

Minutes of the Michaelmas Term Business Meeting held over Zoom on Friday 13th November 2020

Members Present

President: R A Smith

Master: S C Johnson

Secretary: G Chu

Melissa Nash	Rene Russell *	Kate Jennings *
David Richards	Andrew Johnson	Andrew Roberts *
John Hutchinson	Florence Lazenby *	Andrew Carlotti
Dima Szamozvancev	Allison Wang	Skye Purchase *
Jonathan Nash	Luke Smith	Ed Gardner
Jadd Virji *	Ben Gladwyn *	Christopher Winkless-Clark
Thomas Haslam	James Ellison	Dickon Love
Jemima Morris *	Elizabeth Hopper	
Stephen Burr	Sam Johnson	

* elected during the meeting

The Meeting Commenced at 20:00.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Thomas Hooley.

2. Minutes of the Michaelmas term business meeting 2020

This was accepted as a true account. James Ellison will ensure no track changes enabled for the minutes on the website. Proposed by Dave Richards, Seconded by Chris Winkless-Clark. They were accepted unanimously.

3. Matters Arising

3a. ART award money use

The Teaching Officer has been in contact with Stephanie Warboys about the awarded £500, and highlighted the spreadsheet of what it could be spent on. He mentioned that it was originally planned to be spent on the Charmborough Ring, but due to the Freshers' Fair being virtual it was not used this year. The Teaching Officer explained the use of the award money as follows:

USE	AMOUNT
COMMS (website hosting)	51
STEEPLE KEEPING	200
ART BOOKS (learners logbooks)	34
STATIONARY	30
RINGING WORLDS (subscription)	85
OTHER TEACHING RESOURCES	100

The President feels that this does not need approval from the meeting as the spending is considered appropriate, and the decision should come from the committee. The Steeple Keeper clarifies that the £200 for steeple keeping are for the tail ends which were replaced over the summer, and not for the upcoming change of ropes. Andrew Johnson questions whether approval is needed from ART, and how it could be used on recruitment of new ringers. The Teaching Officer says that ART does need to approve it, but there is no rush in figuring things out as Stephanie is flexible on the timings. In terms of recruitment, we have recruited a high number of new learners and also have a record number of existing ringers joining. Even though we are currently restricted to ringing handbells and ringing rooms, there is still strong interest.

3b. Ropes (including colours and funding)

The Steeple Keeper submitted the following report to the meeting.

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The ropes with the new tail ends were put back into StAG in September, so that project is now finished.

However, Phil Gorman (who made the repairs) estimates that the current ropes only have about five years left in them. This is reasonable as a rope set typically lasts 20-30 years, and these ones have been in since 1990.

Therefore, we will need to purchase some new rope, and this should be done as soon as possible as they can take over a year to arrive once ordered. I therefore have obtained the following quotes for a full set of 8 ropes with synthetic tops and natural tails:

- Ellis Ropes Ltd. - £1344 (+£19.20 delivery) (including VAT)
- Malcolm Brown Bellropes - £1426.08 (including VAT)
- Avon Ropes - £1608
- Mendip Ropemakers Ltd. - £1400

Unfortunately, Mendip Ropemakers have been put out of business (hopefully temporarily) by the current pandemic, so we will be unable to order from them.

It should be noted that, despite the higher price, the bellringing community (or at least the portion that uses the Facebook group) seems to overwhelmingly recommend Avon. In these circumstances, I believe we should prioritise quality over lower prices as that will lead to a longer life and savings in the long-term. However, any recommendations from guild members would also be appreciated!

The question then arises as to how we will fund these ropes. We are currently putting together an application for funding from the Societies' Syndicate, which would supply (up to) £1000. However, there is an issue in that we accessed these funds only last year for the handbell restoration, and the Syndicate may not be keen to issue a second grant so soon.

In addition, new bell ropes come under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which will allow us to claim back the VAT (~£220-270). This may only be possible to claim if the church are the ones that buy the ropes, however I believe this is something which could be negotiated. Unfortunately, however, you do not pay VAT on Avon ropes, so in reality they will cost us more like ~£400 extra than the other suppliers, rather than the apparent ~£200. It should be noted that they have said they will try to reduce their price to match quotes from competitors, though I am not sure how much lower they would be willing to go.

Assuming we get both of these sources of funding, that leaves us with ~£200-600 to pay, which I would say is reasonable for the guild to pay out of pocket, though of course any donations from members would be most welcome (though I would suggest waiting on these until we know the results of our grant applications).

The next decision that has to be made is what colour we want the sallies to be! We can choose three colours, as usual, from a wide range. Avon ropes offer the following selection: red, white, blue, purple, emerald green, bottle green, burnt orange (Sainsbury's carrier bag colour), wine (burgundy), gold (yellow), black, or mid blue.

Alternatively, Ellis ropes offer sallies in Red, White, Blue, Green, Gold, Dark Wine, Black, Purple, Light Wine, or Light Blue.

In other news, one of the clapper rests has broken off the 8 in the GSM handbell set. I am currently investigating whether or not I can use some sort of metal glue at the Department of Engineering to fix this. If this is not possible, then I would suggest just leaving it for now, as it is only a minor issue on our tertiary handbell set, and is not worth paying someone to fix.

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The Steeple Keeper, Chris Winkless-Clark, begins with an assessment by Phil Gorman, who said that our ropes in StAG only have a maximum of 5 years left. This is a fair assessment as the ropes have been used for around 30 years, a good lifespan for these ropes. The Steeple Keeper says now is a good time to start ordering as the ropes could take around 18 months or longer to arrive once ordered, and failure to act promptly would result in us having to borrow a rope from GSM if a rope at StAG were to break, which isn't a suitable long term solution. Quotes were collected from 4 different ropemakers, 3 of them giving a price of around £1400 including VAT, and Avon gave a price of £1600 not including VAT. The bellringing community does overwhelmingly recommend Avon, and the Steeple Keeper noted that the higher quality may be worth the investment as it could save the Guild money in the long run. In terms of funding, we would be applying for £1000 from the society's syndicate, but the strength of our application may be harmed as we received £1000 from the societies syndicate in 2019 to restore the handbells. The plan is to apply before the January deadline and we would know the results by the Lent term business meeting. The Steeple Keeper also highlights the use of the places of worship VAT redemption scheme, which makes the difference between the Avon ropes and the others closer to £400. He also noted that the Guild could also be exempt from VAT due to its educational nature, and he would check this by the next meeting. He also noted that even with the society's syndicate, we still need between £200 and £600 out of the Guild accounts or through donations.

Stephen Burr queried about the materials for the ropes. The Steeple Keeper noted that they were all synthetic polyester tops and natural tail ends, and that the quotes are for the same product from all 4 companies. The President believes they may be different, and noted that during his time as steeple keeper in GSM, Ellis was doing flax tails but could be upgraded to hemp, Avon were doing hemp. Andrew Johnson noted that, during his experience at a ringing roadshow, there was a difference in feel between tail ends made by the different rope makers. Luke Smith, the Steeple Keeper at GSM, said that most of the ropes in GSM were from Mendip, though this is mainly due to their quick response as GSM ropes are more easily worn due to its low ceilings, as opposed to the quality of the ropes. He concludes stating that the ropes from Ellis are stretchier and could worsen the situation that is already caused by the high ceilings of StAG. The Steeple Keeper also noted a report sent in by John Harrison, that they have been using Avon and highly recommends them. The President summarises this part of the discussion saying that there are overall positive comments for Avon and mixed reviews for others, and that the final decision should be left with the officers. The Guild unanimously agrees. The President then concludes by suggesting the Steeple Keeper contact Phil Pratt (Avon) to discuss more details about the prices, and noted that the prices may be able to be matched to those quoted by other suppliers.

In terms of funding, Stephen Burr feels we should investigate all sources of income, and as this is the core of what our Guild does, we should not delay the ordering process until we secure funding. Andrew Johnson questions whether the grant from the society's syndicate is claimed before or after a resource is bought. The Steeple Keeper said that they would only provide a grant before the purchase. The President and Luke Smith said that this is not an imminent problem, and have kindly suggested that if needed, the Guild could borrow a rope from GSM.

In terms of colours, the sallies are currently red and gold. Ed Gardner asks the colours that were provided in the report to be read out, and the Steeple Keeper proceeds to do so. The President suggested that the Guild do not go for too many pale colours as they could get grubby quickly. There is also an argument made for Cambridge Blue, though this option is unavailable, a similar shade was available. Luke Smith suggested that it depends on the interior design, and that it is important to have a different colour than the background. The Master noted that the colour of the ringing room is the Church's decision, and the President remembers that the room has changed colours dramatically on 4 different occasions, and that if the ropes were to last 30 years, then it is very

likely that further redecoration would occur in this time period. It was agreed that this matter be left until the Lent term business meeting. Stephen noted that we should discuss this with the church as they may have opinions on the sally colours.

4. Relevant matters from the AGM

4a. Ringing World Subscription

The Ringing World subscription needs to be renewed by January as confirmed by the Master. The President made it clear that he had just resigned from the Ringing World board of directors and may not be impartial on this issue so he would neither vote or comment on this matter. The Master noted that there is not great interest in the Ringing World from either existing student ringers or learners, and that it was not on the right level for the learners in particular, and that we get ringing news from other places. A suggestion was made about having a joint subscription with the Cambridge Youths as a tower subscription, and the cost could be split amongst us. Stephen Burr questioned whether we should upgrade to a digital subscription and to distribute this amongst students, but the Master believes that the current online subscription can't be shared between the whole band. The Master mentioned that Cambridge terms are very busy and people may flick through the magazine during practices but wouldn't take time to read it online. Andrew Johnson said that the money spent is also to support Bellboard, which is a cause worth supporting, and also comments that any students writing articles for the Ringing World would be appreciated, as the wider ringing community may be interested in university ringing. He also suggested that we reorder on the Christmas issue, which may cost us an extra £5, but save us the money due to the increasing subscription rate. The Master said that the idea of the Ringing Worlds was to be brought to StAG and Benet's, but in reality, it was rarely read at these practices in comparison with GSM. This was due to the lack of social space in GSM. The Youths kindly suggested that they do not mind the Guild reading the Youth's copies which stay at GSM.

The other problem raised was the accumulation of the Ringing Worlds. The Secretary pointed out that the Guild Ringing World collection starts from 1941 and ends in 2004, with 1971 missing from the collection. The Master stated that with the more recent Ringing Worlds, there is a collection from May 2017 until now with a few gaps. If we wish to keep the older Ringing Worlds the only thing that needs to be done is to replace the 1971 issue, and to have a space instead of the window reveals for the Ringing Worlds. The President agrees that the current setup is not satisfactory and that a bookcase behind the 4 and 5 at OLEM would be put up in the future for the Ringing Worlds. Stephen Burr pointed out that if the lack of space was an issue, the more recent versions could be stored on DVDs or other digital formats.

In response to supporting Bellboard through the Ringing World, James Ellison suggested that we could support Bellboard through increasing our peal and quarter peal donations. This suggestion was well received by Guild members. John Hutchinson noted that the more quarters rung, the cheaper each individual quarter would be. This proposal was accepted by all with four abstentions. It was left to the Secretary and the rest of the committee to finalise the donation amount, after looking at previous quarter peal and peal numbers. The Guild will be informed of this amount at the Lent term meeting.

5. New Members

The following people were elected to membership of the Guild. They were proposed by Stella Johnson and seconded by Chris Winkless-Clark:

Andrew Roberts (Gonville and Caius)

Ben Gladwyn (Pembroke)

Florence Lazenby (Jesus)

Izzy Anderson Besant (Clare)

Jadd Virji (Trinity)

Jemima Morris (Fitzwilliam)

Kate Jennings (Selwyn)

Navonil Neogi (Trinity)

Natasha Kozlowski (Newnham)

Pascal Keller (Clare Hall)

Rene Russell (St John's)

Skye Purchase (Peterhouse)

Tein van der Lugt (Wolfson)

Tiffany Tsui (Newnham)

Timothy Chun Hei Wong (Robinson)

All were elected unopposed and were virtually applauded. The President noted that this is a very odd year, and that in normal times the Guild would be going to the Champion of the Thames and buying beer for the new members. The President regrets this cannot happen this evening, but is looking forward to getting to know the new members when we are able to meet again.

6. Cambridge towers

Sam Johnson (Bene't's) notes that we haven't done much for the past 8 months and the ringing we have done is all fine, the tower was the same as last time, and is optimistic that we can do some more ringing there this coming January, and that it is an exciting prospect that Bene't's is rung at more often. The Steeple Keeper noted that the bells at StAG have not been rung since dinner day, and is hopeful that nothing has broken since then. The ropes are now back in after having the tail ends replaced, and the Steeple Keeper would check how stretchy they have got. The Steeple Keeper would consult the church to ask to check the ropes after term time. Dave Richards noted that in GSM, all bells had been used through September and October before ringing stopped again. They are also making sure that the simulator facilities are up to standards and that it is a resource that the Guild can use. The President notes that OLEM is all good and the bells have not been rung since March. Sam Johnson, on behalf of his father, Barry Johnson, said that all permissions to build the belltower at St Clement's have been granted, and it is just a matter of fundraising. Work should begin sometime next year.

7. Diary Dates

Guild Dinner at Newnham – 20/03/21

Cancelled Events – SUA, London Outing, Guild New Year

The Master noted that if the dinner happens this year, the loving cup would not happen. Newnham have been reasonable and will offer a full refund if social distancing measures are still in place, or could defer it to next year. She has organised speakers and will start organising towers over Christmas. She also expressed dismay over the cancelled events, but the cycle outing could be moved into the next term if possible. The President noted that Guild Week is currently not planned this year, but if something were done it would be similar to the plan for the cancelled week in August 2020, which is a 4-5 day trip to the Shropshire area. He also noted that this is not the right time to start booking towers, but it would be nice to do something if at all possible.

8. Any other business

8a. Central Council representative election

Dave Richards, the current CCCBR representative said that we are entitled to two, though one has been left vacant since James Dann stepped down. After no students expressed an interest in being the CC rep, the President states that he would like to do it, but not for the long term, but so he could attend the meeting and try and represent the Guild. Dave Richard proposes, with Stella Johnson seconding. There are no other nominations. The President was thus declared elected, though he stressed that if any student representative were to stand for the position, he would step down immediately. His tenure would take place immediately, unlike normal circumstances. Andrew Johnson states that the Central Council now allows the representative to be changed at any time, and it was agreed that the Secretary would contact the Council to inform them of our new representative.

8b. Guild Handling of COVID-19

The Master states she wanted to provide a current update on the Guild's operations during COVID-19. Ringing has been taking place in Benet's since late September and at GSM 3 times, and that involved 14 people. The

Guild also has 6 sessions each week for handbells, involving a total number of 18 people. The latest count for learner signups was 23, with 14 coming to at least 1 session, and 7-8 coming regularly. In addition, there were 9 existing ringers who signed up, of which 8 were elected this evening. The President thanks the Master for being so active in getting people to join. He also questions whether there are enough handbells of good enough quality, of which the Master said the current arrangements suffice. She mentioned that whilst Stone Age Bruce is likely in the GSM void, they are likely unringable anyway but we should find them when we can. The biggest problem is the case for the GSM and Big Bruce sets, which are either large and heavy or with poor handles. The Assistant Master proceeds to show the cases through his video feed. It was also noted that the locks to the GSM case had to be broken to open it, and now a luggage strap is used to close the suitcase.

8c. Cambridge District

Stephen Burr raised the point that all towers in Cambridge are part of the Ely Diocese and fall in the Cambridge District, and that there is an active community in which all members of the Guild are welcome to be a part of. The President adds that the District ran a very interesting online webinar series through the first lockdown which is available on the Cambridge District YouTube and spans a wide range of subjects, from the history of ringing to conducting. Dave Richards mentioned that this webinar series has restarted recently and will hopefully continue until March, and that if anyone wants to talk about a ringing topic at a webinar they should get in touch with him.

8d. State of future meetings

Stephen Burr mentioned that for future meetings under normal circumstances, we should consider having a virtual aspect in the meeting as this would allow Guild members outside Cambridge to join. The Master suggested that this would be worth it for the AGM, but likely not for the business meetings as they would not be relevant to members of the Guild who aren't resident in Cambridge. The older members of the Guild suggested that it is still worth having them provide input to the meeting, though perhaps members joining virtually should not be given a vote. The Secretary mentions that under the current rules, the meetings must be held in Cambridge, and that to have a virtual aspect, this must be agreed at the next normal meeting. The validity of this meeting was thus raised, and whether there should be a vote on the legitimacy of this meeting. James Ellison noted that you cannot vote on the validity of the meeting until the next proper meeting. It was agreed that a decision on this matter should be deferred to the next meeting, and that the rules should be examined carefully and the officers come up with a proposal for the subsequent meeting on this matter.

Dave Richards concludes the meeting by stating the current matter of accounts, and that Moodle grants access and filing rights to the junior treasurer but not the senior treasurer. This matter would be resolved after the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 21:29.

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