

**CASTOR RINGING SCHOOL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2020
Held at 10.00am by Zoom link**

In attendance:

Officers and Committee Members:

David Teall (DT), Chairman
Chris Burgess (CB), Administrator & Protection Officer
Hilary Hardie (HH), Treasurer
Ronnie Fraser (RF), Steward
Terry Wright (TW)
Miss Angela Whiteway (AW)

Steven Brown (SB), Julian Burton (JB), Mrs Helen Cornford (HC), Peter Furness (PF), Mrs Sally Hudson (SH), Mrs Julie Nicholson (JN), Mrs Julie Pocock (JP), Mrs Jane Robinson (JR), Mrs Anne Russell (AR), Mrs Pat Teall (PT), Mrs Jean Tinsley (JT).

1. WELCOME

DT opened the meeting and welcomed members of the Ringing School. He explained how zoom works for the benefit of anyone who had not used it before.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Paul Reed, Rev David Ridgeway, Mrs Pat Dale, Mrs Jane Webb, Stuart Weston (Safety Officer)

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2019

JN proposed the minutes be approved. This was seconded by JR and agreed by the Attendees.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No matters were raised from the minutes.

5. ANNUAL REPORTS

Head Tutor's Report

The Head Tutor's report can be found at the end of the minutes.

Attendance Report

CB reported that due to the Covid Situation only 12 sessions had been held at Castor, with 2 other sessions held elsewhere. The maximum student attendance had been 15, with an average attendance of 10. There has always been a sufficient number of tutors/helpers with a maximum attendance of 12. It was noted that not everyone remembers to sign the attendance book, and CB reminded them of the need to do so.

Treasurer's Report

The Accounts and Treasurer's report can be found at the end of the minutes.

HH reported that due to the enforced reduction in sessions, the income was down but so also were the costs. She noted that the high number of attendees in the 1st 3 months had produced an income of almost ½ that of the previous year. There had been no expenditure on stays or printing.

JB thanked the Ringing School for the contribution to Castor tower.

CB reported that he had agreed to purchase a circular saw from William Baxter to assist with making stays. The cost would be £100 which would be cheaper long term than having stays made up externally. JT offered the loan of her husband's tools if they would be of help.

6. ADOPTION OF THE ACCOUNTS

JR proposed that the accounts be adopted. This was seconded by HC and agreed by the Attendees.

7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

DT's introduction to this agenda item can be found at the end of the minutes.

DT summarised that under the terms of reference, candidates were required to attend at least 24 sessions in the year, but because of the Covid situation, only 12 sessions had been held therefore no-one was eligible to stand for election to the Committee. He explained 3 possible resolutions:

- a) Take into consideration the number of sessions attended in the previous year
- b) Use pro rata figures
- c) Extend the term of the current Committee for 12 months. A special resolution would need to be passed in order to do this.

It was noted that some important meetings would need to be held to get things going again post Covid and that it might be prudent for "experienced hands" to do this in close conjunction with JB in his capacity as Tower Captain for St Kyneburgha's.

Following discussion, it was agreed that extending the term of the current Committee was the best option. All the Committee members in attendance expressed their willingness to do this. HC proposed that the resolution be passed. This was seconded by JT and agreed by the Attendees.

DT thanked the Committee for everything they do and for what they would need to do in 2021 to re-establish ringing.

8. RETURN TO RINGING

DT's introduction to this agenda item can be found at the end of the minutes.

It was noted that no definitive procedures or time frames could be established at the moment, as a 2nd Covid wave was anticipated and may bring another lockdown. It was also noted that plans for returning to ringing would need to be in stages and take into consideration guidelines set by the Government, the Church of England, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, A.R.T. and the incumbent of St Kyneburgha's.

There was considerable discussion on ways of returning to ringing including use of audio equipment, tower ventilation and practicalities of sanitising ropes/equipment. It was noted that protocols put in place for service ringing were not necessarily suitable for a teaching environment. It was agreed that the return to ringing should be left to the Committee and arranged according to the Covid guidance in place at the time.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

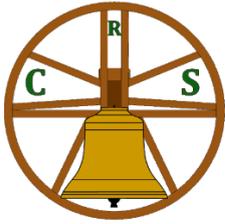
No other matters were raised.

DT thanked everyone for attending and for their contributions to the meeting. He thanked HH for arranging the Zoom facility.

There being no other business the meeting was closed at 10.57am.

MINUTES APPROVED:

Signature: Date:.....



Castor Ringing School

Head Tutor's Report – November 2020

This is my fourth Annual Report as Head Tutor but my first using the medium of Zoom. The year has, of course, been dominated by the Coronavirus Pandemic and the consequent closure of our much-loved Ringing School, so it is interesting to note that the first third of the year on which I am reporting was perfectly normal. Yes, that surprised me too when I sat down to write my report, but, as the year runs from 1st November to 31st October, the first four months were, indeed, pre-covid.

Whilst, from our current perspective, the concept of being simply 'normal' sounds wonderful, that word doesn't really do justice to what was happening at that time. The progress being made was exceptional by any standard, making it a period which I feel particularly proud to have been a part of. Let me remind you of some of the highlights:

On 30th November we held a dedicated session for six beginners from Wittering whilst our improvers enjoyed an away-day at Bulwick. Then, for the first three weeks of December, we ran split sessions with the beginners attending from 9:30 to 10:30 and the improvers from 10:30 to 12:00. An additional beginner joined us in January and four more from Wittering in February throughout which we again ran split sessions. By the end of February, three of our beginners

were promoted from the first column on our Progress Board to the second, thus becoming Rounds ringers.

Meanwhile, our improvers continued to make excellent progress with six of them ringing Quarter Peals during this period. Julie Pocock, Caroline Mould and Helen Cornford all rang their first Quarter Peal on the treble. Three others rang their first Quarter Peal on an inside bell, thereby graduating from the Ringing School: Jane Robinson on 18th November, Julian Burton on 23rd December and Alex Heaton on 24th February. All three have been invited to continue their association with the Ringing School as Helpers. My congratulations to all six for their achievements.

Our ability to offer top quality tuition to this number of people is only possible with the support of the Rector, PCC Members, Tower Captain and Steeple Keeper at St Kyneburgha's and the generous gift of time, skill and experience from our regular Tutors and Helpers. Thank you all so much for all that you do; we could not run the school without you.

The question on all our lips, of course, is when will the Ringing School be able to open again. That is such an important question that I have made it a separate item on the Agenda, so we will come to that later. However, whatever the answer turns out to be, I have no hesitation in predicting that Castor Ringing School has a bright future in which we shall continue to offer expert tuition to all who wish to come along to learn the basics of Change Ringing.

Castor Ringing School Accounts to 30 September 2020			
	2019/20		2018/19
	£	£	£
Bank Balance brought forward		821.53	588.71
Receipts			
Fees	382.00		687.50
Total receipts		<u>382.00</u>	<u>687.50</u>
Payments			
Payments to Castor Tower	165.00		220.00
Teaching aids and booklets	40.00		95.09
Stays			139.59
Donation to Bulwick	20.00		
Total Payments		<u>225.00</u>	<u>454.68</u>
Net Income		<u>157.00</u>	<u>232.82</u>
Bank Balance at 30 September		<u><u>978.53</u></u>	<u><u>821.53</u></u>
Hilary Hardie 12 October 2020			

Treasurer's Report

The income of £382 received in 2019/20 is wholly from the fees paid each week, up and until the School closed in March following lockdown.

The main item of expenditure is the payment of £5 per week to Castor Tower (£55 per quarter) as a contribution towards heating and lighting, and general wear and tear on the bell installation, paid in arrears for 3 quarters of the year.

The only other items of spend in the year was on general teaching aids such as books

and a donation to Bulwick Tower for heating etc, when it held a session.
The balance in the bank account at the year end has increased from £821.53 to
£978.53.

Introduction to Agenda Item 7 – Election of Committee Members

By the strict letter of our Terms of Reference, no-one is eligible for election to the Committee as there is a requirement of attending at least 24 sessions during the preceding year. 14 people do qualify to vote as the requirement there is only 12 sessions, but this number precludes many of the newer members who would be likely to have qualified in a normal year.

Obviously, this has been an exceptional year so we need to solve the problem by passing a special resolution. The question is: what should the wording of that resolution be.

Chris and I between us have come up with a couple of different ways of looking at the attendance figures. The first is to take the figures for the last 12 months of operation i.e. mid-March 2019 to mid-March 2020. Another is to take the figures for the 19 sessions that did take place and multiply them by 50/19 to give a pro-rata figure for the 50 sessions we might have expected to have. There are pros and cons to each but, interestingly, both methods produce much the same list of people eligible to sit on the committee.

An alternative way forward would be to pass a motion to extend the tenure of the existing committee by a further 12 months. That would avoid all problems of eligibility, either to stand or to vote.

Whichever way forward this meeting adopts I would like it to be known that my intention is to invite Julian to attend the important meetings we will need to hold next year in his role as Tower Captain at Castor.



Castor Ringing School

Introduction to Agenda Item 8 Restarting Sessions post COVID-19.

As I said earlier in my Report, the question on all our lips is: “when will the Ringing School be able to open again?” I would dearly love to be able to give you a definitive answer to that question but, given the fact that we are only just over a week into the second National Lockdown of the year, I can’t. No-one knows.

However, before taking questions and listening to your thoughts, what I can do is to give you some idea of the processes we will need to go through before our next session can take place.

The Church of England has stated that bell ringing in their churches can only take place with the permission of the incumbent and must comply with the guidance issued by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. The Association of Ringing Teachers, to whose rules we are subject as an ART Hub, have also stated that ringing must comply with the guidance issued by Central Council. Their guidance is thus the starting point.

As I am sure many of you will already know, Central Council have a dedicated page, <https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/> on which their guidance is regularly updated. As soon as that

guidance suggests that teaching may become possible again I shall call a Committee Meeting to discuss the details and, if they feel it appropriate, draw up a Plan and Risk Assessment to submit to the Rector. If the Rector approves our plan, that will be the green light we have all been waiting for!

There are, of course, a huge number of unknown factors which make it impossible to predict *when* this might happen. Will there be a successful vaccine? How much protection will it give? When will it be rolled out and how long will it take for us all to be vaccinated? Will rules on social distancing stop as soon as we have all been vaccinated or will they continue for a while? Will some activities be allowed only if everyone present has been vaccinated? So many questions and so few answers.

One thing that is possible is that the restarting of sessions may need to be staged with improvers being able to restart before beginners. As no-one here will need reminding, teaching someone to handle a bell, or for that matter, helping an improver who has temporarily lost control, is very up close and personal. However, I am now straying into the field of speculation so I think the best thing for me to do now is to stop and ask if there are any questions or comments that anyone would like to make.