

Essex Association's 138th AGM was held at Chelmsford Cathedral on Monday 1st May. As usual, there was open ringing beforehand. A service touch preceded sung Matins led by the Dean and the Choir of St Nicholas, Witham. The Bishop of Bradwell, the Right Reverend John Wraw addressed the congregation. The Association's acting chaplain, Rhona McEune led the prayers.

After a pause for refreshments, organised by the North East District, the Master of the Association brought the meeting to attendance. 101 members from 38 towers were present, a slight dip on last year. The minutes of last year's meeting were adopted, as were the Accounts and Annual Report.

Then followed the election of officers: As all current officers were willing to stand and were uncontested they were returned to their posts.

Newly appointed District Officers are:

N.E District: P Bray – Deputy Master

N.W District: I Kerwin – Master; M Slowe- Deputy Master; S Evans - Secretary

In accordance with the Rule 8.2 (c) those who have been Ringing Members for at least 50 years are entitled to become Life Members. Ann Dorking (Downham), Patricia Lindsell (Unattached), Len Bullock (Dagenham) and Roger Collins (Saffron Walden) were made Life Members. The Master presented those in attendance with certificates.

A Brewster spoke for the Social Committee and confirmed the details for the Annual Dinner, including a change of location. These are on the EACR website.

The Master updated those present on recruitment and training. There is a group looking at recruitment and training and A. Brewster is looking at how to finance this area.

The Striking Competition Finals will be held at Colne Engaine and Earls Colne on 8th July. The test piece for the 8 bell inter-district competition will be St Martins' Bob Triples. The Master also congratulated the Essex trophy winners for retaining the trophy.

Under A.O.B Nigel Taylor advised there were still places on 10th June for learning to use the 'odd-struckness' meter recently purchased.

Mary Bone, Ringing Course Convenor, thanked learners and volunteers on the Essex Ringing Course this year and advised that next year's course would be held between 5-7 April 2017. Any ideas for groups would be welcome.

Brian Meads urged attendees to read the Central Council changes as they could be important for the future.

Peter Eaves reminded those present that CC representatives don't necessarily reflect everyone's views.

Jim Towler voiced dissatisfaction with the service as it would have been 'nice to join in' instead of listening to a concert.

Rhona McEune advised that she had membership packs available for District Secretaries if wanted.

John Harpole concluded by mentioning the afternoon towers.

Votes of thanks were given to the Cathedral Authorities; the Witham choir and their master, David Martin; Alex Boyle for the anthem 'from vale to mountain high'; the organist Keith Gamble-Beresford; Rhona McEune for prayers and organising, the North East District for refreshments and the North West District for tea later in the day. He also thanked the Principal Officers for their support over the last 12 months.

Following closure of the meeting at 12.37 there was open ringing at various towers within the North Western District.