

SCACR Northern District Annual Meeting: Minutes

16:00, Saturday 6th February 2021, via Zoom

Attendees: Steph Pendlebury (District Secretary), Hamish McNaughton (Association Secretary), Moya & Graham Hills, Rob Lane (Association Master), Julie Quinn, Marion Hollands, Richard Neal, Chris Westwood (committee member), Susie Bowen (committee member), Neil Dobson, Simon Alford (District BRF Rep), Jeremy & Sandra Alford, Kathy Howard, Mike Cattell, Sue Gadd (Association Treasurer), Helen Wells, Val Burgess, Iain Davey, Elaine Farrow, Angela Cash, Lynda Johnson.

Note: several attendees were not Northern District members so did not vote.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from: Richard Pendlebury, Rosie Gregory, Ian and Margaret Oram, Julie and Andrew Alford, Jenny Dobson.

2. Deaths of members

A moment's silence was held in respect of the following members who had passed away over the previous year: Tony Jones (Horsham), Peter Dewar (Coleman's Hatch), John Howard (East Grinstead), Valarie Howard (Fairwarp), Betty Stoner (previously a member at Worth).

3. Minutes of ADM on 1st February 2020 at Lindfield

The draft minutes had been circulated electronically in advance of the meeting. These were proposed as a true record of the meeting by Chris Westwood, and seconded by Val Burgess. The minutes were duly accepted with no changes.

4. Welcoming of new members

The following people have joined the Association in the last year, and were welcomed in their absence as new members: Karen Prowse (East Grinstead), Susan Spurling (Cowfold), William Martin-Lawrence (Hartfield), George Grant (Horsham), Richard Brock (West Hoathly). We look forward to welcoming them to the Association in person, and presenting membership certificates, once restrictions are lifted.

5. Secretary's report for 2020 – Steph Pendlebury

The following report had been circulated electronically in advance, and was read out at the meeting.

"I have a confession to make: usually I just use the previous year's report and change a few words. This method won't work for 2020. Although the Association's General Committee has been busier than usual, meeting monthly, things at District level have been much quieter than usual.

The year started out on a plain course: ringing with brunch on the first Saturday of the year (at Lower Beeding), then ringing on the wonderful new Westley bells and a fabulous tea for the February ADM at Lindfield, followed by a new members' event in March (making the most of Cowfold's new loo!). We weren't to know it then, but the final "stand" called at Cowfold would be the last for a District event in an actual ringing chamber for the remainder of the year. With a vaccine for COVID-19 being rolled out as I type, I am hopeful that we may be able to return to small face-to-face events in some form in 2021...

"However, with the launch of Ringing Room and other online ringing platforms, combined with the wide uptake of Zoom video-meetings, a change of method is now possible. Previously, considerations such as size and accessibility of the ringing room, number and "go" of the bells, availability of a loo and kitchen facilities, and ease of parking, all restricted the number of towers that could be used for events and practices. Now all that is needed is an internet connection and computer, tablet or smartphone (headphones are advisable!). Although we have held a couple of online District events, the ease with which dozens of people (learners and helpers) from across two counties can take part at any given time provides an opportunity for a wide range of more focused Association practices. Hopefully these will help ringers at all levels to develop their skills and method repertoire, until we can get back into the tower to practise properly.

“During the first lockdown, the District committee discussed what we could do to help ringers through this difficult period. We decided that it would be most useful to most people to increase the publication frequency of *Northern News* to monthly, to keep the community updated and bring people together. Big thanks to newsletter editor Katherine Potter for her hard work on this! Our BRF rep, Simon Alford, has provided advice to several towers over the past year (see his report). Thanks also to the District committee – Susie Bowen, Elaine Farrow (Ringing Master), Rosie Gregory, Chris Westwood and Richard Pendlebury – for their support; hopefully rather more of their ideas can be taken forwards in 2021...!

“As ever, if Northern District members have requests or suggestions about practices or events (particularly virtual ones!), please do get in touch: sec-north@scacr.org.”

The report was adopted with no changes. Rob thanked Steph and the committee for their work in supporting the ringing community in these challenging times.

6. Bell Restoration report for 2020 – Simon Alford

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

“Unsurprisingly there has not been much to involve me in the last twelve months. All the outstanding actions from last year’s report remain, awaiting a time when they can be safely attended to. I have had contact with one new tower:

“Highbrook

I was put in contact with Mother Nicol Kinrade, the Priest-in-Charge of All Saints, Highbrook, by Graham Hills; Ollie Watson had already been asking for advice regarding some remedial work required to the chime. I made a short safety inspection at her request and reported back that nothing was unsafe as such, but that a professional inspection should be carried out to ascertain what work would be required to put the chime back in proper working order. I supplied her with contact details for several suitable firms but haven’t heard from her that any inspections have been carried out yet. My report on the chime is available separately.

“Cowfold

Stella Bianco informed me that Anne Ekins had found the stay of the second to be split, and enquired if Terence McGinn had given me some spare pulleys and stays, left over from the work done at Lower Beeding at the turn of the millennium. They had been passed on to Terence since he was BRF officer at the time, but they haven’t yet come into my possession. A new stay has now been made and fitted by someone else.”

Steph and Rob thanked Simon for his work in visiting and advising towers.

7. Election/Appointment of Northern District Officers

- (a) Secretary – Steph Pendlebury (nominated by Chris Westwood)
- (b) Ringing Master – nominations were invited from the floor; there were no nominations. Steph thanked Elaine Farrow for her work in this role over the previous two years.
- (c) General Committee Members – Susie Bowen, Rosie Gregory, Richard Pendlebury, Chris Westwood (Nominated by Rob Lane). No additional nominations from the floor.
- (d) Bell restoration/maintenance (“BRF”) contact – Simon Alford (nominated by Steph Pendlebury)

The above District Committee members were duly elected *en bloc* by majority vote. Steph and Richard Pendlebury will sit on General Committee.

8. Nominations for Association Officers

- (a) Association Master – Rob Lane (nominated by Steph Pendlebury)
- (b) General Secretary – Hamish McNaughton (nominated by Rob Lane)
- (c) Treasurer – Sue Gadd (nominated by Val Burgess)
- (d) Safeguarding Officer – any nominations from the floor (and are they accompanied by a supporting statement)? No nominations.

(e) Trustees – Margaret Sherwood (nominated by Simon Alford) (Note: the other two Trustees are still within their term of office)

(f) Bell Restoration Fund (BRF) Secretary – Graham Hills (nominated by Hamish McNaughton)

9. District and Association Events and Practices - Discussion

A discussion around what kind of virtual and socially-distanced events and practices members would like was held. Weekly Association practices are going well and being enjoyed by learners and helpers. Moya is organising a quiz on 27th Feb, which all members are welcome to join. Suggestions for possible future events:

- socially-distanced handbell practices in-person in e.g. small groups of 6 could be practical, as lockdown eases.
- Mike Cattell suggested starting to plan some kind of ringing celebration of the end of lockdown/restrictions.
- Also a suggestion to organise some memorial quarter peals for those who have passed away, and also to thank the NHS.

10. Update from towers

A representative from each tower gave an update on how their ringers are keeping in touch, and how many ringers they think will return to the tower:

Ardingly – no members present, no news from the tower

Balcombe – no members present, no news from the tower

Bolney (Susie Bowen) – rang briefly between lockdowns in the summer; try to keep in contact but haven't been doing social events or Ringing Room. Concern that there may not be enough ringers to form a viable band. Some don't want to ring in a mask, some don't want to travel more than 15 minutes.

Coleman's Hatch – Chris Westwood kept in contact with them in the first 6 months, but hasn't heard anything since then. They had been intending to ring once a month for choral evensong, when restrictions allow. The bells are well supported by the local community.

Cowfold (Stella Bianco) – ringers keep in touch by email; 6 out of 8 have renewed subs. They rang 18 times between July-November but not for Christmas. And one new person wants to learn to ring, and one ringer has moved in from outside the county. Confident that they'll have a viable band.

Crawley (Iain Davey) – keep in touch, some are not very keen to ring with restrictions (small ringing room with minimal ventilation). Confident that they will have a viable band after restrictions are lifted.

Cuckfield (Julie Quinn) – the ringers haven't really been keeping in touch. She thinks probably 4 ringers will go back, plus one beginner who started just before lockdown. So they will need some support.

Danehill (Chris Westwood) – ringers keep in touch via WhatsApp; 10 members have paid subs (more members this year than last!).

East Grinstead (Lynda Johnson) – ringers keep in touch via email. All the ringers will be renewing; she is confident that there will be a viable band after restrictions are lifted.

Fairwarp – 4 family members are ringing every Sunday, and practices on Ringing Room.

Fletching – no members present; no news from the tower.

Hartfield (Chris Westwood) – ringers had picnics in a small group all through the summer (even in the rain), and keep in touch via WhatsApp. All keen to ring once allowed to do so.

Horsham (Val Burgess) – ringers have weekly Zoom meeting, plus WhatsApp and phone calls with those who don't use Zoom. Rang Aug-November twice each Sunday. One new, experienced ringer has moved into Horsham from outside the county. Virtual tower dinner in November, with some invited guests (including the Gales, the Tilleyes, the Rebbecks).

Itchingfield (Angela Cash) – ringers are loosely in touch with one another. Might look strong on paper but Angela is not confident that there will be enough ringers returning (4 members don't really ring). Most of the ringers are now over 70. Will need some support coming out of lockdown.

Lindfield – no members present and no news from the tower, but the feeling is that they're in a strong position.

Lower Beeding (Val Burgess): they haven't met recently and haven't rung at all, but did organise picnics in the park (with other local towers) over the summer. Graham has been keeping in touch with band members by phone. Not all members might renew, and the band was already pretty reliant on help from Horsham, so likely to need support.

Rudgwick – no members present, no news from the tower.

Rusper (Elaine Farrow) – rang on Sundays during the summer. A couple of people have moved away, dropped out or might not come back. The remaining ringers will be keen to get going but the band will be short of numbers.

Slaugham – no members present, no news from the tower.

Slinfold – no members present, no recent news from the tower. Sandra Alford reported that family members were ringing for Sunday service in the summer.

Turner's Hill – no members present, no news from the tower.

Warnham (Sandra Alford) – rang handbells outside weekly in the summer; rang 4 bells for service when it was allowed. No Zoom or outdoor meetings at the moment. 16 members have renewed.

West Grinstead (Stella Bianco) – they rang for 3 bells July-November.

West Hoathly – no members present, no news from the tower.

Withyham – no members present, no news from the tower. According to Sue Gadd's records, only 4 have renewed (7 members last year).

Worth (Neil Dobson) – keeping in touch via WhatsApp group, weekly Zoom meetings, and some Ringing Room practices. Most of the year the tower has been clad in scaffolding, so ringing wouldn't have been possible anyway (although the ringing room is small and poorly ventilated). Neil has been playing a recording of a quarter peal for weddings, midnight mass, carol service and Christmas morning. The scaffolding is now starting to come off. The tower AGM was held over Zoom a couple of weeks ago. All members have renewed (18).

11. AOB

Survival and Recovery

- we're looking for Survival and Recovery Champions to join a national network to share good ideas. Don't need to be an experienced ringer; just enthusiastic and keen to help!
- launch of new survival & recovery toolbox today! <http://ringingteachers.org/survival-and-recovery-toolbox>

Rob and Steph thanked everyone for attending, and thanked Hamish for running the technical parts of the meeting.