

Central Council Report for 2020

The Council meeting for 2020 was not held, as planned, in the City of Nottingham but was to be a virtual meeting held on zoom and attended by 150 people.

The meeting started promptly at 10:30 and members were welcomed in prayer by the Rev David Grimwood. We were reminded to think of friends and family that we have not been able to see during lockdown. The first business of the meeting was to vote on acceptance of the Clerical Guild to affiliate to the Council, when the vote was counted they were approved by 95% of the vote.

Simon Linford, chairing his first full Council meeting, kept the business flowing and injected a very relaxed style and the occasional note of humour.

A minutes silence was observed in memory of those who had passed to higher service since the last meeting, their names were read out by the Secretary. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by 87% of the meeting. There are now 66 affiliated societies although the Society of Sherwood Youths have now disaffiliated.

The accounts were presented by the Treasurer, having been audited, the Council's total assets at the end of 2019 were valued at £435k, the General Fund and Publications having made small surpluses. From next year, the accounting year end is to be moved from the current calendar year in line with the financial year at the end of May.

The presentation of the accounts was followed by the presentation of the Workgroup report.

Much of the Council's work is carried out by what used to be called Committees but have now been replaced with Workgroups. There are now 8 of these and between them they cover every aspect of ringing.

The first of these groups, the Stewardship and Management Workgroup has spent much of the year trying to get ringing through the Covid19 crisis. The most important item to come out of their report was the Westley Award for Tower Maintenance, which this year was present to Sue McClaughry from Calstock for huge amount of work that she put in on the Calstock restoration project. I am sure that all Guild members would wish to extend their congratulations for Sue on this magnificent achievement.

The Volunteering and Leadership Workgroup are presently focussing on making contact with lapsed ringers and have been publishing articles on education in the Ringing World.

The Universities Workgroup is a new group that has been set up to support younger ringers transition into university or further education.

Historic and Archive Workgroup, deals with historical records and the Central Council Library, which is housed at Worthen near Shrewsbury. The workgroup is responsible for the furthering the digital publication historical records.

Communications and Marketing. Have concentrated on developing the social media platform. Have also been involved with recoding ringing interviews.

Senior Stakeholders, Involved mainly liaison between church bell ringers and the church of England. Particularly relevant during the Covid19 crisis.

Technical and Taxonomy. Dealing with method ringing, peal compositions and also responsible for maintaining the Dove database.

Schools & Youth Group, responsible for dealing with the development of ringing amongst young people working alongside ART.

After all of the above workgroup leads had reported, the President of the Council Simon Linford looked forward to the rest of 2020 and coping with the restrictions placed, as with all other aspects of live, on ringing.

A motion to allow small ringing societies to register was also passed by a majority of 76%

It was a strange and possibly unique meeting although it is possible that we will have to meet remotely again at this time next year. I am pleased that the meeting was able to happen but I missed the usual face to face contact with old friends.

The Ringing World AGM.

The AGM of the Ringing World took place just after the lunch break of the meeting chaired by the Chairman of the Ringing World David Grimwood.

Although subscriptions were down slightly due to an accounting correction, sales of merchandise were good but income from advertising and donations were down. Continued investment in the business included the appointment of an Assistant Editor and a Digital Assistant.

The Editor was congratulated on keeping the journal a thought leader and for keeping people together during difficult times.

The meeting itself, as usual was not without moments of controversy it was observed by one member that the amended constitution had not been registered at Companies House within the required 15 days and then during the debate on a motion to change the charitable structure of the company, Andrew Wilby suggested that the Trustees were not being honest with the membership over changes to the constitution and also the future of the paper.

The motion to change the structure was defeated.

We shall see what next year brings..