

Approved Minutes of NEC meeting held on 1st July 2023 on Zoom

Present: Keith Rowland (Chair), Anthony Hayes (Treasurer), Diane Holt (Membership Secretary), Martin Winter (SER), Alan Hartley (WHMF) Rona Gager and Christine Lazenby (NER), John and Jane Willis (SWR), John Elcock and Laura Buist (SR), Nicola Wright and Judy Gees (EMR) Irene Merson and Kate Worthington (NWR), Linda McCord and John Thompson (EAR), David Hampson (WMR) Roger Lazenby (NER), Christine Reid.

1. Chair's welcome

The Chair, Keith Rowland, welcomed everyone to his first meeting as our new Chair.

2. Apologies for Absence

John Atkinson, Beth McCord, Malcolm Wilson, Alan and Gay Cooper, Lysbeth Wilson.

3. Minutes of last meeting dated 1st April 2023

Accepted after a minor typo.

Proposed Nicola Wright Seconded Diane Holt.

Judy was thanked for typing the minutes for the 1st April 2023 NEC meeting.

4. Regional Matters

East Midlands

The new EM Chair Nicola Wright was appointed at the EM AGM on 29th April 2023 in Ruskington. She introduced herself and gave some biographical details. She has plans to visit all teams in the region with a view to ascertaining why they do not go to EM rallies. She wishes to encourage attendance and to grow the membership of the region. She has plans to update the EM website, magazine and facebook page. Nicola aims to help teams to host rallies in the future.

The EM Regional Team has a new committee and is being chaired by Samuel Davies, with help from Marie Allen, Jane Heald, John Atkinson and Sandra Cox.

The EM region has a rally on 14th October 2023 to be hosted by Anthony Hayes, in Seagrave in Leicestershire.

Very sadly, long standing EM member, Tegwen Manton, has passed away. Tegwen was well known in the region and used to play with Harlaxton Chimes. Jane Heald has agreed to write an obituary for Reverberations.

Judy mentioned her Mini Minsters handbell team who have all achieved certificates under the HRGB Crescendo Scheme. Twenty one youngsters from years 3,4,5, and 6 have been awarded either the PP or the MP certificate. An article and photo will be published in Reverberations for the Autumn edition. John Willis was thanked for his speedy response in printing out all the certificates.

Regional Matters, continued.

East Anglia

After a brief discussion it was decided that diary dates should be sent directly to John Willis in future.

The region asked members whether they wanted to have a physical copy of the regional magazine or an electronic copy. By far the most popular was a physical copy. The region has had a problem extracting labels from the database, but will refer to John W for help and advice.

The skills register was discussed and was said to be a nightmare.

The regional team has had several concerts principally in Colchester, Bedford and most recently in Great Yarmouth. Thanks were given to Sue Walland and Aidan Fozard and to all the regional team ringers for their hard work in making the concerts a great success.

South West

At a recent rally in Torpoint near Plymouth, ringers had been turned away as the event was oversubscribed.

There will be a rally on 9th September 2023 in memory of Ryan Price. The region has decided that instead of a Christmas festival, there will be a concert by the regional team.

South East

Martin Winter represented the region as Gay Cooper is in hospital and Alan is supporting her.

The Handbell Festival Service on 17th June held in Guildford Cathedral was a great success with visiting ringers up 20% from last year.

There was a SERBO concert on 28th May, the first in three years and this was well attended.

Instead of a Christmas Together event, the region will have a Tea Together event in the summer. (see minutes of 1.4.23 for further details).

All other events will take place as published in the diary dates.

North East

The AGM was held in May in Grassington and was a great success.

The Summer Ring has had to be cancelled due to a low uptake. The committee will try to find out why this has been so, as in previous years, this rally was well attended.

The NE regional online newsletter will be published more frequently on a little and often basis.

There has been some communication with Katherine Butler.

There is a rally on 7th October 2023, not currently on the HRGB diary dates.

Regional matters, continued.

North West

There are a couple of summer workshops planned. The region wishes to add more options for members as well as rally ringing and has two workshops planned for 2nd and 16th September in Llandudno and Penrith respectively.

An NBO concert in June 2024 is in the early stages of planning by Kate W.

Scotland

The committee met face to face in Dunblane and tried out a blended meeting whereby some committee members were present in person and some joined online. This worked very well. Two members, Katrina Gordon and Sam Payne were able to join the meeting electronically. There will be a rally in Dunblane on 7th October 2023 to be arranged by Malcolm Wilson, playing the music of Lysbeth Wilson in celebration of Lysbeth being awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Years Honours List, 2023.

Brief mention was made of the National Rally in Stirling and John E and the team were congratulated for a wonderful rally. See more in item 6, paper 2.

West Midlands

Corrie Paxton has resigned from the NEC as she is relocating to Sussex. Martin Winter asked about the location and wondered if Corrie would like to continue her activities in the SE region. DH and MW to liaise over contact details.

There was a very enjoyable concert on 10th June with a choir, ringers and a solo trumpeter.

A workshop on 11th June had to be cancelled due to the organiser Ursula Howe having to withdraw because of personal circumstances.

Richard Hartnell has been active in two schools recently: Hagley School and Chantry School in Worcestershire.

The regional newsletter is just about to be published.

5. Future events

i) National Events

1. National Residential Ringing Week, 31st July to 5th August 2023.

See paper 1 submitted by Aidan Fozard. The outing on Wednesday afternoon will be to Chatsworth house, at £30 per head.

2. National Rally 2024, 5th-7th April 2024, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

The organisers have given thanks to the Scottish team for tips particularly in relation to the budget.

There will be two charging rates: £265 for residential ringers and a day guest rate for Saturday and Sunday of £150.

The Junior rate will be £100 for juniors aged 6 to 16 sharing a room with an adult. The day guest rate will be £70. Registration will open on 30th September 2023.

There will be four skills workshops which everyone will do. Two workshops will be split by skill level. The aim is to attract less confident, less experienced ringers.

Future events, National events, continued

3. National Rally 2025, 11 to 13 April 2025.

This will be hosted by the East Anglia region. The venue has changed from Wymondham College, as this venue has failed to respond to e-mails and queries.

The new venue will be Kents Hill Park Training and Conference Centre. The price will be comparable to Stirling. The venue is very keen to accommodate handbells and has been looking at table layouts and so on. A deposit of £1000 will be required.

NEC approval for the venue and payment of the deposit was agreed. The deposit will be paid from the HRGB events account.

4. National Skills Day 2026.

The AGM will be held via zoom and the event will be a one-day event hosted by the SW region in Swindon. More details to follow in due course.

5. National Diamond Jubilee Event/Rally 2027.

This has been deferred until the next NEC meeting on 30 September 2023.

6. Drop in visit to Heritage Quay on 8th July 2023.

The exhibition opened on 19th June 2023 and will close on 5th August 2023.

There will be an open day on 8th July. Clifton Handbell Ringers will play from 2pm until 2.45 pm. Alan Hartley will take people around the exhibition and John Atkinson will have his twelve bell team there. There will be an opportunity for people to try handbells.

Peter Fawcett has donated items from his personal collection, including the Belle Vue Medal. The Belle Vue Trophy cannot be donated as it belongs to the village who bought the trophy and must be retained until the next competition. There will be various cabinets and displays covering the social history of HRGB as well as information on music, handbells and notebooks of meetings and competition comments.

It was suggested that a national e-mail could be sent out to let members know about the event on 8th July and about the exhibition.

In time once the archive has been catalogued, the material will be available on the Heritage Quay website.

ii) Virtual events

Three webinar dates have been agreed:

19th September 2023. This will be for anyone who has arranged some handbell music and will cover performance rights, how to get the music published, copyright and how to self-publish.

18th October 2023 to be given by Katrina Gordon on a subject yet to be agreed.

16 November 2023 to be given by Aidan Fozard and Malcolm Wilson. The subject will be concert performance programming: repertoire and how to sell a concert.

The webinar team is still looking for help. Please contact John Willis or Keith Rowland if you can help.

ii) International Events

1. 21st International Symposium in Japan. (See flyer distributed)

Christine Reid reported that six pieces had been submitted to a competition organized by Jacky Cooper, to find the piece that will represent HRGB at the 2024 International Symposium in Japan.

The winner is a new composition by Sandra Winter called Into the Light. It is normal practice to invite the composer to attend the Symposium. The NEC agreed to this unanimously.

Registration will open in September 2023 and will be handled centrally via Jacky Cooper. The fee will be in the region of £500 for the Symposium plus flights.

The flyer has been circulated via HRGB already on Facebook. Subsequent to the meeting I have been advised that the funding is slightly different. The cost of the Early Bird Registration will be 98,000 yen not 95,000 yen.

2. 22nd International Symposium, UK

The strapline has been decided as “Bridging the World Through Music .” The logo design competition winner will be awarded £100. It is early days but negotiations have begun relating to the food that will be served. Meetings have started to work out budgets and it has yet to be decided who the conductors will be. There has been lots of interest from Handbell Ringers of America, particularly from New England.

6. Past events

i Report from the National Rally in Scotland, paper 2.

John Elcock, the Scottish Chair, was very pleased at how the National Rally went and with the feedback from ringers. He was congratulated by Keith Rowland and the NEC for a well organized and highly enjoyable rally.

ii Draft AGM minutes 2023, paper 3.

These were circulated for information and will be approved at the AGM next year.

7. Money Matters, see the Accounts, paper 4 and paper 4a.

Anthony will be seeing the examiners on 17th July 2023 for wet signatures and then the accounts can be uploaded. There weren't any questions submitted to Anthony prior to the meeting.

There was some clarification about donations income being split between cash and non cash (like donated bells.) There was a clarification relating to paper 4a, where a donation from Scotland of £150 will need a slight tweak.

The reference to the charity commission number should include England and Wales and this will be reflected in all the accounts documentation.

The acceptance of the accounts was Proposed by Laura Buist and Seconded by Judy Gees.

Anthony Hayes was thanked for all his hard work in preparing the accounts on behalf of the Society.

8. Safeguarding Update, see paper submitted by KW and sent to all NEC reps and Regional Secretaries.

9. Reorganisation of the role of Secretary

Jacky Cooper will be the new International Liaison Officer with immediate effect.

Sandra Winter will continue to be the Correspondence Secretary for the next year.

Judy Gees will be the NEC Secretary and AGM Secretary with immediate effect, with the agreement of Kate Worthington.

Subsequent to the meeting, Judy has offered to take on the role of Secretary for HRGB as she will be retiring in February and will have more time to devote to HRGB matters.

10. Membership cards

There was much discussion as to whether we should abandon the use of membership cards. Some teams still want cards in order that the Correspondent can prove that membership has been paid for. The suggestion was made that it should be the default option not to have cards and that teams will need to tick the box on the renewal form if they require cards. The NW region pointed out that in their original paper, their proposal was to get rid of the cards, principally because they are not used or needed and that the use of plastic is bad for the environment. The membership secretary has a supply of cards and the idea of using them up until they are gone was suggested, although this may cause a run on cards.

One proposal was :

“It is the intention of the NEC to cease the issue of membership cards in order to reduce the plastic usage and to keep the cost to members of £12 pa.”

This was thought to be unwise as we could be held to having to keep the cost at £12 and we may not be able to raise the membership fee if we wanted to in the future.

Another proposal was “ It is the intention of the NEC to cease issuing cards due to the entire environmental impact. “

The Chair decided that this matter would be considered further by himself and John Willis for publication in Reverberations. The wording would be agreed and circulated to the NEC.

Subsequent to the NEC meeting John Willis proposed the following:

“The NEC has decided that in order to limit the Society’s environmental impact, membership cards will be withdrawn when the current stocks are exhausted. Until then, members may opt to receive them by ticking the appropriate box when renewing their membership.” This wording has been discussed between John Willis and our Chair, Keith Rowland, and has been agreed.

Membership survey. See Paper 5, page 2.

This was covered in a paper submitted to the NEC by John Willis. There was a very low response rate to the survey (5.3%) which was very disappointing. Of the members who replied to the survey, 51% did not want a membership card, 38% would be happy with a digital card, 7% would prefer to receive a card , 15% would prefer to receive a card for life, and 10% thought that those wanting a card should pay a suggested £2 charge to cover the cost of producing the card.

11 Charity Commission Update

Nothing to report.

Officers' reports for this meeting

12. Membership update

There are still a few people renewing their membership.

There has been a proposal regarding part year membership:

People wishing to join part way through a year should be charged the pro rata cost plus the following year's membership. So, someone joining in July would pay £18 and in each case their membership would be valid until 31st December of year following their joining date.

This was agreed unanimously by the NEC.

The idea behind this is to stop members joining part way through the year (previously members could join in October and pay £3) , then they could download all the free music then not bother to renew in January. This was felt to be unfair to existing members who pay the full fee of £12.

13. Sales Update, see paper 5

Diane was thanked for her help in running the sales table at the National Rally when John and Jane Willis and family were unable to attend.

14. Website update, see item 2, paper 5.

Catchup e mails will be sent as and when required.

15 Reverberations, see paper 5

There are some articles in the pipeline but more articles are needed. Alan agreed to do a write up about the exhibition at Heritage Quay.

Young Vibrations articles will be left to the regional magazines, and the Young Vibrations magazine will be discontinued.

Some regions still need to send in their regional roundups.

A new editor of Reverberations is still being sought. John Willis was thanked for all his work on the magazine.

16 Social Media update, see paper 6.

Malcolm Wilson was unable to attend the NEC meeting but has submitted paper 6 with a social media update. He has asked for some help with social media particularly with running the HRGB YouTube channel. Keith will contact Jason and Kris from Tintinnabulis to see if they would be interested in getting involved.

17 Archives

This has been covered under the Heritage Quay item, under agenda item 5.

18. William Hartley Memorial Fund

The WHMF has a two octave set of Malmark handbells and a three octave set of Whitechapel bells available for lease. KR has just been on a bells tour of Ireland and wondered if any resources could be provided to Southern Ireland.

18. William Hartley Memorial Fund, continued

AH confirmed that WHMF bells are insured for worldwide use and bells have been sent to the Orkneys in the past. Customs issues and restrictions may exist and possibly with us being HRGB, there may be a problem legally dealing with Southern Ireland. Kathy Fahey was mentioned and contact with Ireland was organised by the late Dereck Jackson unfortunately. There is an overseas category and the only restriction is that an overseas member may not be in the NEC. Martin Brian Hough was mentioned as a possible contact, and he lives near KR.

19. Matters arising from last meeting, paper 7.

Corrie Paxton very kindly submitted a paper relating to the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Handbells are now listed in the list of skills. Corrie has agreed to write an article to be included in Reverberations.

Corrie is relocating to Sussex and will be put in touch with the SE region to see if she would like to continue with her bellringing activities.

20. Correspondence, paper 8.

Sandra Winter provided a report to the NEC outlining the contact messages since the last NEC meeting.

21. HRGB Diary Dates

Diary dates should be sent to John Willis direct in future for inclusion. A link to the HRGB diary dates will be provided for NEC meetings in future, rather than a print out of all the dates.

22. Any Other Business

i. Education Group

The Education update was included here, see paper provided by Linda McCord.

Funding of student places at Symposia and the NRRW was highlighted. It was disappointing to only have one application from the Vaughan Evans Memorial fund this year.

MW said that there is a system in place already for funding places at international events and that the Scottish region has done a lot of work in this area. LM requested that the issue of financial support for students should be put on the agenda for the next NEC meeting on 30th September 2023.

ii E mail addresses

Robert Willis is the contact regarding new HRGB e mail addresses, if one is needed.

iii Regional minutes

These should be sent to the Secretary ie Judy Gees in future please, who will file them.

This is a requirement of the HRGB rules, 32j.

iv Purchase of a laptop for the Secretary.

This was agreed by the NEC. Robert Willis has recommended a laptop and will provide an Office Professional Plus 2021 licence which includes Publisher, Word, and Office. Thank you Robert.

v The date of the NEC meeting on 23 March 2024 has been changed to 13 April 2024.

Date of next NEC meeting 30th September 2023 on zoom. Please think about agenda items.

Judy Gees