

HANDBELL RINGERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Annual General Meeting – Membership Secretary's Report

On a happy start to my report, **12** new teams have registered with HRGB since the beginning of this year, which is an amazing number. Although, not all of their members have joined HRGB, if they come to an event held by the society and like what they see, they might well become members later on in the year. Also, on another optimistic note, the number of Independent members has increased, as has the number of junior members belonging to a team. I don't know where these Independent members ring but I am sure that their Regional Secretaries will be keeping in touch with them. They may yet be forming more new teams. HRGB membership has sadly gone down slightly from this time last year. The overall figures for members in teams have dropped by 44 to a total of 1732. (This figure does not include Honorary Life Members or Founder Members). This is due mainly to some teams no longer ringing or having a smaller team. The Youth Teams have also dropped slightly but as we know Youth Teams membership can change quite a bit over a school year and this may yet increase as we go through 2024. As membership figures have been dropping every year for quite a few years, it is quite encouraging to see new members and new teams joining us, as we need to halt the decrease in our membership to ensure HRGB is still viable for the future.

I know I go on about Gift Aid every year but when you complete a form, HRGB benefits from the Inland Revenue, because for each member that signs up as a UK tax payer, we receive 25% of their Membership fee as a grant thus turning their £12.00 into £15.00 to HRGB. This all helps to keep the fees at the rate they are and I am pleased to report there will not be an increase in fees for 2025. So, if you are a tax payer and have not yet signed up to the Gift Aid scheme, please give it careful thought and if we can persuade any new ringers to join HRGB and subscribe to the Gift Aid scheme this will really benefit all HRGB members. The Gift Aid forms are on the HRGB website under "Joining HRGB" and I will have some at the National Rally for any one that wants one.

I know some of you had some issues when trying to do the renewals online through the website and I would like to say a big "Thank you" to everyone for their patience and support. It is still fairly new to some of you but each year more of you are renewing online which is a great help to me. I am hoping to do a webinar with John Willis, our WebAdmin guru, at the end of this year, just before the renewals, explaining the system and how to renew online in detail, to help more of you to be able to do it this way. Information about this will be sent out when things are sorted.

Hope you all have a great year with all your ringing endeavours.

Diane Holt
Membership Secretary