

# **1THE RINGING WORLD LIMITED**

## **Minutes of the thirty-eighth Annual General Meeting**

Held in the Teaching and Learning Building, Clifton Campus, Nottingham Trent University, NG11 8NS on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 at 11:00 hrs.

**Present:** P Jopp (Chairman of the Board of Directors), Ms ER Ainsworth, GRD Lay, Mrs CF Roulstone (Company Secretary) and 139 Members of the Company (list held separately).

**Apologies for absence** had been received from the following members:

Alan Regin, Ex-officio, Steward of the Rolls of Honour; David Bleby, ANZAB; Rhona McEune, Barrow & District Society; Revd Jon Rose, Clerical Guild; Andrew Hall, Derby Diocesan Association; Sue Hall, Derby Diocesan Association; Joanne Tucker, Devon Association; Helen Bridgman, Essex Association; Chris Povey, Four Shires Guild; John Couperthwaite, Guildford Diocesan Guild; Jen Thomas, Kent County Association; Sam Brook, Lancashire Association; Lianne Brooks, Leicester Diocesan Guild; Robert Lewis, Middlesex County Association & London Diocesan Guild; Jane Sibson, Peterborough Diocesan Guild; Robert Crighton, Salisbury Diocesan Guild; Anthony Lovell-Wood, Salisbury Diocesan Guild; Julian Newman, Salisbury Diocesan Guild; Ruth Marshall, Scottish Association; Paul Lewis, Shropshire Association; Derek Sibson, Society of Royal Cumberland Youths; David Katz, Swansea & Brecon Diocesan Guild; Ian Self, Truro Diocesan Guild; Hayley Young, Truro Diocesan Guild; Michael Church, Winchester & Portsmouth DG.

Apologies had also been received from RD Crighton and RJ Wallis, directors.

Members of the Company were required to consent to be a member of The Ringing World Ltd and in the event of the Company being dissolved, undertake to pay a sum not exceeding £10.00 as a contribution to the assets of the Company for the payment of debts and liabilities. No members of the Company who were present at the meeting declined their consent.

### **1. Minutes of the 2021 AGM**

The Minutes of the thirty-seventh Annual General Meeting of the Company were approved by the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

### **2. Company Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021, together with the Report of the Directors and the Independent Examiner**

The Chairman presented the accounts and reported a £12,637 deficit. This was mainly due to ringing not quite recovering from the pandemic. Nevertheless it was better than the serious loss taken the previous year. On a positive front, subscriptions, merchandise sales and donations were up. However, income from advertising had gone down as people were reluctant to advertise when there was no ringing going on.

Expenditure was some £4,469 greater than last year as a result of salary increases and typesetting costs. Printing costs were also up and although the company had negotiated a new contract, this had not come into effect until the latter part of the year. Other expenditure included franking costs and computer costs. However, the company was still in a strong financial position.

The Chairman gave an update of the company's financial position to date. Income was better than budgeted with subscriptions, donations, merchandise and other income all in a favourable position. Expenditure was also looking better than forecast.

Overall the company was forecasting a £10K surplus this year. Merchandise and sales were going very well and donations were nearly back up to their previous levels. However, the company would continue with its cost and expenditure control.

The Chairman proposed that the company accounts were adopted and this was carried.

### **3. Chairman's Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

The Chairman presented his report. There had been a number of employee changes during the year. The compositor, Chris Caryer had retired in January and Sarah Carrick was now doing this role on a contract basis which had saved money. In May, Jo Leigh, a marketing and admin assistant, had been hired, and it was hoped that advertising revenue would increase once she was more familiar with the setup. Chris Teesdale had resigned as Assistant Editor in May, and Trisha Shannon had been appointed to the role. Finally, Will Bosworth was starting a new post as a lay clerk in St Patricks Cathedral, Dublin, but would continue in his role as Editor. The pandemic had shown that the company could work efficiently remotely.

The Chairman also thanked the volunteers who continued to support the Ringing World: Richard Smith who supported BellBoard, which he wrote, Bill Hibbert who did other back end software changes, Doug Davies who proof read the quarter peals and Phil Moyse and Nigel Herriott who supported BellBoard enquiries. Additionally, Lee Pinnington had changed over the accounting systems free of charge and David Hull had organised the RWNYP for a number of years. David had announced that he was standing down next year.

Publications had been very successful: These included the Education Column Collection, The Core 7 and Beyond, The Little Purple Ringing Book, Methodoku puzzle books, and Criblines Pocket Books. The company had also acquired the Viggers record books and these could now be bought from the Ringing World.

The RWNYP had been very successful and the Chairman thanked its sponsors: Whitechapel Bells, Founders Company, Girdlers Company, Westley Engineering and Talent Innovations. The 2023 contest would be held in York and in London the following year.

The Chairman went on to speak about the progress that had been made in 2022 and how company was just seeing the benefit of things that had been implemented in 2021. It had a very good relationship with Pyramid Press. The publication had gone out on time every week, and the paper used was environmentally compliant. Pyramid Press had also helped set up direct communication to Letts publisher who were going to take on the diary.

The Chairman noted that Royal Mail appeared to be struggling as an organisation and although the contract change had reduced costs, Royal Mail were not always consistent with their deliveries.

The implementation of Zero had provided cost benefits as well as the ability to analyse the financial data. As a result, there was a lot less work involved in auditing.

The Board was currently investigating commercial subscription management systems to replace its legacy Access database. This would provide the opportunity for enhanced subscription options and improve customer/subscriber communication.

An increased level of ringing in 2022, especially around the Jubilee, had boosted donations.

Improved advertising rates had now been agreed as they had previously been out of kilter with the market. Jo Leigh would be promoting the rates with the company's regular advertisers and then move on to other potential advertisers.

The Chairman provided an analysis of peal and quarter peal totals by month from 2019 to 2022. The graphs showed that peals and quarter peals were now at 60-70% of the levels that they had been in 2019. Donations were back up to 2019 levels as the suggested donation had increased and people were giving more despite less performances.

Nick Elks, Peterborough Diocesan Guild, asked for clarity on the improved advertising rates. The Chairman stated that the rates were more consistently aligned with the general market. The Editor explained that this made the larger adverts more affordable with good colour content and the overall reading experience for subscribers was better as it was easier for them to see what was available.

The Chairman's report was approved by the meeting.

#### **4. Ideas for the Future**

Elva Ainsworth talked about the need to understand the views and wishes of ringers, both subscribers and non-subscribers. Plans were already underway to survey all ringers to test out some key strategic options, get answers to some key questions and start to formulate a vision and strategy for post-covid sustainability. A series of focus groups had already been held to gather the current relevant issues and a draft survey had been drawn up using "QuestionPro". The survey, which would be 10-15 minutes long, would be piloted and revised accordingly, and it was hoped that the finalised product would be launched by Christmas 2022. A summary of the findings would be published and reflected upon to formulate a strategy to serve the exercise.

Tina Stoecklin, Scottish Association, suggested that people should be asked what information they feel they are missing, as they might be looking for information that they are not getting.

Sue Gadd/Stephanie Pendlebury, Sussex County Association commented that 10-15 minutes was too long for a survey.

#### **5. Appointment of Directors**

The Chairman thanked Richard Wallis and Claire Roulstone, retiring, for their time on the Board. Graham Bradshaw was elected by paper ballot.

Mary Bone was taking over as Company Secretary.

#### **6. To give the directors authority to appoint an Independent Examiner**

The Chairman informed the meeting that the company had used Langdowns DFK Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors for many years. However, they produced the whole report and were very expensive. Technology had moved on and the production of the report

was now a lot more straightforward. The Chairman asked members for approval to use an independent examiner and research the market before appointing one. This was approved.

## **7. Any other business**

Linda Garton, Bedfordshire Association, said that there had been a lot of positives and thanked everyone who had been involved with the Ringing World this year.

The meeting closed at 11:55 hrs.