

**South West Regional Association of the  
Handbell Ringers of Great Britain  
D R A F T Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
Held at Oake Village Hall  
On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 2.30pm**

**1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Adrian Foss welcomed everyone to our 51<sup>st</sup> AGM having celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2025/2026.

70 people were present.

**2. Apologies for Absence.**

Jeff Harrison, Fiona Willis, Mary Doddridge, Sara Coward, Michelle Sears, Lorna Askew, Margaret Farney, Helen Batt, Audrey Sprague, Emma Chase, Sue Moseley.

**3. Approval of Minutes of the 2025 AGM.**

The Chair asked for approval of the minutes of the 2025 AGM which had been published in the Autumn 2025 Newsletter and on the Region's website.

Proposed by Paul Scoble Seconded by Ros Lawton

The minutes were then signed by the Chair.

**4. Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Chair's Report – Adrian Foss.**

Welcome all to this AGM: apologies if we have less cake than we did last year when we celebrated our region's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It is possibly ironic that having moved to the middle of the year to avoid the worst the pernicious elements could throw at us, now we have only just avoided getting half-baked.

This has been my second year of my second stint as Chair: for personal reasons, I have not put myself up for re-election, but I intend to stay on the committee if you are kind enough to elect me.

We have had eight events this year, and I'm ashamed to admit I did miss two of them.

We started with Burghill and Tillington Rally, then moved on to the two Sou'westers Concerts, the first in Taunton and the second in Honiton. I was seriously impressed and inordinately proud of those events and all involved. The audiences were a mixture of ringers (old and present) and the public and all the comments I had were extremely positive.

Then it was back north to a Ringing Round the Region in Iron Acton before we moved into full Christmas mode. This time the fates were kind and we enjoyed the excellent hospitality of Woolavington for the Prelude, having had to call off the event there last year: they even lined us up a lovely sunset. From there it was on to Tiverton and the Christmas Festival: another fantastic event with Bell-Tide opening proceedings and a tremendous collection for the Air Ambulance to finish it off.

At the end of February we had another Ringing Round the Region event, this back in St Leonard's Church hall in Exeter, where we had several events previously, so I knew how to get there from the station (I like events where I can get to 'let the train take the strain'): it also turned out to be somebody's birthday as well, so there was cake.

And finally.....

There was the National Skills Weekend at the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh. This was a resounding success and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved, even if I can't always remember their names all the time.

I did 'New Maths' at school and that involved the fabled Venn diagram: in this case there were two primary groups, one who planned the event, and the other who implemented those plans, and there was big overlap of those involved in both groups. Everybody worked their socks off, whether they were there or not. And then there were the kind souls who lent us gear, again, even if they could not attend personally.

To give an idea of the level of effort beforehand, each of the attendees were provided with a personalised event listing: the events had to be arranged and attendance worked out from the ringers' responses, and then the bells, foams and accoutrements sourced. Each listing then got printed and folded and put into a plastic pouch on a table in Okehampton and then put into a goody bag with other materials and then sorted into groups for each event day's arrivals and boxes made up. I lost count of the number of boxes getting unloaded into reception.

I don't know how many keyboards and mice were worn out, or the number of printer cartridges emptied.

Then there was then event: sorting out tables (finding ones that were the same height made it interesting), getting bells and foams into their starting positions, checking with the presenters what they wanted/needed. Holding the first round of activities, then moving bells, chimes, singing sticks etc as required, ready for the next round. A quick breather for the AGM (when my memory unstuck and we were thanked for choosing a flatter venue than our last National in Exeter) and the on again for the next round and so to the Ceilidh (thank you Beverley) once we had sorted most of the bells for massed ringing.

Sunday started with a short service: slight hiccup with the first verse of the first hymn, but we made it through. Then massed ringing and strike everything down and go home, although that was the only time when we got any rain.

Again: my very profound thanks to all involved.

In addition, a very big thank you as well to the Committee: running the region is a team effort and they have served you/us very well indeed.

May I also add, it has been an honour to serve as your Chair person

## **6. Secretary's Report – Trish Carne.**

Having thanked Adrian so much for 'stealing my thunder' and me striking through the first half of my report, I decided to carry on regardless from August 2025.

2025/26, as you probably know, is the South West Region's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday. It has been a very busy and successful year.

It all started early in August with the Burghill & Tillington Rally which was attended by a good number of ringers who thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the massed ringing of Jason Walker's first composition, Summer Bells.

September saw the Sou'Westers Regional Ensemble making final preparations for their two 50<sup>th</sup> birthday concerts.

The first was held in Taunton. The dress rehearsal went fairly well, although the conductors' faces would tell you otherwise in places! What do they say, a poor dress rehearsal – a good performance. Our compere for the evening was Paul Scoble, aptly dressed in his Cornish attire.

Three weeks later our second concert was held in Honiton. An equally well attended concert ably compered by Paul Scoble again. We put in another credit worthy performance and again many of the audience were eager to come on down and try out the bells & chimes. Our Chairperson, Adrian Foss thanked everyone for coming to watch and listen and the ensemble for two very good performances.

Our next RRR took place at Iron Acton nr Bristol. It was very pleasing to see a few newbies this time. A good afternoon was had by a full hall of ringers.

Two of the SW Regions annual events came next, starting with our fun ring and solos at the Christmas Prelude in Woolavington. Thankfully this year there was no storm Burt to disrupt travel to the venue and its unfortunate postponement last year.

Our final event of 2025 was the Christmas Festival, held at St Paul's Church, Tiverton. Taking part were ringers from several areas of the region. The evening was compered by Fiona Willis after Adrian Foss had welcomed the audience and introduced Robert Willis, our conductor for the evening. We nominate a charity to receive the proceeds of this event and the Devon Air Ambulance was chosen this year.

What was 2026 going to hold for the SW Region? Well we certainly didn't get to rest on our laurels.

Our preparations for hosting the National 'Skills Weekend' Rally April 2026, in Morton in Marsh, Gloucestershire actually started back in summer 2025 when the Fire Service College was selected as a suitable venue for what we had planned. A second visit in September saw the real work begin finding out what rooms were available, what activities we could hold where according to their sizes and location. We were also invited to stay for lunch to try out the restaurant and what we could expect to keep everyone fed well.

Having been at the helm of the last SW National Rally at Exeter University in 2017, Jane & John Willis requested to work in the background this time. They poked and prodded us with 'have you done this' & 'what about this, that and the other'. In effect

this meant the rest of the committee, although having attended other National rallies, were actually first timers as 'the organisers'.

One member, our treasurer Ann Tyack, really did turn up trumps, as the lady of the spreadsheets, as she made sense of all the data she collected from the 142 delegates' individual needs for the weekend. Another member, Gina Scarbro, who had never tackled anything like it before, drew up all the floor plans, room orientations, maps and signage for this event.

Two mammoth tasks on near vertical learning curves which unfortunately took over their lives for months. Two brilliant jobs done, which were frequently marked as excellent on the feedback forms after the event.

The rest of us foot soldiers and several helpers took on the myriad of other tasks between us in order to provide an overwhelmingly great event. It wasn't all plain sailing, mind, we had several dodgy moments along the way.

What a wonderful thing hindsight is about what could have been done differently to make it a good deal easier on ourselves especially Ann & Gina.. One delegate wrote "having organised a National Rally before, we know just how much work is involved and aren't we pleased it comes round only once every seven years or so. Absolutely!

Our first regular outing this year was a RRR at St Leonards Church, Exeter. This was also the occasion of Robert Willis's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday. We had a full house, good massed ringing, a great shared tea and two delicious birthday cakes made by Rob's brother Ben Willis.

Dare I ask - Can we have a 'normal' year this year – what do you reckon?

## **7. Treasurer's Report – Ann Tyack**

The finances of the region continue to be healthy and show an overall surplus for the year of £1,443.65.

Our Rallies and Events produced a surplus of just under £650. There was a smaller number of events; the expenditure here also includes the AGM which, in 2025, was expanded to include our celebration of the region's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Membership fees are paid to National funds and some of this comes back to the regions as a Regional Rebate. Previously it had been 25% of fees but in 2025 this increased to 50% which is why the regional rebate figure is so much higher. The rebate has traditionally been used to pay for Newsletter printing and distribution, although latterly it had not been enough for this due to increasing costs. This year postage costs were reduced by John coordinating printing with Sou'westers and other events so that many team newsletters could be distributed by hand.

The Sou'westers performed 2 concerts which were well supported with 186 tickets sold across both. The concert income shown is the money received from the venues, after subtraction of hire cost from the ticket sales revenue. Added to subs and donations, this gave an overall surplus of £301.60 for the Ensemble.

We now have Linda running SW Sales, the first year in which this has been separate from National. Expenditure exceeds income this year due to purchase of stock in advance.

We are always grateful for donations into our funds, although these were down on the previous year. Traditionally the Christmas Festival is run as non-profit making and, therefore, we donated to the church as well as an additional donation to the Air Ambulance. The donation tin at this event was provided by the Devon Air Ambulance and therefore the contents of that did not go through our accounts.

Committee expenses were kept to a minimum due to rearranging in-person meetings to Zoom through the summer months so as not to affect Sou'westers concert rehearsals.

There were no major purchases in 2025, and all the bell maintenance of minor running repairs was done for the region free of charge for which we are grateful to John and others who bring some tools to rehearsals or take a bell home for some TLC.

I thank Phil Jolly, our Examiner of Accounts, who completed his 10<sup>th</sup> year and is now retiring from the post. I am grateful to Eric who has offered to step into this role and I will be proposing him later in our meeting.

## **8. Report of the Regional Representatives to the NEC – John Willis.**

The NEC held all their meetings during 2025 via Zoom under the chairmanship of Keith Rowland.

Matters dealt with at meetings this year include:

Planning and financing of events:

- Skills Weekend/National Rally
- International Symposium, Aberdeen
- Team Leader/Directors Weekend Seminar
- Diamond Jubilee event in 2027
- National Residential Ringing Week

The planning of the International Symposium in Aberdeen is in full swing under the Project Manager Martin Winter. At the time of writing this report there were just over 600 people registered, including, non-ringers and exhibitors, and the event was closed for applications other than those that could be accommodated through cancellations.

In April (9<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup>) 2027, the HRGB Diamond Jubilee celebration will be hosted by the Northern Bell Orchestra in Harrogate.

The next Residential Ringing Week in Sheffield is planned for August 2027

On the financial front the NEC has received and agreed several requests for financial assistance from the Vaughan Evans fund. Many of you will know that the National

Treasurer, Anthony Hayes, has been far from well and it seems inevitable that we will also be seeking a new Treasurer soon.

Following a complaint about the behaviour of an HRGB member, the NEC discussed the rules about suspension and expulsion of members and an amendment to those rules was proposed - and carried at the AGM at Moreton-in-Marsh. Work continues now to ensure that we have procedures in place to cope with the modern world where peoples' rights and sensibilities need to be protected. A Code of Conduct had been published on the website and will be included in the next issue of Reverberations and a new procedure to ensure that we are able to deal with members' complaints and issues is being prepared.

An interesting development has been the agreement that HRGB will take part in the Living Heritage scheme. Most of you will be aware of the UNESCO World Heritage sites – such as the Jurassic Coast – but they have now begun to document a corresponding Living Heritage, activities that have a long history but are in danger of being lost. There have been about 800 nominations of things in danger of being lost; activities such as Maypole Dancing, Lacemaking and Working with Heavy Horses are obvious examples and we believe that Handbell Tune Ringing sits quite comfortably with them. Other nominations such as Door step milk delivery with electric milk floats, Bathing in Victorian Turkish baths and the Dudley Coffin Race may not make the final list.

The NEC performs a useful function in circulating information to regions and promoting best practice but the tone of the meetings and, behind the scenes, the work of the four executive officers of the Society is very much coloured by the attitude and interests of the Chairperson. Keith Rowland has indicated that he will be stepping down after the 2027 AGM and it will be interesting to see how a new Chair will affect the organisation.

## **9. Motions Submitted**

No motions had been submitted.

## **10. Election of Officers and Members of the Committee**

Those nominated were elected without opposition en-bloc – Nem con.

Chairperson:	Trish Carne (Devon)
Secretary:	John Willis (Devon)
Treasurer:	Ann Tyack (Devon)
NEC Representatives:	Jane Willis (Devon)
	Robert Willis (Devon)
Ordinary Members:	Beverley Tapper (Somerset)
	Sue Page (Gloucestershire)

Diane Holt (Devon)

Gina Scarbro (Somerset)

Paul Scoble (Cornwall)

Jason Walker (Herefordshire)

Roy Colvile (Devon)

### **11. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts**

Eric Damerell – proposed by Ann Tyack - seconded by Adrian Foss.

### **12. Any Other Business**

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 3:09pm

**Signature:**

**Date:**