



The Worcestershire & Districts Change Ringing Association

Founded 10th April 1882 – Branches formed 1911

MINUTES OF 142nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION, HELD AT THE OLD PALACE, WORCESTER SATURDAY 12th APRIL 2025 STARTING AT 16.55 **DRAFT 3a**

Members and visitors present

Emmanuel Alozie - Visitor

Kate Andrew - Shrawley

Mo Awkati - Kinver

Diane Awkati - Kinver

Charli Birks - Coseley

Amelia Birks - Coseley

Joseph Birks - Coseley

Andrew Evans - Unattached (S)

David Flint - Smethwick

Andrew Gray - Cookley

Ellie Haynes - Powick

Sarah Haynes - Powick

David Hildred - Chaddesley Corbett

Hilary Hildred - Chaddesley Corbett

Alison Hodge - Unattached (W)

Laura Homer - Halesowen

Sam Homer - Halesowen

Will Homer - Halesowen

Christine Hurst - Barbourne

David Jones - Pershore

Sue Kington - Barbourne

Cliff Little - Pershore

Paul Mills - Kempsey

Freya Mills - Kempsey

George Morris - Malvern Link

James Mort - Worcester, Cathedral

Lizzie Mort - Unattached (W)

James Normington - Malvern Link

Helen Normington - Great Malvern Priory

Carys Normington - Great Malvern Priory

Rachel Page - Pershore

Jess Pugh - Worcester Cathedral

Darran Ricks - Worcester Cathedral

Sue Robinson - Worcester Cathedral

John Slater - Worcester Cathedral

Paul Smith - Powick

Elisabeth Smith - Visitor

Stella Smith - Worcester Cathedral

Trevor Still - Great Malvern Priory

David Struckett - Kidderminster

Chris Tennant - Ipsley

Beryl Thorp - Barbourne

Steve Townsend - Hanbury

Robin Walker - Worcester, All Saints

Jenny Walton - Unattached (W)

Mark Wilson - Worcester, All Saints

Leonie Woodward - Pershore

Total present = 45 members + 2 visitors (Quorum = 25)

In the absence of the President, Vice-President Mark Wilson took the Chair.

1. Opening prayer

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by the Chaplain, Rev'd David Hildred.

2. Apologies for absence

Bishop Martin - Patron (Honorary)

Kate Burston - Pershore

Jane Chapman - Chaddesley Corbett

Kate Collinwood - Great Comberton

Gerry Edwards - Malvern Link

Katrina Emery - Stourbridge

Dean Stephen - President (Honorary)

Ruth Etheridge - Earls Croome

Maxine Goodhead - Brierley Hill

Roger Gurney - Powick

Rose Humphrey - Ipsley

Barry Humphrey - Ipsley

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David Jenkins - Worcester Cathedral
Ioan Normington - Malvern Link
Helen Peberdy - Droitwich, St Peter
Stuart Piper - Pershore
Margaret Pridmore - Barbourne

Gill Roberts - Rowley Regis
Alan Roberts - Rowley Regis
Elizabeth Tennant - Ipsley
Lucy Tennant - Ipsley
John Westwood - Shrawley

3. Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

The minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting. John Slater proposed and Andrew Evans seconded that the minutes were a true record of the meeting. This was agreed by the meeting; a copy will be signed by the Master and Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

5. Loss of members who have passed away since the last Annual General Meeting

The list of those who have passed away is included in the Annual Report. Rev'd David Hildred said a few words and led a moments silent reflection.

6. Officer's Reports and the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024 as published in the 2024 Annual Report

Central Committee Report – There were no comments or questions. The report was approved by the meeting.

Belfry Advisory Panel Report – The Chairman noted that it had again been a busy year for the Panel. There were no comments or questions and the report was approved by the meeting.

Archivist's Report – The report was brief noting the co-option of an Archivist early in 2025. This was approved by the meeting.

Peal Secretary's Report – There was nothing to add and the report was approved by the meeting.

General Fund Treasurer's Report – In the absence of the Treasurer, the Master advised the meeting that the accounts had been examined by the two elected Account Examiners. The Master then explained that the Central Committee had realised recently that Account Examiners should not otherwise be members of the Central Committee (Rule 13). Rachel Page is, however, the Southern Branch Master and therefore a Central Committee Member, and as such, should not have been an Accounts Examiner as she had done for the past few years. The Master apologised for this error and said that he did not believe that either Role had been compromised in any way. Robin Walker proposed that the report should be approved and this was seconded by Trevor Still; the meeting approved the Report.

Belfry Repair Fund Report – This report had been approved by the Trustees of the Belfry Repairs Fund. Grants had been paid towards work completed at Great Comberton, Ombersley and Upton on Severn. A question was asked about progress with the plan to install Jonathan Hughes memorial

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bells, currently hung dead in Worcester Cathedral, as a full-circle ring in St Clement's Church, Worcester. Darran Ricks responded that the plan for St Clement's was not going ahead, but it is hoped that the bells may be installed elsewhere. Trevor Still proposed that the report be approved and this was seconded by Di Awkati then approved by the meeting.

The Chair concluded this item by thanking the Report Editor for the quality of the report, and in particular for the original watercolor picture of Worcester Cathedral on the front cover.

7. Election of up to three Vice-Presidents of the Association, according to Rule 5

The Master took the Chair for this item.

Robin Walker proposed and Di Awkati seconded, that Alan Roberts be re-elected.

Di Awkati proposed and Helen Normington seconded that Mark Wilson be re-elected.

Rachel Page proposed and David Jones seconded that Andrew Evans be elected as Vice-President.

In the absence of further nominations, these 3 were approved as elected by the meeting.

8. Election of Officers of the Association

The following nominations had been received prior to the AGM:

Post	Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
Master	No nomination		
General Secretary	Alison Hodge	Chris Tennant	Robin Walker
Assistant General Secretary	Paul Mills	Alison Hodge	Sarah Haynes
Treasurer (General Fund)	Stuart Piper	Robin Walker	Martin Bluck
Chaplain	David Hildred	Nicola Piper	Mark Page
Peal Secretary	Paul Smith	Robin Walker	Lizzy Tennant
Archivist	Darran Ricks	Robin Walker	Paul R Smith
Clerk to the Trustees (BRF)	Robin Walker	Martin Hills	Nicola Piper
Treasurer (Belfry Repairs Fund)	Stuart Piper	Robin Walker	Martin Bluck

There were no nominations for the post of Master. Each nomination was approved. This was agreed by the meeting and the people named were declared elected. The Chairman thanked all the Officers for their contributions during the year, in particular, James Mort who had stepped down as Master.

Election of Central Council Representative

James Mort was proposed by Paul Mills and seconded by David Jones. With no other nominations, he was elected.

9. Election of two Account Examiners, under the provisions of Rule 13

The following nominations had been received:

Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
Andrew D Evans	Steve Bowley	Claire Penny
Rachel Page	Steve Bowley	Claire Penny

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The Chairman stated that the nomination of Rachel Page did not comply with the rules, as was explained earlier, so this nomination was invalid. Andrew Evans then proposed that Kate Burston be nominated as an Account Examiner and this was seconded by Leonie Woodward. The Chairman confirmed that the election of Andrew Evans as Vice-President earlier in the meeting, did not preclude him from being an Accounts Examiner. These nominations were approved by the meeting.

10. Notices of Motions

None had been received.

11. Safeguarding

Di Awkati told the meeting that she had been in contact with tower captains during the year about safeguarding matters. She offered to advise ringers if they had any concerns about an issue, whether they thought it may be a safeguarding issue or not. She reminded members that all adults and children could be vulnerable. Ringers need to talk openly about safeguarding so that people know that they can discuss any concerns and know who to approach for help.

The WDCRA Safeguarding Policy is on the website and an up-to-date copy should be displayed on all tower notice boards, along with the single sheet that shows local safeguarding contacts. The CCCBR “Code of Conduct” offers helpful guidance and should be displayed in all towers.

Ringers should undertake the appropriate level of safeguarding training as indicated on the WDCRA website. In summary, all ringers are requested to complete the online Basic Training. Tower Captains should complete the Basic and Foundation Training. Some leaders of activities and tower captains in larger churches and cathedrals should complete the Leadership Level.

She reminded members that tower captains and those teaching bell handling should check that their DBS is up to date through their local Church of England diocese. Updates are needed every 3 years, and she advised members to use the ‘update service’ as this simplifies the renewal process. The update service also enables the checks to be valid in other Church of England dioceses.

She concluded by telling the meeting that more dioceses and churches are checking ringers before they allow them to ring, for example on outings.

12. Health & Safety

Alison Hodge advised the meeting that if ringers have any concerns about health and safety issues in towers then members of the Belfry Advisory Panel may be able to advise. Although completion of risk assessments for a tower and bell installation is the responsibility of the church authorities, it is advised strongly that one or more experienced ringers accompany those doing the assessments, so that they can advise on matters relating to ringing and bells that may not be known to those doing the assessment.

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13. Future directions for the Association

James Mort advised members that he had commented on the Association's Five Priorities in the Annual Report. Future directions for the Association would now be left to the newly elected Central Committee.

14. Amendments to Association Rules

James Mort reminded the meeting that some changes to Rule 8 (Election of Members) proposed last year had not been approved by that AGM. Since then he had consulted members who had expressed concern about the rewording of the Rule. He said that further discussion about this rule and other rule changes would be continued by the new Central Committee and proposed at an EGM probably in the autumn.

15. Association Membership Subscription rates for year starting 1st January 2025

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Master explained that the Central Committee proposed that subscriptions would have to rise this year. Several factors have contributed to this:

- The rates have remained unchanged for many years, some as much as 10 or 20 years!
- Subscriptions to the CCCBR are now based on individual association member numbers and are increasing progressively
- Other significant cost increases are anticipated for example in insurance, printing, bank charges etc
- The Treasurer estimates that the accounts would only just break even without an increase
- Although percentage increases are relatively large, absolute rates remain very low.

The new rates proposed by the Association Master, seconded by the Treasurer (in his absence) were:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| - Ringing Member aged 18 years and over on 1st January | £8 from £6 |
| - Ringing Member aged under 18 years on 1st January | £4 from £3 |
| - Ringing Member aged 60 years and over on 1st January | £6 from £4 |
| - Associate Member | £5 from £3 |
|
 | |
| - Life Associate Member: one payment | £5 (unchanged) |
| - Non Resident Life Member: one payment | £5 (unchanged) |

These were approved by the meeting.

16. Arrangements for the 2025 Interbranch Striking Competition

Rachel Page told the meeting that this event to be arranged by the Southern Branch. However, she has difficulty so far in finding a tower willing to host the event on Sunday 5th October 2025 (Sunday had been suggested by the Central Committee due to ringers' concerns in recent years that there were more conflicts on Saturdays with wedding ringing.) Robin Waker noted that he had already confirmed a judge for the event on Sunday 5th October 2025.

17. Arrangements for the 2025 Annual Dinner

Robin Walker advised that the dinner will be held at Worcester Masonic Centre on Saturday 15th November 2025. This later date than usual had been chosen to move the dinner from Remembrance Sunday weekend. Mark Wilson advised that the dinner there is an excellent meal and very good value for money.

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18. Date and venue for the 2026 Annual General Meeting

This will be arranged at a venue in the Southern Branch. Chris Tennant proposed that it would be held on Saturday 25th April 2026. This was seconded by Trevor Still and approved by the meeting.

19. Any other relevant business with the consent of the Chairman

There was no further business.

20. Votes of thanks

Mark Wilson thanked the Association Officers for their work during the year.

Chris Tennant offered thanks to the following:

- Paul Mills for the preparation, printing and distribution of the annual report – also in pdf format this year for the first time
- Darran Ricks and Robin Walker for overall arrangements for the AGM
- Kate Andrew for her help with the use of The Old Palace
- The Dean for leading the service in the Chapel of The Old Palace
- Robin Walker for playing the piano for the service
- Paul, Sarah, Lizzie, Linda, Sue and other helpers for the tea.
- Mark Wilson for chairing the meeting
- Churches and ringers for use of the bells in 3 towers during the day

The meeting closed at 17.54

A raffle was drawn after the meeting. This raised £81.00 for the WDCRA Belfry Repair Fund. The excess donations for tea were £107.50, also donated to the same Fund.

Alison Hodge
WDCRA General Secretary