

# Shropshire Association of Church Bellringers



## News – November 2024



### November Events

#### **Training Morning Saturday, 2 November at Edgmond 10 – 12.30**

This will be a varied practice, ranging from call changes to Grandsire Triples. We ask for a donation for the tower and refreshments.

*Gill Glover*

### Surprise Practice

Our next Surprise practice will be at **Wem on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November** at 7.30pm. Looking forward to seeing you all there for whatever you would like to try from Cambridge Minor to 5 spliced Major. Please let Tony or Gareth know if you plan to attend, so that we know if we have enough for a viable practice.

*Tony Freemont*

### **Saturday 12 October – Practice and Quarterly Meeting at Moreton Corbet**

It was a cold evening and the body of Moreton Corbet church was certainly chilly but there was a warm welcome from Tony Freemont, who ran the ringing and encouraged everyone to have a ring on this recently refurbished six. Methods rung were Plain Bob, Grandsire, St Simons and Cambridge along with rounds and call changes.

Sue Dancey, besides kindly providing hot drinks and biscuits, ably chaired the Quarterly Meeting. One new member was elected, Jackie Morris from Meole Brace. The main business was a preview of the rule changes to be proposed at the Association AGM in

January. These are mainly alterations to reflect existing practice such as having a separate Membership Secretary and clarifying some of the wording around membership for peals for example. Sue emphasised that the committee will welcome, and consider, any comments that members wish to make before the January meeting.

Paul Lewis and Ann Williams reported from the Central Council AGM which was held in Devon in September. One decision which will affect our Association financially is to increase the annual subscription we pay to the CCCBR. 40p per member will be payable in January 2025 and in January 2026 this will rise to £1 per member.

The Central Council is looking ahead to the future of bellringing as the number of active ringers is falling and youth recruitment has dropped considerably as traditional sources have declined (church choirs for example). Churches are also at risk of closure if their congregations are very small, they are in rural parishes or the buildings are too expensive to maintain. This obviously affects access to the rings of bells that they have.

The evening concluded with the 100 Club draw and raffle (donations of prizes always welcome). Cash prizes in the 100 Club draw went to Nick Byne of High Ercall, Derek Dancey of Bicton and Keith Atkey of Market Drayton. The raffle was run by Ann Williams and raised £51. Prizewinners were Paul Heminsley, Paul Lewis, Tony Freemont, Adrian Roberts, and Madeline Harris. We left the Corbet knights and ladies on their tombs "in icy hoods and mails" at about 9pm.

*Jad Bienek*

## **Autumn Social – Ceilidh at Meole Brace - Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> October**

Thank you to everyone who attended the ceilidh and made it an evening to remember. The band was splendid and kept us all entertained, especially the caller - and they were heartily thanked with a great round of applause at the end of the evening.

From nibbles to amazing desserts, via a choice of delicious main courses, several cooks provided a superb, inventive and elevated cuisine. Sue received many compliments on behalf of the catering team by being in the privileged position of taking the food orders. Everything got a mention - the nibbles were welcomed, and salads went well (great ideas!). Many people returned for seconds of the main courses - and thanks to pre-planning there was not much to take home. The puds were also well received. Vegan and gluten free friendly choices of brownies, flapjacks and freezer cake, sumptuous trifle and cheesecake, fast vanishing crumble & custard - all disappearing rapidly with very few seconds to offer - well judged!

Geoff and Jad were such great bar managers and even turned in a profit of over £50, and found homes for the leftover stock. We were also grateful to those who were firmly anchored in the kitchen, engaged in a cycle of serving, then clearing away and then the washing-up. Thanks also to those of you who arrived early and/or stayed behind to put

out or stack chairs and tables. All part of the necessary tasks for helping the event start and finish smoothly.

Everyone played their part, and we're so pleased that some of the helpers got to dance as well! We both felt it was a great event.

For next year's autumn social, we are planning a quiz. The ceilidh will return for the Association Centenary year in 2026.

*Sue Dancey and Vicki Sivess*

## **Report on the Central Council AGM, 2024**

The meeting this year, the 127th, was held in Exeter and Paul and I attended, plus 150 other representatives.

S. Agatha's Guild withdrew from the Council; the Open University was admitted. Prayers were said for the 23 former members of Council who have died since last year, including Chris Kippin.

Chris Mew was made a Fellow for his work on safeguarding and Barbara Wheeler for her work in distributing the CC publications.

The total assets of the Council are £419,000, despite a large loss made from the General Fund on spending for Ringing 2030.

The CC Library move from Worthen to Loughborough has been completed.

Alan Glover declined to be elected a Fellow after his 12 years as CC Librarian ; he was thanked for his work over this time.

The various Workgroups reported, particularly focussing on young ringers, schools and the use of the 3 main mobile rings. The plans for the proposed National Ringing Centre in Northampton have been abandoned.

Tina Stoecklin, President, introduced the plans for 2025/2030, based on the Three Pillars, viz. a targeted marketing campaign, including school lesson plans and more overall publicity; targeted recruitment campaigns particularly aimed at young ringers in view of the demographic time bomb which is ticking; providing a quality environment for ringers including safeguarding, inclusivity, insurance and teaching. Some of the services of the CC provided to ringers were mentioned, including safeguarding, safety advice, method regulation, record keeping, noise complaints advice, support of Bellboard, the library and other facilities.

This led on to the most controversial part of the meeting where it was proposed to increase the annual subscription to the CC to 40p per society member in 2025 to £1.00 in 2026. In brief this was to support the work of the Council in implementing the Three Pillars in an increasingly complex environment, to improve communication between the CC and Societies and the possible recruitment of some paid assistance to assist the 70 or so volunteers now running the Council. This would have important financial implications for

all Societies with particular difficulties for University societies who do not have subscriptions from their alumni, likewise the Clerical Guild with no subscriptions. There was much discussion on these matters and the motion was finally carried 87:26. For information, Paul voted for the motion and I voted against - whilst acknowledging there was a need for increased spending I felt there was no clear business plan and an overall lack of information as to how the money would be spent. It was observed that discussion on this major topic had been limited due to time constraints also that the voting procedure has been somewhat inexact - 87 +26 +5 abstentions does not add up to 152 !

*E. Ann Williams*

Next month our other CC Representative, Paul Lewis, will report on further important issues discussed:- namely the threat of church closures, and developing youth ringing.

*Ed.*

## Looking Ahead

### CENTENARY DINNER

This has now been booked and the contract signed for **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026** at the **Hawkstone Park Hotel** at Weston-under-Redcastle. The price for the 3-course meal has been frozen at £36.00 p.p. All food issues can be catered for. Put it in your diaries now!

*EAW.*

Many thanks to Ann Williams for her forethought in getting this important event booked in good time.

*Ed.*