbell says that some towers will publish a phone number to call to gain access to the tower.

Adrian says that there are good suggestions here, but if after several months we find the system is not working for us, then we should approach the church for changes.

Jonathan Agg points out that the current tower work will also install an automatic fire door at the bottom of the tower, and there are efforts to seal and improve fire retardancy of the doors on the tower staircase. Intumescent paints may be used.

Richard Smith asks about the egress route onto the nave roof. It is pointed out that exit via the roof is the only route out of the tower should the staircase become impassable. The chancel and aisle roofs are linked, and it is possible to exit with reasonable ease (in an emergency) on to the nave roof. Richard asks if a small rolling ladder (for example) could be provided to link the nave roof to one of the aisles, therefore providing an additional egress route (eventually ending at the church office in the south-east corner of the church).

Adrian asks the Secretary to raise this issue with Richard Summers.

7. Master's Report

Jonathan Agg draws out some themes from his report. It is easier to run ringing when there are a lot of people, and the ringers are thanked for the support. Jonathan says ringing is best when people are making progress – challenge yourself to try something new and make it happen. Reviewing Hawkear output is a good way of getting better. It will be possible to review it after the practice and that will lower the current 'barrier to entry' of reviewing and understanding the data.

Jonathan notes that very impressive ringing was achieved for the 12-bell competition. The build-up to the event was exciting and the best touch was probably on the day which is pleasing. Jonathan feels that piece is some of the best ringing he has been involved in.

Fewer peals were rung this year – some were lost and some failed to start at short notice. Members are encouraged to ask for peals – GSM is a fantastic resource and we should make the most of it. The meeting is reminded that many towers are worried by the possibility of complaints for just one peal rung, so we're in a very fortunate position. Jonathan notes that quarter slots are also available.

David Pipe offers a vote of thanks to Jonathan for this year and the rest of his time as Master. Adrian also thanks Jonathan for heading up the ringing with such passion and clarity.

8. Treasurer's Report

a. Accounts

Phillip Orme had circulated copies of the accounts prior to the meeting. This was the busiest year for him as treasurer, with transactions amounting to around £33k in total. The 12-bell competition was the largest part of that. Nearly £11k came in and £7k was paid out. The profit from the day was paid to GSM as originally planned. The Society emphasises that we were very pleased with the larger than expected profit, and it was the result of a very successful day.

In terms of expenses, there was an inspection of the bells by Taylors, a new set of ropes and provision of sound control material. There is a long-established pattern that the church buys ropes for the bells, but the ringers reimburse a substantial proportion of the purchase cost. This year there was a wish to reimburse the Society for these costs of maintaining and improving the bells, and so a claim for reimbursement from the Faulkes Fund was made and then subsequently received in full.

Phillip raises the fact that there are currently three "account operators" to the Cambridge Youths account held with Santander – George Unsworth, Phillip Orme and Frank King. George Unsworth has requested to be removed from the account and Phillip proposes adding the Secretary (Dave Richards) to the list of authorised signatories. Patrick Brooke seconded the proposal, which was put to a vote and accepted nem. con.

It is also noted that several assets are listed as being in possession of the County Archives at Shire Hall. The County Archives are in the process of being moved to Ely and are currently inaccessible. George Unsworth notes that four titles have come into the possession of Gareth Davies and will be submitted to the archive when it reopens. The titles are:

- Fine Book for the Society of Ringers of St Mary the Great, 3rd Feb 1908 to 10th July 1922
- A book recording paid ringing occasions from June 1947 to June 1959
- Ernie Hibbins peal book
- Ringing Records of T Reginald Dennis (one volume)

Patrick Brooke asks for it to be noted that, between the 12-bell donation, normal donations to the church and additional payments in respect of fabric normally expected to be paid for the church, the effective donation from the ringers this year amounted to around £7,000. This is a healthy sum compared to the total pledge and donation amount of around £100k per annum. Patrick noted, however, that the current annual donation was set at the July 2015 EGM to be in effect for three years (2016-8). George Unsworth proposes that donations continue should continue at £500 per year for another three years. This motion was seconded by Richard Smith and accepted nem. con.

b. Statement from the Independent Examiner

Michael O'Callaghan comments that there is nothing further to add to the report which has been published.

c. MCF Bell Fund

The meeting thanks Frank King for preparation of the report.

Financial matters having been discussed, adoption of the accounts is proposed by Patrick Brooke and seconded by David Pipe. The accounts are accepted nem. con.

9. Belfry Maintenance Officer's Report

In the absence of Oliver Bardsley, his report is taken as read and a request is made for comment.

Richard Smith notes that the acoustics are not as good as they could be. It is suggested that if a small amount of hum can be cut out, then the band might be able to ring more accurately. The ArmaFlex which was purchased prior to the 12-bell was effective to a degree, but there is now explicit disapproval for its reinstatement in the report on the void floor. It could potentially be fitted elsewhere in the tower where it is unlikely to be as effective. Richard comments that people may know Guildford Cathedral. Large sound absorbing panels were placed in the belfry and ringing room and the acoustics were considerably improved.

George Unsworth asks whether we can employ an acoustician to tell us what to do. Adrian approves of this route. One request is to repeat the measurements which were made after the new bells were installed, and it is noted that we still have the equipment to do this.

Barry Johnson comments that he is suspicious of acousticians. George Unsworth also comments that there is little value in doing work on the tower until the final outcome of the antenna project is known for certain. Barry Johnson suggests putting the Armaflex on the ceiling of the upper void and there is enthusiasm for taking this forward.

10. National 12-bell Competition 2018 Report

Liz Orme comments that the day went very well for us with over 800 visitors and 120 volunteers. It was also noted that it was more than just a ringing competition and the Society felt it was successful in deepening and strengthening relations with the church. Thanks are given to all who contributed, no matter how big or small.

It is noted that 12-bell committee have not put the summary report from Cambridge on the competition website as yet.

Adrian comments that he proudly wears the t-shirt and drinks from the beer glass.

11. Election of Officers

Post	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded
Independent Examiner	Michael O'Callaghan	David Richards	Jonathan Shanklin
Belfry Maintenance Officer	Oliver Bardsley	George Unsworth	Cecilia Pipe
Master	Liz Orme	David Pipe	Phil Orme
President	Adrian Daffern	Patrick Brooke	Jonathan Agg
Secretary	David Richards	Luke Smith	Jonathan Shanklin
Treasurer	Phil Orme	Catriona Shearer	Alf Pipe

It is noted that Oliver Bardsley may be leaving Cambridge during the next year and therefore may not be able to complete a term as Belfry Maintenance Officer. Luke Smith offers to take over the role should this become the case.

All posts were elected by vote with no votes against any candidate.

Adrian comments that it is a privilege to be elected President of the Society, and notes his pastoral role. Any member should feel they can contact him on any issue.

12. Report on St Clement's

Barry Johnson reports that in some ways not much has happened. There has been much building work at the church, but this is not directly relevant to the bells project. They are next hoping to build something to connect the newly installed toilets to the sewer.

The hope is to apply for a faculty for the bells in the next few months. If a faculty is granted, then the question of what to do next will return to the Society. Money would need to be found to finance the project. There are a number of people who might be prepared to sponsor a bell.

A more fundamental question is whether the Society would like to have some sort of ownership of the project. If that is the case, then the Society will need to be involved in fundraising. There is also a question about whether the Society wants to be involved in the management of the bells.

Barry closes with an observation that there has been a substantial improvement in the overall financial viability of the church, having signed an agreement with the Russian Orthodox. Barry recalls that Liz asked if there can be access to the bells in perpetuity – at the moment there is no reason to think that access will be different to any other ring of church bells.

Michael O'Callaghan asks for an indicative cost for the project, to which the answer is around £200k. Michael further asks what would happen if the Society chose not to be involved in the running of the tower. The answer is that it would become a city tower like the other independent towers.

Phil Orme comments that he thinks the Society should be involved. Teaching at Great St Mary's has progressed well, but the facilities aren't ideal.

Adrian suggests that a smaller group of people could meet to develop a proposal which can be brought to the Society. This principle is agreed, and Jonathan Agg, Liz Orme and David Pipe agree to work towards it with Barry.

Adrian thanks Barry Johnson for his enthusiasm and drive with regards this project.

13. AOB

a. Informal dinner

An informal dinner will be held at a restaurant in the city on Saturday 21st September 2019. It is noted that one of the reasons for having a low-key dinner this year is to help prepare for the upcoming 300th Anniversary of the Society in 2024.

b. Donations into the box

Cecilia Pipe asks whether it is possible to pay donations by BACS, but also have a system where people can leave a token or marker on the box to say that's how they've donated. Phil Orme confirms that some members have paid by BACS in the past and that he's happy to give details to members who prefer to pay that way.

Adrian thanks the bell-ringers for all they do. There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 9.31pm

Those in attendance:

Jonathan Agg, Harriet Armitage, Alison Brooke, Patrick Brooke, Hannah Campbell, Andrew Carlotti, Barry Johnson, Michael O'Callaghan, Liz Orme, Phillip Orme, John Peverett, Alfred Pipe, Cecilia Pipe, David Pipe, David Richards, 齋藤昭子様 (Akiko Saito), John Sherwood, Luke Smith, Richard Smith, George Unsworth, Michael Williams.