

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD of BELLRINGERS
SONNING DEANERY BRANCH
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
St Sarik Hall, Sonning, Saturday 16th February 2013

1. There were 29 members present. Apologies were received from Hilarie Rogers, John Harrison, Stuart Gibson, Andrew Price, Aidan & Liz Hopkins, Tricia Amos, Peter Kemm, Barbara Wells, Rachel Moss, Ann Martin and Rachel Leitch-Devlin.

2. Acceptance of the minutes of the previous AGM was proposed by Simon Farrar, seconded by Alison Clayton and accepted without dispute. There were no matters arising.

3. **Officers' Reports** had been available to view and were accepted (see enclosed reports). The following points arose. The Treasurer said that members could no longer be admitted to the category of Honorary Member. One of our Honorary Members, Keith Begrie from Wokingham St Paul, had died in December 2012. Part of our funds was to be transferred to a higher-interest account. Thanks to Andrew Dugdale for printing the newsletter free of charge. This has been critical in improving our finances.

There was no Ringing Master's report, as the post was still vacant.

The Chairman thanked the previous Ringing Master John Manley (who has moved away) for his efforts on behalf of the branch.

The Bookstall Holder suggested that we look at the Central Council website (ccabr.org.uk) for details of books on ringing.

The newsletter editor asked that people keep sending articles for publication to her. The Chairman thanked Alison for producing the newsletter.

The meeting stood in memory of Keith Begrie.

4. Election of New Members:

Tower	Nominees
Barkham	Ted Hodby
Binfield	Alex Maberly
Easthampstead	Thomas J Hinks, Connor Bannister, Thomas Wood
Hurst	Sue Slade
Sandhurst St Michael	Lawrence Daniel Robins
Twyford	Lewis Howell
Waltham St Lawrence	Ben King, Jennie Walton

Wokingham St Paul	Ian Smith
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They were proposed en bloc by the Chairman and elected nem con.

5. Election of Officers

Officer	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Chairman	Simon Milford	Simon Farrar	Jacquie Hazell
Treasurer	Sue Davenport	Graham Slade	Rob Needham
Secretary	Rob Needham	Pam Elliston	Simon Farrar
Joint Ringing Masters	Simon Farrar & Graham Slade	Jacquie Hazell	Andrew Elliston
Branch representatives	Sue Davenport (+1 vacant)	Alison Clayton	Steve Wells
Newsletter editor	Alison Clayton	Graham Slade	Jacquie Hazell
Bookstall holder	Pam & Andrew Elliston	Rob Needham	Simon Farrar
Training officer	John Harrison	Simon Farrar	Graham Slade
Webmaster	John Harrison	Rob Needham	Simon Farrar
Independent Examiner	Steve Wells	Simon Farrar	Graham Slade

All were elected unopposed.

6. Branch Practices and Events

A provisional list had been circulated (see attached). Two practices remained to be confirmed. The pocket diary card was no longer required; the practice times were available on the website, and several spare copies of the list were available at the meeting. It was pointed out that Wokingham St Paul would be unable to hold any future practice with a 4.30 start, as there is an evensong every Saturday from 5pm.

7. Proposed Rule Change relating to Committee Meeting

Guild Rules state that each branch shall have a Committee consisting of the officers and one representative from each tower. However, this definition of 'committee' is not widely understood by members. To make the meaning more transparent, our Branch committee meeting, usually held on the 3rd Saturday in November, is in future to be known as the Business Meeting. The change was proposed by Jacquie Hazell, seconded by Pauline Needham, and carried.

8. Recruitment at Sandhurst

Derek Palmer, tower captain at Sandhurst St Michael, gave a short talk outlining his experience there. When he joined in 1987, there were plenty of ringers and several were of high standard. By 2000, numbers had fallen and it was difficult to retain learners. Ringing in the porch meant that the ringers were always on show to the congregation, so they adopted a uniform to look smarter. He found that the church was not a good place to look for ringers. The successes he had were due to: an article in Sandhurst Residents' Magazine, leaflets distributed to schools and libraries, and particularly tower tours and open mornings. Though some recruits have moved away, the tower now has 14 members of which 10 can ring Plain Bob Minor inside. He showed a Sandhurst leaflet he had used for recruiting.

Rob Needham said that Sonning had a similar leaflet, and he would try to make available an electronic version that other towers could personalize for their own use. Attention was drawn to other leaflets available. Also, recruits had come forward after seeing ringing on television. It is important to maintain a high profile and recruit from as many sources as possible.

Jacquie Hazell, who had recently been on an ITTS course at Kineton in Warwickshire, stated that with ringers getting older and dropping out, it was important to get a new supply of qualified teachers of ringing, as many new recruits will have to be taught to keep the bells ringing. Recruits are more likely to stay if they are taught well. She distributed leaflets, one to each tower, giving details of the course (www.ringingteachers.co.uk). Robert Newton added that the ODG was intending to support the initiative by proposing a donation of £1000 to the Ringing Foundation at the next AGM.

9. Striking Competitions

The Reading Branch had been approached with regard to holding a joint 8-bell competition. Robert Newton thanked Sonning Deanery for their continuing support of the Guild 6-bell competition.

10. Fundraising & social events

No immediate fundraising was planned. A branch outing was requested, and Graham Slade agreed to organize one for early September.

11. AOB

Jacquie Hazell asked for help with assessing the state of ropes at Shottesbrooke, and was advised to approach John Harrison.

Derek Titford thanked Sonning for taking-on the AGM at short notice.

Robert Newton thanked Jamie Taylor (vicar of Sonning) for taking the service, David Duvall for playing the organ, and the ringers of Sonning and Waltham St Lawrence for providing the tea.

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm, to be followed by further ringing.