

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH
**Annual General Meeting, Saturday 18th February 2023,
at St Michael & St Mary Magdalene Easthampstead**

MINUTES

Present: 19 branch members from 11 towers were welcomed to the AGM by the Chairman, who also welcomed the ODG Master Catherine Lane.

The chairman announced that since there was not a quorum (20) the meeting could not legally conduct formal business, notably approve the accounts, change the rules, hold any significant votes. With this caveat those present agreed to continue.

1. **Apologies:** Judith Atkinson, Vikki Bullbeck, Alison Clayton, John Coombes, Mary Ede, Jacquie Hazel, James Moynihan, Jennifer Moynihan, Peter Needham, Sue Portsmouth, Graham Slade, Judith Witting.
2. **Death of members:** The meeting held a minute's silence in memory of Derek Titford, Waltham St Lawrence and past ringer Simon Paterson, Sandhurst.
3. **Approval of minutes of previous AGM:** The minutes of the February 2022 AGM were approved by members with a minor correction. The Guild Master is not a Guild Ringing Master.
4. **Acceptance of minutes of previous Business Meeting:** The minutes of the November 2022 Business meeting were accepted.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:**

Sue Davenport highlighted an issue, from the Business Meeting, that the planned May practice would clash with the Guild AGM and 8-bell striking competition. Historically the conflict was avoided by holding the practice in the morning. Also, few of those who attend Branch practices also attend the Guild AGM but adding the competition in the morning would involve at least eight members. The officers agreed to find a suitable resolution.
6. **Branch Officers' Reports:**

All reports had been on the website for members to read before the meeting, so they were taken as read, with the meeting confined to any questions and discussions about them.

 - a. **Secretary** (Jan Glen)
 - b. **Treasurer** (Sue Davenport) The Treasurer raised the issue of late payment of subs by some towers. It was clarified that subs are due for the Guild year which runs from January to December. Nicola Lee said it would be easier if subs could be paid online. The Treasurer feels this would be too difficult to align payments and members.
 - c. **Ringing Master** (Nigel Mellor) Nigel added that there has been an increase in attendance at the elementary practices, which are the most well attended practices. The practices are fun and the learners progressing well. Nigel will look to change one of the two monthly elementary practices to an intermediate practice.
 - d. **Training Officer** (Jane Mellor) Jane reported that the attendees of the ART M2 course last year are delivering training sessions including at the elementary practices and Jane intends to provide ongoing support. Steve Wells added that what ART are doing is excellent. The report was approved.
 - e. **Branch Reps** (Sue Davenport & Vikki Bullbeck)
 - f. **Bookstall Officer** (Sue Portsmouth).
 - g. **Youth Officer** (Jennifer Moynihan) Jennifer was unable to attend the meeting, so the Secretary read out an addendum to the published report:

On Sunday, 12th February, a very successful youth practice was held jointly with Reading branch, at Sonning. The practice was well attended by young ringers from both branches, and we intend to organise more joint practices, alternating between Sonning Deanery and Reading locations. Hopefully, with the additional BBYR practices each month, this will give our young ringers an opportunity to attend 1-2 practices every month, plus access to outings, competitions, and social events (including guild events).

h. Webmaster/Postmaster (John Harrison)

i. Safeguarding (Jane Mellor) Nicola Lee asked for confirmation that the online safeguarding course is not a requirement for ringers under 18. Jane confirmed that to be correct. Katie Lane commented that someone under 18 who is doing some teaching, should have an awareness of safeguarding. The chairman mentioned guidance that ringers over 16 should do the awareness course.

7. Election of new members: The proposed new members were all elected, with some being elected subject to payment of outstanding subs. The new members elected were:

Jacob Richardson	Easthampstead
Daniel Richardson	Easthampstead
Sienna Spain	Easthampstead
Mia Watson	Easthampstead
Jane Robinson	Finchampstead
Natalie Johnson	Sonning
Daniel Ricketts	Twyford
Karen Ricketts	Twyford
Benjamin Eylott	Wokingham, All Saints
Elsie Bishop	Wokingham, St Paul
Maya Bishop	Wokingham, St Paul

Elected subject to payment of subs

Nicola Hayden	Hurst
Janice Howell	Hurst
Angela Vickery	Hurst

The following new members had been elected at a previous branch event and were now subject to ratification at this AGM. The members ratified were:

Dave Adams	Binfield
Chris Williams	Binfield

8. Election of Officers: Although the meeting couldn't technically elect officers, it was agreed to proceed since (a) most officers were already serving in post (b) the one vacancy was uncontested and could have been filled on a casual basis by the officers anyway. Katie Lane took the chair and Rob Needham proposed John Harrison for Chairman, seconded by Jan Glen. No other candidates were proposed, and John was duly elected. All officers other than Sue Portsmouth were prepared to stand again, and as no other candidates were proposed, they were duly elected. Jennifer Moynihan had volunteered to take on the Bookstall Officer role. Jane Mellor proposed Jennifer, seconded by Steve Wells and Jennifer was duly elected. Lesley Graves proposed Simon Smith to continue as the Independent Examiner, seconded by Geoff Harvey. Simon was duly elected.

Elected Officers:

Chairman	John Harrison
Secretary	Jan Glen
Treasurer	Sue Davenport
Ringing Master	Nigel Mellor
Deputy Ringing Master	Steve Wells
Branch Representatives	Sue Davenport, Vikki Bullbeck
Newsletter Editor	Rob Needham
Bookstall Officer	Jennifer Moynihan
Training Officer	Jane Mellor
Youth Officer	Jennifer Moynihan
Webmaster/Postmaster	John Harrison

Safeguarding Officer Jane Mellor
Independent Examiner Simon Smith

9. Branch practices and events schedule Steve Wells queried the Commonwealth Ringing Day. John Harrison clarified and said details are on the Central Council website. Ringing on this day is optional. Ken Davenport highlighted an error on the schedule, the correct date for the Radley course is 15th April. Steve also asked about details for ringing for the coronation. Katie Lane encouraged everyone to ring as much as possible in as many churches as possible. Katie encouraged members to attend the Guild AGM on 20th May to ensure a quorum for the meeting. Members attending will have the opportunity to ring the newly restored and augmented 8 bells at Broadwell.

10. Any Other Business.

The Chairman summarised the paper on the use of branch funds and asked for questions. Steve Wells commented that there did not appear to be any major expenditure since Easthampstead in 2004. The chairman mentioned other large grants: Wokingham All Saints 2004, Wokingham St Paul 2005, and Sonning 2018. Towers may make requests for fund, for example for soundproofing etc. There were no additional comments, indicating that there was general agreement.

Jane Mellor highlighted that Rob Needham and Darren Smith would be interviewed live on Radio Berkshire on Sunday 19th February just after 8.00am, with Jennifer and James Moynihan possibly joining by telephone.

Katie Lane reminded members that the Guild is run by volunteers and, despite many requests, there is still a vacancy for a Steward for the Newbury, Reading and Sonning Deanery area. Katie encouraged members to consider taking on the role, or suggest someone for the role, which was not onerous. Katie also advised that Tony Crabtree will be standing down as Deputy Master this year and for members to also consider taking on this role. The role mainly involves taking meetings when the Master is not available and running the Guild striking competitions.

Katie encouraged members to support the Guild ringing day on 1st May in the Chiltern and neighbouring branches. The ringing day raises important monies for the Guild bell fund.

On 8th July is the Guild festival which only runs every 5 years and is hosted by the Oxford City branch. It provides members with the opportunity to ring at towers that are not normally available. Invitations will be sent out.

Katie reminded everyone that quarter peal certificates are available for those completing their first quarter. Certificates are also available for testaments for long service. Also, a member who has been a Resident Ringing Member for at least 30 years and who has given meritorious service to the Guild or a Branch may be nominated by a branch and then proposed for Distinguished Membership by two members of the Guild., the names of those proposed for Distinguished Membership will go forward for ratification at the Guild AGM.

The Chairman thanked Steve Wells and the Easthampstead ringers for the tea, and Kevin Lovell for taking the service, and thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 18.20.

Actions from the Meeting

SDB Officers to determine if it is feasible to hold a branch practice on the day of the Guild AGM and 8-bell competition.

SDB Officers to review payment processes with a view to clarifying the requirements and ensuring timely payments can be made.

Chairman to clarify national information about Coronation ringing.