

Approved Minutes of the NEC meeting held on 28th January 2023 on zoom from 10.00 to 16.30

Present: Tim Willetts (Chair), Anthony Hayes (Treasurer), Diane Holt (Membership Secretary), Gay and Alan Cooper (SER), Alan Hartley (WHMF) John Atkinson and Christine Lazenby (NER), John and Jane Willis (SWR), John Elcock and Laura Buist (SR), Mike Johnson and Judy Gees (EMR) Beth McCord and Kate Worthington (NWR), Keith Meader and Linda McCord (EAR), Corrie Paxton and David Hampson (WMR)
Attending: Lysbeth Wilson (SR), Roger Lazenby (NER), Malcolm Wilson (SR)

1. Chair's welcome

Everyone was welcomed and Lysbeth Wilson was congratulated on her award of a British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours List.

Judy Gees was thanked for the Minutes of the meeting in October 2022.

2. Apologies for absence.

None, although Malcolm Wilson has stated that he will be guiding visitors around Dunblane Cathedral, so would join us at lunchtime.

3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.

Page 2. TW asked us to keep thinking about a new Editor for Reverberations.

Page 6. The e mail referred to was private and was not meant for circulation.

There were some minor typos and a short discussion on the acceptance of bells by the WHMF:

Page 7. Tim and Alan Hartley reminded trustees that a decision about this matter had been taken eighteen months ago-that each case should be treated on its merits.

Gifts to HRGB of bells was discussed. Perhaps ringers leaving bells should set up an endowment in order to cover refurbishment and insurance of the donated bells. If HRGB does not want the bells, perhaps they could be sold, at the NEC's discretion. It would be a shame for bells to be sold for scrap, for example, when there may be a team somewhere in the country who could use the bells. The NEC can use its discretion as to the gifting of bells to teams, rather than allow bells to be scrapped.

A suggestion was made to put a note on the website that the donation of handbells would be encouraged. This suggestion was not agreed.

The HRGB policy on the acceptance of bells will remain the same but can be the subject to review in the future.

Minutes Accepted. Proposed Anthony Hayes Seconded John Willis.

4. Regional Matters and regional events in 2023

West Midlands. The Bells Beyond Belief event has been moved to a new venue as the Government has requisitioned the Pear Tree Hotel, for refugees. The event has been moved to the White House Hotel and will be on 10-12 February.

The Regional Rally and AGM will be on 4th March. There will be a regional rally on 7th October in Withington in Hertfordshire and the David Williams Memorial Rally on 18th November 2023.

It is problematic not having a Secretary and the Chair, Richard Hartnell, has agreed to stand for another year following the end of his three year tenure. This is allowed under the rules of HRGB but not the WM.

North East

The Autumn Rally held in Bingley had a pleasing number of ringers with two youth teams attending; Clifton Juniors and the Kildwick Youth Team. Future events include Grassington on 13 May, A Summer Ring on 21 June to be held in Sheffield and an Autumn rally in Hedon near Beverley.

The region has two information boards which can be loaned to other regions and teams for the promotion of concerts. The NER is looking to update the boards with a team map and an information leaflet which teams may borrow.

South West

There was an autumn rally in Marden Vale , which was well attended. There was some wonderful massed ringing, conducted by Diane Holt. The Christmas event shared with the Somerset and Dorset Male Voice Choir was a success with £600 raised.

The AGM and rally will be on 11 March in Exeter. A rally is planned on 10 June in Wilcove, near Plymouth.

East Anglia

There are lots of events as per the HRGB diary dates. A sub committee has been set up to organise the National Rally in 2025 and one of the options is Wymondham College. A potential issue is that the doors do not lock on the individual rooms. The bells are in a secure location. The NEC agrees that the region should progress the booking but that ringers should be notified in advance that the rooms are not lockable. The sharing of music was mentioned and it was agreed that this is an excellent idea. There is a National Rally Liaison Officer, Steve Winter, and he can be contacted for help.

TW suggested that lists of available music for sharing can be sent to Judy for circulation to regions. The music is generally free but some regions charge a flat royalty fee of say £15 or £10.

Lists can be sent to Judy with a note of music that is free for use and a note will be added if a royalty fee will be charged.

North West

There were two successful rallies in the Autumn. The AGM will be on 25 March and the region struggled to find a venue at first. The committee has met twice and the region has its own zoom licence.

South East

Some teams are active and some less so, following the pandemic. "Christmas Together" consisted of small events at local level, and was a good way of getting teams together. The music for this was provided for free by the region. It was a useful and popular initiative. One ringer, Cliff Blundell, who is 93, has taught himself to ring six in hand and he has been to Iona as well as the London Eye to play to the public. Details can be found in the SE Regional newsletter and Reverberations.

The birthday rally on 7th January was good. Future events include the AGM on 4 March in Sanderstead, the Headcorn rally on 20 May and the SERBO concert at Redhill on 28 May 2023.

Scotland

The region is very proud of Lysbeth Wilson and her BEM. The Bankfoot Rally was a great success. The National Rally is being hosted by the Scottish Region, on 14-16 April 2023, and a regional rally will be held in Dunblane on 7th October 2023.

East Midlands

The region has had two rallies, some of which were poorly attended. There was a Back to Ringing Rally on 29 October and a joint rally with the WM region, also in October. Both were enjoyable rallies with some new faces. The joint rally was a wonderful opportunity to meet ringers from a different region. The AGM will be on 29 April in Ruskington, hosted by Judith Kirk. There is another rally planned for 14 October organised by Anthony Hayes. The committee meets regularly on Zoom. Judy commented that her little school team, the Minster Minis, played to some seniors in Southwell before Christmas and they were a great credit to the school. Tim and Alan had been sent a video of the concert, and noted some super circular ringing!

5. Future Events.

i) Regional events in 2023, See above.

ii) National Events in 2023

1. National Rally 2023

The Scottish region has a good team in place and they have worked very hard to organise the National Rally in April. The payment date is 31 January 2023 and workshop details will be available very soon.

Live streaming of the event was discussed. There are people available to do the filming, but they will be required elsewhere in workshops. Hiring a professional was felt to be too expensive. If someone wanted to film a workshop or concert, the film could be added to the HRGB website.

There are 123 ringers booked and there are spaces for a few more ringers.

TW commented that other guilds are doing this and one reason why the post of IT Strategy Officer was established. Ringers could learn a lot from watching workshops and seeing techniques demonstrated.

It was agreed that if anyone wishes to film using a video camera or mobile phone, then permission should be sought to use the film and to place it on the HRGB website or HRGB Youtube channel.

The ReachVolunteering site was mentioned and perhaps an IT Specialist, a volunteer, could be identified to help us. Damien Lim is a good IT specialist and may be approached to assist, potentially.

2. National Residential Ringing Week 2023

See update circulated by Aidan Fozard. Aidan asked for permission to organise the 2025 event and this was granted by the NEC. Applicants who would be considered for the

Vaughan Evans grant should be notified to Tim, Diane and Anthony for selection, as soon as possible. Aidan would like names and details by 1st May if possible.

3. National Rally 2024

The contract with The Hayes in Swanwick has been signed and the venue has been very helpful in answering questions. The logo for the 2024 National Rally has been designed by Kate Worthington.

4. National Rally in 2026.

See paper 5ii) and papers submitted by the SE region and also the NW region.

The proposal was discussed and various points were made. Rallies are a great opportunity to meet people, there is the issue of expense of a National Rally and International Rally in one year. Day visitors have been accommodated before in York in 2012, for example. Could this be considered at a later date? How would a one day rally work and who would organise it? Potentially by an ad hoc group of NEC members from different regions? A survey was completed after the National Rally in Sheffield last year and the idea of a one day event was not popular with ringers. A one day rally could be an opportunity to do something different at a lower cost to ringers. Perhaps the rally should be called a National Event.

The proposal was voted upon as follows.

1. Who agrees we should not have a rally of any description in 2026? 1 vote.
2. There should be a rally in 2026. 11 votes
3. Not sure 2 votes
4. Abstentions 5 people.

The chair requested that those who voted that there should be a rally in 2026, should bring a paper to a future NEC meeting explaining their thoughts on how the rally would be organised.

iii) Virtual events

See paper 5iii)

The last webinar by Judith Frye went very well. The next HRGB webinar on 7th March is about how to get teams back on track following the pandemic. It covers recruitment and will be delivered by Malcolm Wilson.

Numbers have been falling off in recent months, and perhaps the webinars should be on demand. It was felt that webinars are a useful tool and a good opportunity to teach people new skills. They can perhaps be recorded and placed on the website to be watched later. JG asked for Aidan Fozard's excellent webinar on notation to be repeated and for there to be a webinar aimed at young ringers. The survey e mail sent out to ringers was not received by some.

There was a request for more people to join the webinar organising team.

5iv) International events

1. **21st International Symposium, Japan.** No information forthcoming. Details will appear on the International Handbell Ringers Facebook pages in due course.

2. 22nd International Symposium, UK.

The following information is confidential and must not be announced until 17th February 2023.

The Chair tabled the suggested plan for announcing the venue, drafted by Martin Winter:

1. Confirm with Steve Daun from The Sage booking team what if any of their plans are to announce the event to make sure that as far as possible we coordinate our actions.
2. We notify regional committees in advance so that they can plan to publicise the symposium at their upcoming events, especially as there are many AGMs early in March.
3. We give teams in the Newcastle area advance notice of the announcement, particularly those who were contacted by The Sage as part of their bid preparation as it will be good to involve them as much as possible in the event.
4. We publish the decision on the HRGB website and by e mail to team correspondents on Friday 17th February 2023.
5. We notify the heads of the overseas guilds by e mail on Friday 17th February 2023.
6. We include the announcement in the next edition of Reverberations.

If there are any enquiries prior to 17th February, we say that an announcement will be made on 17th February 2023.

The Chair thanked Roger Lazenby for his work in drawing up the contract and Martin Winter for agreeing to be the Chair of the symposium steering committee. John Atkinson asked for a one hour webinar on how to publicise the symposium. Roger will speak to Martin to see how this can be achieved.

6. Past Events

UK Bronze 2022. No details have been forthcoming but the event was generally well regarded and was a success.

Business Matters

7. Role of Secretary, paper 7.

The chair and the whole NEC are very appreciative of the four individuals who have taken on the four roles:

Judy Gees as NEC Minutes Secretary, Kate Worthington as AGM and Diary Secretary, Jacky Cooper as International Secretary and Sandra Winter as Correspondence Secretary.

The vacant role of HRGB Secretary will be advertised in Reverberations and at the AGM the members will be advised that four people have offered to do the roles, as above. Should a candidate be forthcoming, then the four volunteers above will liaise with the new secretary and stand down.

It was noted that Rules 8b, 9, 41, 43 and 60 will need to be looked at. The roles are non

trustee bearing roles. The Chair will keep in contact with all four volunteers to support as appropriate.

The HRGB Secretary e mail address is still active and mails are going to Sandra Winter. Trustees agreed that if each volunteer needed an HRGB e mail address, they should ask Rob Willis for help in setting this up.

8. Role of Chair –suggestions for moving forward, paper 8.

There has been a nomination for Chair, details of which are confidential at present.

9. Succession planning. Recruitment. Please refer to paper 8 from the October 2022 meeting.

Various sites were highlighted in the October paper including <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/> <https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/>

The ReachVolunteering site was a useful tool for finding registered volunteers. An organisation submits its postcode, and specifies areas of expertise that it is looking for eg marketing, IT, Education etc. registered volunteers specify whether they are prepared to work remotely.

It was felt that a volunteer to help with Membership would not be useful as our requirements are so specific and niche. However, we may be able to find expert help for other areas like marketing, education, safeguarding, publicity and IT.

Tim Willetts volunteered to explore the site to see if suitable candidates could be identified and approached by HRGB for help specifically for publicity and marketing in the first instance.

10. Money Matters

2022 Update. There have been delays in our Treasurer receiving bank statements, due to the postal strikes.

The 2022 National Rally mandate has been transferred to the Scottish Region.

There was a refund to the attendees of UK Bronze and if possible the refunds will be made by BACS. The £4500 surplus needs to be returned to the UK Bronze attendees rather than be donated to other members attending the National Rally.

The bank has enforced dual signatories on all accounts. New forms are required to add signatories. Forms will need to be signed by some Trustees.

Our Treasurer has proposed that the HRGB membership fees should remain at £12. This will need to be agreed at the AGM. There was a suggestion that we should say at the AGM that reserves are healthy and that the cost of living crisis has been factored into the decision to keep the membership fee at £12.

The NEC voted to keep the recommended HRGB membership registration fee at £12.

11. Rule Changes relating to Membership, Paper 11 and John Tipping's e mail.

The amendments suggested in paper 11 were accepted with the addition of 3b), page 1, Junior members (young people up to the age of 18) to replace (applicable to young people still at school).

All other rule changes were accepted as suggested in paper 11.

John Tipping's e mail proposal relating to rule 8A (d) and Rule 64 was voted on and carried. The rule changes will be ratified at the AGM.

12. Charities commission governance code, paper 12.

Principle 6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Trustees were split into groups to discuss this.

The groups discussed the governance code and said that HRGB is inclusive to all. Examples of people from different heritages, blind ringers, non binary people, young and old, special educational needs and disabilities were given. It was felt we have a positive attitude to minorities and welcome them. We do not have anything in our rules and regulations excluding minority groups or conflicting with inclusivity. One group stated that many teams are church based and play religious music, which may be a barrier to non Christians. It was suggested that at rallies perhaps we could offer other services to different faiths. The Arrange Me Site was mentioned as a tool for arranging music for other faiths. Teams deal with disabilities and had strategies in place to make HRGB inclusive to all. It was noted that we do not request details of impairments on our membership forms.

Colonialisation was mentioned linked to bells. Some negative connotations do exist based on things that had happened in the past. On the whole though, it was felt that we are welcoming to all and do not put barriers in the way and embrace all ringers.

13. Membership cards.

Deferred pending a paper from the NW region.

14. Charity Commission news, paper 14.

The Chair has asked the Safeguarding group to look at the issue of bullying and harassment. It was suggested that the issue could be raised at the team leaders' seminar. We should have zero tolerance of bullying and harassment and the issue will need to be handled sensitively.

15. Membership update

Renewals are coming in thick and fast and statistics will be available for 1st April 2023. About 50% of teams wish to retain membership cards. Some teams have folded following the pandemic and there are a few new teams and some independent members.

There is an HRGB webinar on 7th March about relaunching a team, to be delivered by Malcolm Wilson.

16. Safeguarding update.

The safeguarding group will discuss bullying and harassment and will report back to the

NEC.

Andrew Tate. We need to be careful and to be alert to young people talking about this.

The Chair is stepping down and the role of National Safeguarding Officer will need to be filled.

17. Music Sales proposal, paper 17.

The availability of the "Bedford Books" and "HRGB Music for All" should be available to HRGB members and free of charge.

People getting the music and selling it on was discussed. Sibelius files will be available. Kate Worthington will talk to John W about software to show that the music has been downloaded. Saying the music is freely available, will discourage people from selling it on. Philip Bedford has expressed a wish that the music should be available free of charge.

The proposal in paper 17 was agreed by a majority.

18. Website update

There is not much to report. The main hitch has been relating to membership as the system was an extension of the core software. The net result of the errors was that money for renewal was set against correspondents and not each member. This will cost a few pounds to correct. Diane has had a job to renew individuals for forty teams. A permanent solution needs to be found.

19. Social Media update, paper 19.

Malcolm Wilson has submitted a written update and has requested help with uploading videos onto HRGB Youtube. Please contact Malcolm if you are able to assist in any way. Malcolm was thanked for all his hard work in promoting HRGB on social media.

20. Reverberations

The Spring Issue is very nearly ready and needs proof reading. John is just waiting for a few bits and for the 17th February date to pass.

The 2023 AGM agenda and proposals will be included as an A5 insert in Reverberations.

If people do not have computers to access information on the website, they can go to their local library.

New Editors for Reverberations and Young Vibrations are being sought. John Willis was thanked for all his hard work in producing Reverberations.

21. Archives

Cliff Blundell has put together a history of Burnham Handbell Ringers and has offered a flashdrive and documents to the HRGB archives. The NEC agreed to accept the documents and flashdrive into our archives.

Alan Hartley gave an update on developments at Heritage Quay. He has been asked to put together an exhibition for the Kirklees Year of Music. The public will be able to see the exhibition free of charge from 19th June to 6th August 2023. This is a big opportunity to advertise handbells and to recruit new ringers. There is the potential to visit the exhibition on the Wednesday afternoon of the National Residential Ringing Week, 2023. John Willis has an article about the exhibition in Reverberations and will mention the exhibition on the

website.

22. WHMF

Nothing to report.

23. Matters arising from last meeting

None.

24. Correspondence

None

25. Diary Dates

See updated list previously circulated, together with diary dates published on the website.

Regional team events can be advertised. Please send details to John Willis.

26. Any other business.

None.

27. Date of next meeting: 1st April 2023 via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 16.20

Judy Gees