

# The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

Minutes of the 123rd Annual Meeting held by video conferencing (Zoom) on Saturday 5th September 2020 at 10.30 am.

## Present

**Fellows:** John Baldwin, Alan Frost.

**Ex-officio:** Mary Bone, Alan Glover, Tim Jackson, Simon Linford#, Dickon Love\*, David Mattingley, Louise Nightingale, Allen Nunley, Mark Regan\*, Alan Regin, Chris Ridley#, Andrew Smith.

**Ancient Society of College Youths:** Richard Allton, Colin Newman, Leigh Simpson, Andrew Wilby.

**Australian & New Zealand Assn:** Peter Harrison, Christopher O'Mahony, David Smith.

**Bath & Wells Dio. Assn:** Jay Bunyan, Michael Hansford, Charles Pipe-Wolferstan.

**Bedfordshire Assn:** Patrick Albon, Linda Garton, Richard Horne.

**Beverley & District Society:** James Blackburn.

**Cambridge Univ. Guild:** David Richards.

**Carlisle Dio. Guild:** Christine de Cordova, Duncan Walker.

**Chester Dio. Guild:** Carole Hallam\*, Graham Jenkins\*, David Jones, Tom Nestor.

**Clerical Guild:** Revd Jon Rose\*.

**Coventry Dio. Guild:** Annie Hall, Joy Pluckrose.

**Derby Dio. Assn:** Andrew Hall, Susan Hall, Gill Hughes.

**Devon Association:** Joanne Tucker\*.

**Devonshire Guild:** Lynne Hughes, Fergus Stracey.

**Durham & Newcastle Dio. Assn:** Howard Smith, Barbara Wheeler.

**Durham University Society:** Phil Hughes.

**East Derbys & West Notts Association:** Edward Sterland.

**Ely Dio. Assn:** Philip Bailey, Sue Marsden, Daniel Stevens\*.

**Essex Assn:** Fred Bone, Paul Bray\*, Helen Bridgman\*, Paul Cammiade, Vicki Chapman.

**Gloucester & Bristol Dio. Assn:** Mark Davies, Derek Harbottle, Richard While\*.

**Guildford Dio. Guild:** John Couperthwaite, Jackie Roberts.

**Hereford Diocesan Guild:** Colin Ward.

**Hertford County Assn:** Stuart Brant, Tony Crowther, Geoff Horritt, Margaret Horritt.

**Irish Assn:** Don McLean, Michael Pomeroy#.

**Kent County Assn:** Phillip Barnes, Douglas Davis, David Grimwood, Caroline Stockmann, Nick Wilkins\*.

**Ladies Guild:** Rosemary Hemmings, Alison Williams, Jan Wyatt.

**Lancashire Assn:** Sam Brook\*, Cate Gardner\*, Beth Ingham.

**Leeds University Society:** Naomi Calvert.

**Leicester Dio. Guild:** Carol Franklin, Steve Millington, Arthur Rees.

**Lichfield & Walsall Archd. Society:** Stephen Askew\*, Stuart Hutchieson, David Towell\*.

**Lincoln Dio. Guild:** Philip Green, Christopher Sharp, Christopher Turner.

**Liverpool Universities Society:** Martyn Bristow.

**Llandaff & Monmouth Dio. Assn:** Matthew Turner.

**Middlesex County Assn & London Dio. Guild:** Sonia Field, Robert Lewis, Adrian Udal, Clyde Whittaker.

**National Police Guild:** John Cousins.

**North American Guild:** Bruce Butler, Eileen Butler, Beverly Faber, Christian Haller\*.

**North Staffordshire Assn:** Jan Hine, Tim Hine.

**North Wales Assn:** Antony Diserens, Beverley Furniss.

**Norwich Dio. Assn:** Katie Wright.

**Oxford Dio. Guild:** John Harrison, Lucy Hopkins Till, Graham John, Timothy Pett.

**Oxford Society:** Dorothy Hall\*.

**Oxford University Society:** Craig Robertson\*.  
**Peterborough Dio. Guild:** Simon Dixon, Nick Elks, Jane Sibson.

**Guild of St Agatha:** Anne Bray.

**St Martin's Guild:** Richard Andrew, James Ramsbottom.

**Salisbury Dio. Guild:** Tom Garrett, Anthony Lovell-Wood, Julian Newman, Vicki Rowse\*.

**Scottish Assn:** Ruth Marshall, Tina Stoecklin.

**Shropshire Assn:** Paul Lewis\*.

**Society of Royal Cumberland Youths:** Ian Roulstone\*, Derek Sibson, Jane Wilkinson.

**South African Guild:** James Champion.

**Southwell and Nottingham Dio. Guild:** Jim Crabtree, Anne Sladen.

**Suffolk Guild:** Chris Birkby, Neal Dodge.

**Surrey Assn:** Kate Flavell, Paul Flavell, Jason Hughes#.

**Sussex County Assn:** Alison Everett, Sue Gadd\*, David Kirkcaldy, Rob Lane, Stephanie Pendlebury.

**Swansea & Brecon Diocesan Guild:** David Katz.

**Truro Dio. Guild:** Robert Perry, Ian Self.

**Univ. Bristol Society:** Imogen Brooke, Patrick Wheeler.

**Univ. London Society:** Anne Hughes\*.

**Veronese Assn:** David Roskelly.

**Winchester & Portsmouth Dio. Guild:** Michael Church, Michael Hopkins Till, Allan Yalden.

**Worcestershire & Districts Assn:** Kathryn Cocks\*, Alison Hodge, James Mort\*.

**Yorkshire Assn:** Robert Cater#, Barrie Dove, Simon Plows\*, Elaine Scott\*, Peter Scott\*.

[\* — new member; # — returning member]

The Barrow & District Society, Dorset County Association, East Grinstead & District Guild, Four Shires Guild and the St David's Diocesan Guild were not represented.

The Chair was taken by the President, Simon Linford, who welcomed all members to the

meeting. He especially welcomed John Baldwin, Fellow and Dove Master, and wished Tony Crowther, Hertford County Association, a happy birthday. The President advised members wishing to speak on the procedure and reminded them to give their name and that of the society they represented. He informed members that the proceedings were being live streamed to the Internet and were also being recorded to assist with the Minutes. The President reminded members to declare any relevant conflicts of interest. The President explained how the electronic voting system would operate during the meeting. He noted that, according to the Rules, only representative members were able to vote.

## 1. Opening Prayer

Revd Canon David Grimwood, Kent County Association, led members in prayer.

## 2. Applications to affiliate

The Secretary, Mary Bone, reported that an application had been received from the Guild of Clerical Ringers. A letter signed by both the President and Secretary of the Guild confirmed a membership of 102 as at 1 June 2020; that the purpose of the Guild is to promote the ringing of bells; and that the Guild undertook to abide by the Council's Rules and Decisions. The application was put to the vote and approved (95% in favour; 3% against; 2% abstentions). The President welcomed Revd Jon Rose to the meeting as the representative of the Guild.

## 3. Welcome to new members

The President gave a warm welcome to new and returning members (indicated by \* and # respectively in the list of those present).

## 4. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from David Kelly (Fellow), Ian Oram (Ex-officio, Steward of the Fred E Dukes International Bell Fund), Peter Limage (Barrow & District), Tim Jones (Devon Assn), Chris Povey (Four Shires Guild), Lianne Brooks (Leicester DG), Ken Davenport (Oxford DG), Stephen Pettman (Suffolk Guild), and Adrian and Shân Nash (Winchester & Portsmouth DG). Further apologies were presented from John Vesey (Llandaff & Monmouth DA).

## 5. In Memoriam

The Secretary read the names of the following members and former members who had died since the last meeting: Melvyn Hiller (Salisbury DG 1972–1975, Kent CA 1975–1981); Arthur Fidler (Devon Assn 1969–1971); John Barnes (SRCY 1969–2016, Life Member 2016–2018, Fellow 2018–2019); Norman Mallett (Guild of Devonshire Ringers 1961–1972); David Willis (Additional Member 2011–2017, Guild of Devonshire Ringers 2017–2019); George Pipe

(Honorary Member 1961–1979); R Roger Savory (Winchester & Portsmouth DG 1965–1975 and 1978–1980); Andrew Stubbs (ASCY 1975–2008, Life Member 2008–2018, Fellow 2018–2020); John Foot (Liverpool University Society 1981–1987); Revd Richard Dorrington (Shropshire Assn 1975–1979); Eric Sterland (East Derbys & West Notts Assn 1967–1969); Prof Ronald Johnston (Australia & New Zealand Assn 1975–1979, Yorkshire Assn 1984–1993, Ex-officio 1993–1996, Honorary Member 1996–1999; Vice-President 1990–1993, President 1993–1996); Roland Backhurst (Bath & Wells DA 2006–2019); Geoffrey Dodd (Winchester & Portsmouth DG 1972–1978). Members kept a period of silence in memory of these members and former members.

*(The minutes, reports and accounts were published with the Central Council Meeting Papers on 7th August 2020. The relevant page numbers are shown against each item.)*

## 6. Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting (pp7–11)

The Minutes were approved on the proposal of Christopher O'Mahony and seconded by Doug Davis. Jason Hughes requested that voting numbers at this meeting be reported as well as percentages. The Minutes were approved nem con (87% (117) in favour; 13% (17) abstentions).

Anthony Lovell-Wood reported that he had been unable to vote via his connection to the online meeting and queried if other members were similarly affected; the technical assistance team undertook to investigate.

## 7. Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

No member wished to raise any matter.

## 8. Annual Trustees' Report for 2019 (pp11–13)

The President introduced the formal annual report of the Council to the Charity Commission for 2019 and noted that it had been approved by the Trustees on 17 May 2020. He invited the Secretary to comment on and update the report. The Secretary noted that a section on risk assessment had now been included and reported on changes to the membership figures in paragraph 7: there were 4 Fellows, 14 Ex-officio members, 170 representative members and 29 vacancies. With the addition of the Clerical Guild 66 societies were now affiliated to the Council. The Society of Sherwood Youths had given formal notice in June of disaffiliation, the reasons being the direction of Council activity and the cost of affiliation to a Society without an annual membership fee. The Swansea & Brecon Diocesan Guild was now only entitled to one member. The Secretary noted the names of a number of members with long service who had stood down prior to the meeting: Jeremy Cheesman (Surrey Assn

1981–2020); George Dawson (Society of Sherwood Youths 1968–1981; Southwell & Nottingham DG 1981–2020); Ernie de Legh-Runciman (Lancashire Assn 2002–2020); Graham (Ben) Duke (Hertford CA 2002–2011; SRCY 2011–2020); Alan Ellis (North American Guild 1999–2008; Honorary / Additional member 2008–2011; North American Guild 2014–2019); Andrew Howes (Salisbury DG 1989–2020); Catherine Lewis (Kent CA 1999–2020); Chris Mew (Surrey Assn 1969–1982; Coventry DG 2008–2020; President 2014–2017); Angela Newing (University of Bristol Society 1975–1987; Honorary 1987–1990; Gloucester & Bristol DA 1990–1993 and 1996–2020); Beryl Norris (Guildford DG 2002–2020); Helen Perry (Truro DG 1996–2008 and 2014–2020); Richard Wallis (Surrey Assn 1996–2020); Mervyn Way (Devon Assn 1993–2020); Peter Wilkinson (Chester DG 1999–2004 and 2005–2020); Robin Woolley (Society of Sherwood Youths 1993–1999; Southwell & Nottingham DG 2002–2017; Society of Sherwood Youths 2017–2020). She concluded by urging societies to elect members to fill the vacancies: the Executive wished to be held to account and wanted members who would participate and contribute to the Council's strategic direction and work. The President proposed that the members receive and adopt the Annual Trustees' Report; this was seconded by Philip Green and approved nem con (96% (128) in favour; 4% (6) abstentions).

## 9. Accounts for 2019 (pp14–16)

The Treasurer, Andrew Smith, presented the Accounts and noted that the Independent Examiners had issued an unqualified report. The Accounts had been approved by the Trustees on 17 May 2020. He thanked the Independent Examiners for their work, particularly Jeremy Cheesman who had now retired after serving as an Independent Examiner since 2005; he additionally thanked Ian Self (Library) and Beryl Norris (Publications) for their contributions. The Treasurer reported that the Council had total assets of £435,446 at 31 December 2019. The General Fund made a small surplus of £873. Publications made a surplus of £5,934 and the Library incurred a small deficit for the year of £484. The Bell Restoration and Fred E Dukes funds paid out previously committed grants. He stated that there was no proposal this year to vary the current affiliation fees, as the Council needed to determine its future membership structure over the coming year and only then would it be prudent to propose a future affiliation fee structure.

The Treasurer proposed that the members receive and adopt the 2019 Accounts; this was seconded by Michael Church and approved (96% (131) in favour; 1% (1) against; 3% (4) abstentions).

## 10. Annual Report of the Executive and Workgroups for 2019 (pp17–37)

The President drew attention to two highlights of the year: the reception for ringers hosted by the US Ambassador and the new style of

the annual meeting and mini-Roadshow held at Goldsmiths in September. The Secretary apologised to Chris Turner whose name had been again omitted from the list of those working on the peals analysis. John Harrison suggested that, as the annual meeting was now held in September, the reporting year should in future end in May.

The President proposed adoption of the report of the Executive and workgroups for 2019. This was seconded by Allan Yalden and approved nem con (95% (126) in favour; 5% (6) abstentions).

## 11. Executive and Workgroup updates for January–August 2020

The President stated that the work of the Executive would be included in the next item on the agenda.

**Stewardship & Management:** Alison Hodge, workgroup leader, reported on major items of work in 2020: much preparatory work on risk assessments for a limited return to ringing during the Covid-19 pandemic; changes in workgroup membership; articles in *The Ringing World*; a presentation at the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) conference in March; advice and guidance in response to enquiries; and the introduction of Microsoft Teams to improve the group's working practices. Alison highlighted the second Westley Award for those new to tower bell maintenance which had been presented to Sue McClaughry of Calstock.

**Volunteer & Leadership:** the workgroup leader, Timothy Hine, reported on presentations at the ART conference (*see pp30–31 of the meeting papers*); the development of work on recruitment and retention of ringers, reflected in a number of articles in *The Ringing World*; a renewed focus on lapsed ringers; and the move to online presentations and workshops with associations. He noted that the fifth series of the *Education Column* was now being published. Work was in hand on proposals for new residential courses and the role of ringing centres was being re-visited. The group was keen to engage non-members with particular skills in its work. Tim responded to questions and comments on courses from Fred Bone, John Harrison and Robert Cater. He expressed his gratitude to the former Education Committee and the materials which they had produced, much of which had been deposited in the Council's Library, and hoped that future courses would become self-sustaining. Jane Wilkinson supported work on lapsed ringers and looked forward to future reports on this. Philip Green, who declared an interest as printer of Council publications, suggested that the *Education Column* articles should be published as booklets; Tim Hine confirmed that the author, David Smith, had this in hand and it was intended that publication would be by The Ringing World Ltd. Kate Flavell commended the joint working with ART and stressed that this should continue. The President noted that he held regular meetings with both ART and the Ringing World.

**Young Ringers — Universities and Colleges:** Ian Roulstone, workgroup leader, updated

members on work since this group was established in May 2020. He referred to the importance of student ringing as mentioned in the Council's Strategic Priorities and acknowledged the work done by Jacqui Brown in establishing the [universityringing.org](http://universityringing.org) website. He noted that work would not be restricted to universities and their ringing societies as colleges of higher education also had important student populations. The group intended to work closely with the Northern and Southern universities associations and to promote student ringing at the Ringing World National Youth Competition (RWNYC). Ian also hoped to work closely with ART and he proposed that the ART award for a university society be reviewed as only a limited number of university societies had applied during the time the award had been available. He concluded by saying that there were still opportunities for student ringing during the Covid-19 pandemic as universities and colleges would prefer to support structured student activities in a safe environment. Tina Stoecklin commented that handbell ringing had a role during the pandemic; she suggested that university societies be offered assistance in starting handbell ringing. Jim Crabtree stated that there was a definite role for local ringing societies to play in reaching out to student ringers in areas without a university ringing society; for instance, open days could be organised at suitable local towers during Freshers weeks. Richard Allton urged the group to work also with the alumni ringing societies; these had an important role in maintaining societies as the number of resident student ringers fluctuated. Bruce Butler encouraged the group to be international in scope: there were a number of US universities with rings of bells. Alison Hodge reminded members of the constraints affecting official student societies and welcomed local initiatives to support student ringing.

**Historical & Archive:** the workgroup leader, Chris Ridley, highlighted the importance of historical information both in promoting ringing to the public and in supporting the Central Council's own work. The group was currently engaged in reviewing its priorities; activities would focus on making data available, exploiting the strengths of the Council's Library, and biographies and Rolls of Honour work. Chris invited those interested in the group's work, or with specialist knowledge in particular areas, to contact him.

**Communications & Marketing:** Louise Nightingale, workgroup leader, reported that the group had re-aligned its activities to reflect the Council's updated Strategic Priorities. Planned publicity campaigns for VE Day 75 and VJ Day 75 had been halted due to the pandemic; the group had focused instead on ways to keep ringers retained and engaged during the pandemic and had increased its social media activity. Work on marketing insights to inform publicity materials and communications had begun. The group had trialled short virtual interviews, initially lasting 120 seconds; this had now changed to 240 seconds in the light of experience. Louise asked anyone willing to offer video editing skills to contact her. She also mentioned a proposal to create an image library — a repository of high quality approved images.

**Senior Stakeholder Liaison:** the workgroup leader, Mark Regan, reminded members of the group's purpose: to establish contact and build relationships with people who can influence bellringing and its future. Key relationships would be with the Church of England, government departments, amenity groups and major funders such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The group currently had 5 members, including himself. Most work since May had been with the Church of England Covid recovery team. There were also plans for trial training sessions for new clergy in the Worcester diocese. Mark stated that ringing was a performing art with a long history and formed part of the cultural heritage. The group further intended to develop contact with dioceses in view of the reviews of church infrastructure and possible future church closures. Mark concluded by urging ringers to write to their MPs and bishops stressing that ringing formed part of the country's cultural heritage and landscape. Fred Bone requested advice on the content of such letters. Andrew Wilby subsequently pointed out that MPs do not respond well to mass mailings; any such letters should emphasise the local context. Robert Perry and others welcomed the work done by the recovery team in ensuring that ringing had restarted; there had been a positive reaction by members of the public to hearing bells again. Robert asked if it was known how many towers were now ringing? The President stated that perhaps one third of churches were open again. Alison Hodge suggested that Council representatives could conduct surveys in their areas and that ringers could be allocated to open churches. David Katz reminded the group of the different jurisdictions in which ringing operated; it was not restricted to the Church of England. Adrian Udall queried whether it was appropriate for the Council to instruct ringers not to ring in certain circumstances. Both the President and Mark Regan commented on the difficulties of providing suitable advice and guidance, and the President added that it was helpful if ringers were also PCC members. Jane Wilkinson pointed out that diocesan secretaries were in many cases more useful contacts than the bishops. The Revd Jon Rose offered his services to the group.

**Technical & Taxonomy:** Graham John, workgroup leader, highlighted work in two areas: the Framework for Method Ringing and the Dove database. The group were working on minor improvements and clarifications to the Framework, including a new performance norm which would have covered reporting of the peal of Stedman Triples at Adelaide in June 2019 (a successful peal but failed long length) and categorisation of performances by ringing style, eg tower bells, handbells, key presses, etc. A draft of this second version of the Framework would be issued for comment before the final version was submitted to the Council Executive for approval. Work on the review of extension processes had now been deferred to 2021. There had been major progress on the new Dove database, especially since Dickon Love had joined the team as an additional Dove steward, with tower level data now transferred to the new system. Development work would now focus on pNBR data (proto National Bell Register) and when complete this would remove reliance on

the legacy system developed and maintained by John Baldwin over many years. Graham particularly thanked Richard Smith, Tim Jackson and Dickon Love for their work on the new database. Peter Scott commented that, as a result of the Framework, some call-change ringing was now within its scope; Graham replied that this could best be covered in a separate document with input from call-change practitioners in Devon. Robert Perry added that call-change ringing was widely practised in Cornwall with many intricate patterns being rung. Dorothy Hall suggested that work on key presses as a ringing style should distinguish between tower and handbell style, for example on Ringing-Room, and Graham undertook to investigate this with the team.

**Young Ringers — Schools & Youth Groups:** the workgroup leader, Colin Newman, reported on initial activity in several areas: Scouts: plans were being developed for a series of staged badges which could be rolled out nationally; Guides: an approach had been made about a potential partnership; contact had been made with the Boys and Girls Brigades; schools: lesson plans were being collated which could be delivered by non-ringing teachers; achievement goals were being defined for different levels of attainment for the gold, silver and bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards; and the group was liaising with ART who had applied to be a Duke of Edinburgh activity provider. Colin added that the group then aimed to build an online searchable resource portfolio; to define and develop awareness materials, including a youth-focused promotional video; extend a school engagement strategy; and prepare a number of "how to" guides. Sue Gadd spoke as a Duke of Edinburgh award scheme leader: she suggested that ringing could be more successful in engaging with young people as a volunteer activity rather than as a specific skill, where there was a great deal of competition. Anne Hughes asked about handbell ringing in schools; Colin replied that this was on the group's agenda. The President added that even younger students could participate in this and also requested that experiences from outside England and the UK be shared with the workgroup. Annie Hall stressed that having ringing teachers was a key factor in school access and engagement; work had already been done with ART and she urged the group not to duplicate this. Beverley Furniss commented that church youth groups should also be included.

The President thanked all the workgroup leaders and members for their work as volunteers for ringing and the Central Council.

## 12. Forward Plan for 2021

The President introduced this item, mandated by the new Rules adopted in 2018 (rule 6.1 b) (3)). He highlighted five main areas of activity during 2020 and for work during 2021: ringing recovery in the Covid-19 pandemic; taking forward proposals from the 2017 CRAG report; workgroup re-organisation; strategic priorities; and some other initiatives. On ringing recovery he mentioned proposals to reduce the required distance between ringers and to move

towards local risk assessment. Andrew Wilby supported the Council's work on ringing recovery and noted that in recent years ringing had been increasingly seen as secular, whereas it was in fact a church activity taking place in buildings owned by the churches. Ringers should engage with their clergy and parishes as future decisions on possible church closures, and loss of rings, would be taken locally. Nick Wilkins suggested that more ringers could be kept involved with their bands if they also rang for midweek services. The President stated that CRAG proposals on direct membership, reducing the size of the "Council of Representatives", and branding would be considered with a view to bringing firm proposals to the 2021 meeting. A number of consultation meetings would be arranged, first with a number for Council members and then with further groups of ringers. The President reminded members that the original workgroup structure was always intended to be flexible; new groups were planned to focus on marketing, recruitment, new ringers and breaking down barriers to progress. This would affect the current work of both the Communications & Marketing and Volunteer & Leadership workgroups. A support group was also proposed; this would include an assistant or membership secretary as well as those working on quarter peal analysis and events management. The President highlighted the sixth of the Strategic Priorities (see p37 of the meeting papers) on relations with the Church; the pandemic had shown that it was vital to have strong contacts at both local and higher levels. He noted that there had been much good publicity when ringing resumed. On other initiatives, the President mentioned Mobile Belfry 2.0, new ringing courses, development of the Dove database, research on women in ringing, the "cast of 1,000" proposal to engage experienced ringers regularly to aid others' progress, and an enhanced focus on call-change ringing. In reply to a question from Peter Scott, he confirmed that the Executive was committed to reviewing all workgroups every 2 years. Carole Hallam suggested that the CRAG proposals might well be affected by the pandemic: the Council's priority should be on ringing and its recovery.

### 13. Financial update 2020 and outline General Fund budget for 2021

The Treasurer introduced this item, mandated under the new Rules, and referred members to p38 of the meeting papers. He pointed out that the left part of the table showed a comparison between the agreed budget and current projection for the General Fund for 2020; an underspend of around £1000 was predicted, due to restricted activity as a result of the Covid pandemic. Council meeting income and expenditure was predicted to be minimal as the meeting was being held by video conference. Interest rates were currently stable at around 1%. The second part of the report gave a view of an outline General Fund budget for 2021. Formal approval by the Executive would be required at their November 2020 meeting, noting that there are

potentially some exciting projects coming to fruition which were likely to impact on the outline figures.

### 14. Election of Trustees

**President** — Simon Linford, who had been proposed by Nick Elks and seconded by David Smith, was the only nominee. He was declared elected.

**Deputy President** — David Kirkcaldy, who had been proposed by Kate Flavell and seconded by David Grimwood, was the only nominee. The President declared him elected.

**Treasurer** — Fergus Stracey, who had been proposed by Lynne Hughes and seconded by Ian Self, was the only nominee. The President declared him elected.

The President thanked Andrew Smith, retiring Treasurer, for all his work during the past 3 years (applause).

### 15. Election of Independent Examiners

Caroline Stockmann had been proposed by Fred Bone and seconded by Doug Davis. There being no other nominations, the President declared her elected.

Michael Church pointed out that the phrase "up to two" Independent Examiners in the supporting statement (see p6 of the meeting papers) was incorrect: the Council's Rules specified 2 Independent Examiners and the Executive would be able to appoint another Examiner to fill the vacancy. Caroline Stockmann clarified her statement; the Executive had considered proposing a change to the Rules and Standing Orders to permit only one Independent Examiner to be elected but had decided against this in the circumstances of an electronic meeting. For many years the examination work had been divided between the two Examiners with one working on Publications and the other examining all other accounts and papers. Caroline considered, in the light of her experience, that it was excessive and unnecessary for two examiners each to do all the work.

### 16. Governance Review

The President reminded members of the text of Standing Order G1, which required a review of the Council's rules, standing orders and governance and an assessment of the transfer of powers of representative members to individual members. The review was mandated to commence in May 2019 and to be held every 3 years; the current review would conclude in 2022. External assessment of the Council's governance was still under consideration. The President, supported by Michael Church, noted that the number of Independent Examiners required would be part of the review. Michael Church additionally referred to the background to the current rule; it had been considered appropriate that there should be more than one Examiner elected from the membership to examine the Council's own accounts.

### 17. Motion

Before inviting Clyde Whittaker to propose the Motion, the President asked the meeting to consider if it was appropriate to debate this in a meeting held by video conference or whether the item should be deferred until such time as the debate could be held in person. Andrew Wilby suggested that the arguments for and against the motion should be heard before any procedural motion was put. Jane Wilkinson considered that it was difficult to hold a proper debate via video conference and that it should be deferred; she proposed that the question of deferral be now put to the vote. Peter Scott commented that although the matter had been raised in *The Ringing World* this was a difficult time for consultation; it would be valuable to consider the fundamental issues raised over a longer period. Both Douglas Davis and James Ramsbottom stated that the motion could be debated well via video conference. Robert Lewis referred to the President's earlier comments on the CRAG proposals and the size of the Council: as passing the motion would increase the size of the Council these items should be considered together. Phillip Barnes declared a conflict of interest as chairman of the Kent County Association and seconded Jane Wilkinson's proposal that the question be put. Accordingly the motion as proposed by Jane Wilkinson and seconded by Phillip Barnes:

That the Council prefer discussion of Motion A to be deferred to a future year

was put to the vote.

The motion was lost (30% (42) in favour; 67% (93) against; 3% (4) abstentions). The President declared that Motion A would now be presented and debated.

(A) Clyde Whittaker proposed:

That with effect from the close of the 123rd Council Meeting on 5th September 2020:

1. Rule 1.1 (Definitions) is amended as follows to define a Registered Small Society, its Annual Subscription and Society Contacts:

1.1. The following new definitions are INSERTED:

Registered Small Society: A bell ringing society which appears on the Council's Register of Small Societies in accordance with Rule 4.

Small Society Representative: A non-voting member appointed to represent a Registered Small Society in accordance with Rules 5.7 and 5.8.

1.2. The following existing definition is REPLACED as shown below:

Annual Subscription: A subscription defined by Rules 4.10 or 4.11.

1.3. The following existing definition is REPLACED as shown below:

Society Contact: The contact of an Affiliated Society or Registered Small

Society, whose details have been notified by that society to the Secretary, and to whom notices to that society in connection with the Council's business shall be sent.

2. To set out the terms governing the admission of Registered Small Societies, the following rules are INSERTED after Rule 4.4 (and subsequent rules re-numbered accordingly):

#### Registered Small Societies

4.5 Subject to Rule 4.8 any bell ringing society whose application has been approved under Rules 4.6 and 4.7 shall be listed on the Council's Register of Small Societies.

4.6 Applications from smaller bell ringing societies to become Registered Small Societies shall be made to the Secretary accompanied by a certificate signed by at least two of the society's officers confirming that:

a) its Society Membership is less than 75 (25 in the case of societies operating wholly outside the British Isles);  
b) its purpose is to promote the ringing of bells by a group or association of bell ringers; and

c) it undertakes to abide by the Council's Rules and Decisions.

4.7 A bell ringing society making an application under Rule 4.6 shall be entered on the Council's Register of Small Societies on such date as the Executive shall determine provided that the society's application has been approved in accordance with the Standing Orders.

4.8 A society shall be removed from the Register of Small Societies if:

a) it becomes an Affiliated Society; or  
b) its Society Membership rises above 100; or  
c) any Annual Subscription due under Rule 4.11 is more than 12 months in arrears; or

d) a Motion to remove the society's registration is agreed by a majority of Representative Members present and voting at a Council Meeting; or

e) a decision to remove the society's registration is made by the Executive in accordance with the Standing Orders; or

f) a request to remove the society's registration is given to the Secretary by at least two of the society's officers.

4.9 An Executive Decision made in accordance with Rule 4.8e) shall cease to have effect unless ratified by Resolution at the first Council Meeting thereafter.

3. To provide for the additional Rules shown above, the reference to "Rule 4.5" in existing Rule 4.4 b) is AMENDED to "Rule 4.10".

4. To empower the Council to set an Annual Subscription for Registered Small Societies, the following new rule is INSERTED before Rule 5:

4.11 Where determined by the Standing Orders, each Registered Small Society shall pay an annual subscription, which shall become due on 1st January and shall

be of such sum as may be stated by the Standing Orders in relation to that society's registration.

5. To permit one person from each Registered Small Society to participate in Council Meetings (in a non-voting capacity), the line "Small Society Representatives;" is INSERTED after Rule 5.1a) so that Rule 5.1 reads as follows:

5.1 The Council shall consist of the following members:

- a) Representative Members;
- b) Small Society Representatives;
- c) Individual Members enrolled or appointed as may be determined by the Standing Orders; and
- d) the Council's Trustees, Stewards and Workgroup Leaders, who shall be ex-officio members.

6. To set out the arrangements by which representatives of Registered Small Societies are appointed and retire, the following rules are INSERTED after Rule 5.6 (and subsequent rules renumbered accordingly):

#### Small Society Representatives

5.7 Each Registered Small Society shall be entitled to send one Small Society Representative to attend each Council Meeting provided that no later than six weeks before that meeting's date:

a) where determined by the Standing Orders, that society's Annual Subscription for the year in which the Council Meeting takes place has been received by the Treasurer; and

b) its Society Membership has been notified to the Secretary.

5.8 Subject to Rule 5.7:

a) a Registered Small Society may register or amend the name and contact details of its Small Society Representative at any time by giving notice to the Secretary; and

b) each Small Society Representative shall be deemed appointed from the point at which their name is confirmed in accordance with these Rules, and shall remain appointed until the Registered Society notifies the Secretary of a change.

7. As a Registered Small Society may not also be an Affiliated Society the line "it becomes a Registered Small Society; or" is INSERTED after Rule 4.4a) so that Rule 4.4 reads as follows:

4.4 A society shall cease to be an Affiliated Society if:

a) its Society Membership falls below 50 (25 in the case of societies operating wholly outside the British Isles); or

b) it becomes a Registered Small Society; or

c) its Annual Subscription under Rule 4.10 is more than 12 months in arrears; or

d) a Motion for disaffiliation is agreed by no less than two-thirds of Representative Members present and voting at a Council Meeting; or

e) notice of disaffiliation is given to the Secretary by at least two of the society's officers.

#### Annual Subscription for Registered Small Societies

That in accordance with Rule 7.13 and with effect from the close of the 123rd Council Meeting on 5th September 2020, the Council APPROVES an Annual Subscription of £20 for each Registered Small Society.

#### Admission Criteria for Registered Small Societies

That the Council NOTES the detailed admission criteria for Registered Small Societies, approved by the Executive on 26th July 2020 and published in Edition 4 of the Standing Orders, which following approval of this Motion will become effective on 1st November 2020.

Clyde explained that the Motion introduced an associate status for societies with fewer than 75 members. The principles governing this would be laid down in the Rules while the detailed admission process would be covered in new parts of the Standing Orders. He listed 8 criteria for success: does the scheme achieve its stated objectives; has there been sufficient consultation; are the controls over admission sufficient; have the interests of affiliated societies been protected; is the scheme compatible with CRAG objectives; is it resilient; is it future-proof; and have the alternatives been considered. Clyde then examined each of these criteria in turn. He stated that the proposal would make the Council more representative, would allow continued association with the Council by smaller affiliated societies with declining membership and that recommended improvements made during the consultation process had been incorporated. He went on to point out that the Standing Orders would provide clear admission criteria; a two-month period of notice of registration and powers to remove a registration would be introduced. A registered small society would be able to elect a representative to attend Council meetings but these representatives would not be able to vote. The scheme complemented the CRAG objective of individual membership and would not adversely affect the aim of Council meetings becoming shorter and more effective. Clyde remarked that Council members would retain effective oversight of the provisions. He concluded by showing that the scheme met all the above criteria and added that it would be included in the governance review due to conclude in 2022.

Linda Garton, seconding the Motion, referred to her original opposition to the proposal (*The Ringing World*, 10 July 2020, p676), her subsequent letter (*The Ringing World*, 24 July 2020, p730) and the reasons why she now supported the motion and had agreed to second it. Linda mentioned that the scheme contained provisions to protect the interests of existing territorial societies. She supported Clyde's remarks on continued association with the Council by societies with declining membership. Linda hoped that smaller territorial societies such as Singapore and more university societies would apply to register and take their part in Council deliberations.

During Linda's remarks an amendment to the motion was displayed on screen:

That the Council APPROVES Motion A on the Agenda Paper, as modified by amendments 1 and 2 below:

1. The third part to the Motion (the paragraph headed "Admission Criteria for Registered Small Societies" is REPLACED with the following

paragraph:

"That the Council notes the Executive's intention to conduct a further review of the proposed Standing Order S2.1b before its introduction and in particular:

TO REPLACE the expectation that a small society has implemented a Safeguarding Policy meeting the Council's requirements;

WITH the expectation that a small society has Safeguarding arrangements that reflect local best practice for the jurisdiction(s) where that society operates."

2. The following fourth part is appended to the Motion:

"That the Council notes the Executive's intention to review the success of the scheme for Registered Small Societies established by this motion and to report to Council as part of the Governance Review scheduled for 2022 in accordance with Standing Order G1.1."

Fred Bone raised a point of order: who had proposed and seconded the amendment? Linda Garton clarified that she and Clyde Whittaker had proposed and seconded this amendment. Fred Bone pointed out, supported by Jane Wilkinson (past President), that amendments should be discussed and voted upon once put to the meeting. Clyde Whittaker referred to Standing Order C3.1: the proposer and seconder were able to amend their own Motion. Jane Wilkinson accepted this but added that the amendment was produced after the earlier consultation period had closed; it should therefore be debated and voted upon.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.04 pm for the annual meeting of The Ringing World Ltd; it resumed at 3.45 pm.

The President stated that Standing Order C3.1 did indeed allow the proposer and seconder to amend their motion. He then invited questions on the motion; there would be time after these for more general comments.

Beverly Faber queried that no minimum membership number for a small society was given. Clyde Whittaker replied that the clear criteria in the proposed Standing Orders required a small society to be properly organised with a written constitution; its status and membership would therefore be open to scrutiny. Fred Bone asked if there should be automatic transition arrangements for existing affiliated societies and whether the previous Decision H on Ringing Alliances had been considered as an alternative. Clyde responded that the rule and standing order changes proposed allowed societies with changing membership numbers time to react to their circumstances and plan accord-

ingly. Small societies which increased their membership would have to apply to affiliate to the Council and it was appropriate that all societies should have to apply. He added that the previous Decision H did not allow representatives of alliances to participate in Council proceedings. Linda Garton endorsed this response: the arrangements would give small societies a choice. Richard Allton asked about dual representation of UK-based societies. In reply, Linda Garton noted that the proposals contained provisions that small societies should not frustrate the activities of other societies; she added that different societies had distinctive characteristics. The President commented that the proposals would enable better representation of those currently unrepresented. Robert Lewis referred to the statement that the existing affiliation structure remained unmodified; this was not the case as the participation of small society representatives would impact the ability of voting members to hold the Executive to account during the limited time of an annual meeting. Robert suggested that a separate meeting might be held for small society representatives. Andrew Wilby remarked that, although there might well be multiple representation of individual ringers, they were elected to represent their societies. He then asked if any market research had been conducted to establish how many small societies might wish to apply. Clyde Whittaker replied that a number of small societies had shown interest in the proposal but no research had been done. If approved, the proposals would provide an opportunity for more societies to engage with the Council if they so wished. Clyde hoped that more university societies would take up this option. Tina Stoecklin suggested that the proposals did not go far enough: the Council should be open and inclusive but the proposed measures were not sufficiently inclusive and contained higher barriers to entry than was the case for affiliation; all membership criteria should be examined. Jim Crabtree supported Tina's comments but held that the motion was a first step towards greater inclusion. Peter Scott considered that there should be mutual regard between large and small societies and that a new joint enterprise should go forward involving all ringers, in keeping with the spirit of radical reform in the CRAG report. Peter concluded by saying that the motion provided a small step in the right direction and should be supported.

The President put the motion, as amended above, to the vote. It was approved (76% (100) in favour; 21% (28) against; 3% (4) abstentions). The President thanked Clyde and Linda for their work on this.

## 18. Future meetings

The Deputy President, David Kirkcaldy, outlined initial plans for the 2021 meeting. A provisional booking had been made to hold the meeting in St Mary's Nottingham. No arrangements would be made for a roadshow but practical sessions for local ringers could be arranged at short notice if circumstances permitted.

No invitation had as yet been received for 2022.

Jane Wilkinson pointed out that there had in fact been no opportunity for comments, as opposed to questions, on the motion at item 17.

## Attendance

The table is appended below.

## 19. Any Other Business

(a) The Secretary thanked Fred Bone for again typesetting the annual meeting papers and Colin Chapman for the image on the front cover.

(b) The Secretary urged members to notify any changes in their contact details promptly and to check that their association contact was receiving Council emails.

(c) The Secretary noted that the nomination deadline in 2021 would be six weeks before the meeting. Nominations would be required for Treasurer, two Ordinary Trustees and two Independent Examiners.

(d) The Secretary reminded members of the procedure now in force since the adoption of the new Rules in 2018: an annual membership return was required and this plus the formal notification of a society's membership numbers and payment of the affiliation fee must be received six weeks before the meeting — members would not be able to speak or vote at the meeting if these had not been received by the deadline.

## Votes of Thanks

The President thanked Colin Newman for all his assistance with the organisation and running of this meeting held by Zoom video conferencing.

There being no further business, the President declared the meeting closed at 4.27 pm.

## Summary of Attendance

	<i>Members</i>		
	<i>Societies</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Fully represented	29	71	—
Partly represented	32	73	21
Not represented	5	—	5
	66	144	26
Fellows		2	2
Ex-officio Members		12	2
		158	30