

HANDBELL RINGERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Registered Charity Nos. 298945 (England and Wales) and SC038918 (Scotland)

Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held at 1.30pm on Saturday 6th April 2024 in the

**Main Hall of the Derbyshire Suite, Hayes Conference Centre, Hayes Lane, Swanwick, Alfreton,
Derbyshire DE55 1A**

1. Chair's Welcome and Remarks

Keith Rowland, National Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked them for attending and commented that it was good to be meeting in person rather than via zoom.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Ursula Howes, Ruth Cantlay and the Jordan Hill Parish Church Ringers, John Elcock, David Hampson, Margaret Moss, Linda Parkington, the Winkfield St Mary's Team, Jill Glennerster, John and Jane Willis, Richard and Sue Page, Paul Scoble, Mike Johnson, Lynne Dawson, David and Caroline Sunderland and Brian Buttery.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2023 - published in 'Reverberations' *Autumn/Winter 2023*

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Martin Winter seconded by Samuel Davies and agreed nem con.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were none.

5. Chair's written report

I believe it is important to hold this meeting in person. Zoom meetings are very functional and convenient but once a year it is really good to meet up .

Every time we get to entertain an audience with our music, it is a recruitment opportunity.

During each year, we will play for hundreds if not thousands of people. We should be prepared to ask if anyone was interested in playing handbells. Be friendly, smile. Don't rush to pack up and leave. Be prepared to offer flyers or contact information. This not an expensive hobby. New ringers do not have to purchase instruments and HRGB membership *fees are just £12 per annum.*

Our membership numbers continue to fall so we must look at recruiting new ringers at every opportunity. Remember to tell your face you are enjoying ringing. People need to know we enjoy making music with handbells.

I would like to say a big thank you to Anthony (Treasurer) and Diane (Membership Secretary). Without them the society would quickly grind to a halt.

I am pleased to report that Judy Gees is standing for election to the role of Secretary of HRGB. Judy has been de facto Secretary for most of the last year. I am sure I speak for the other Officers in praising her commitment and organisational skills to keep us all up to date and informed.

Jacky Cooper, in her role as International Liaison Officer, has been busy collecting and distributing information about this year's Japanese Symposium. At the time of writing, 28 people are registered to attend the Hamamatsu event. I am sure everyone will have a wonderful time. Her experience will be very useful when it is our turn to host the next symposium in 2026.

John Willis (Mr Fixit) continues to provide a huge contribution to the running of HRGB. The rebuilding of the website has proved to be a big project but thanks to good planning and hard work, Good news.

Rona Gager has undertaken the role of Young Vibrations editor. We just need to recruit an Editor of Reverberations!?

Laura Buist is leaving her post as Data Controller after the National AGM. This post requires knowledge of ICO and GDPR. We urgently need to find a replacement.

Many thanks to Malcom Wilson and his team, for his work as Social Media Co-Ordinator. This function is so important for HRGB, both now and in the future. Social media provides a vital link to a large proportion of the general public.

Regional committees continue to tirelessly plan and organise local events and are the life blood of handbell ringing in UK. We must make sure the events reflect the needs and wishes of the membership. The focus has moved to more smaller events rather than a few large gatherings as ringers are not always willing to travel long distances. This initiative has proved very successful.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to ensure handbell ringing is alive and well.

End of written report.

Keith went on to say at the AGM meeting that the withdrawal of the membership cards had resulted in a cost saving to HRGB. There was a reminder of the National Residential Ringing Week will be on 4th to 8th August 2025. Alan Hartley was thanked for a very successful event at the HRGB archives centre at Heritage Quay on 8th July 2023.

Members were reminded that free music is available on the HRGB website together with free webinars on many diverse and varied topics. Malcolm Wilson was thanked for his work on the HRGB Social Media Policy which is available on the website.

Hon Membership Secretary's written report, Diane Holt

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.

Hon. Membership Secretary's Report, Diane Holt, continued

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 anyone 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 have a great year with all your ringing endeavours.

End of written report.

There weren't any questions to the Chair or the Hon Membership Secretary about their reports.

6. Financial Report, published on HRGB website

There weren't any questions to the Hon Treasurer, Anthony Hayes, about the Financial Report published on the website and in Reverberations and the report was accepted nem con.

7. Election of Officers

The nominees for the positions of Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Secretary—Keith Rowland, Anthony Hayes, Diane Holt, Judy Gees—were duly elected.

There was one nominee for each of these roles so due to the rules 8A (C) we can declare that they are elected unopposed.

The post of the Examiner of Accounts remains vacant for the moment, but will be addressed by the Hon Treasurer, Anthony Hayes.

8. Motions and Resolutions.

None

9. 2025 National Rally

The East Anglia Region will be hosting this event on 11th to 13th April 2025 at the Kents Hill Park Training and Conference Centre, Milton Keynes. Leaflets will be available at the National Rally and further details will be in Reverberations and on the website.

10. Any other business

1. International Symposium 2026.

Martin Winter, Chair of the organising committee of the International Symposium, reported that the location of the Symposium in 2026 would have to be changed from The Sage in Gateshead to the P&J Live Aberdeen.

HRGB was informed a month ago that the Sage in Gateshead was unlikely to be completed in time for the UK to hold the 2026 Symposium there. This was due to covid, the war in Ukraine, inflation, and trouble in the Gulf affecting the provision of building materials. Another venue, the P&J Live in Aberdeen has been secured and has suitable workshop spaces for massed ringing, excellent catering facilities and hotels nearby and is suitable to host the UK International Symposium in 2026.

Aberdeen Airport is nearby and train links are excellent and there are regular buses too and from the local hotels. Further details will be available on social media and Reverberations in due course.

2. Presentation of a Crescendo Award

Noah Powell-Tuck, a ringer with Burghill and Tillington Handbell Ringers in Hereford was presented with an award under the Crescendo Scheme and was given his certificate and pin badge by the Chair, Keith Rowland. Well done Noah.

The meeting closed at 2pm.

Judy Gees

National Secretary