



Oxford Diocesan Guild
of Church Bell Ringers

Guidelines for Branch Secretaries

Updated March 2022

BRANCH SECRETARIES' GUIDELINES

These guidelines are provided by the General Secretary and do not take account of additional or different procedures which apply to individual Branches. The comments and procedures below should be taken as guidelines only, for the assistance of Branch Secretaries, particularly when they are new to the work. They supplement the Guild and Branch Rules and do not replace them.

Some Branches share some of these tasks amongst other Branch Officers. These guidelines will certainly be of assistance to Branch Treasurers whether or not this office is combined with that of secretary.

BRANCH PRACTICES AND MEETINGS

The frequency and dates of these will depend upon the tradition of your Branch and the wishes of the members.

If at all possible, decide on a schedule of towers for all practices and meetings for a year in advance. Keep a record to ensure that all towers are visited reasonably regularly. Also maintain a record of which towers have halls which can accommodate meetings and where people exist who will organise tea.

Notice of the Branch AGM and other business meetings must be sent to all correspondents of towers with members at least 14 days in advance, and also to the Officers of the Guild (i.e. Master, Deputy Master, General Secretary, General Treasurer and your Branch Steward). Branch meetings must be minuted, and a copy of the minutes should be sent to the Guild Librarian. It is recommended that old Minute Books should be deposited in the Guild Library for safe keeping.

If necessary, items of business such as the election of new members can be taken on the occasion of Branch Practices provided notice is given at least 14 days in advance. (You could consider the possibility of giving such a notice for each Practice to allow for emergency items. A minute of 'No business' would suffice for those (many) occasions when there is nothing to raise.) The Guild

banner may be used at Branch services and this is available from the Guild Master.

Expenses for postage and printing should be claimed from the Branch Treasurer, providing receipts wherever possible.

BRANCH STRIKING COMPETITIONS

For your Branch Striking Competition(s), arrange the location well in advance. Also at least 3 months in advance find one, or preferably two, judge(s). A list of ringers who would be able to act as judges can be obtained from the Guild Master or Deputy Master. Good judges are difficult to secure, so book them early.

The judge(s) should be from outside the Branch whenever possible. Copies of the rules for striking competitions should be sent to the judge(s) and to the competing teams.

Ensure that there is suitable accommodation for the judges. They should be able to hear the bells clearly without being disturbed by the noise or sight of other people.

In advance organise two stewards - one to marshal the teams according to the draw order and the other to be in the ringing room advising the conductor when allocated times for practice and for the rounds are reached, etc.

NEW MEMBERS

When new members are elected at one of your meetings, the name(s) and date(s) of election should be sent to the Guild Membership Secretary as soon as possible. The Membership Secretary will issue a certificate for you to forward to the new member together with a copy of the Guild Rules and the New Members information leaflet.

The Branch should keep an up to date list of members, including the date of election, membership number (obtained from the certificate), tower and when subscriptions have been paid (or whether the subscription has been waived as described in the Guild Rules). In the event of a member moving to another Branch, details should be sent to the Secretary of that Branch. All changes in membership, including deaths, should be notified to the Membership Secretary. The General Secretary should be informed before each Guild AGM of the names of members who have died during the year.

FINANCE

Subscriptions are due to be paid by members at the start of each year. Ensure that you (and they) know the subscription amount, which is generally decided at the Autumn General Committee Meeting.

Chase up towers and members who are slow in sending subscriptions.

The Branch Treasurer should send the appropriate proportion of the subscriptions to the General Treasurer as soon as possible but definitely by 1st March each year.

The Branch Treasurer should maintain accounts and submit them for auditing. A copy of the accounts should be sent to the Guild General Treasurer by 30th April.

BADGES AND RULE BOOKS

The General Secretary holds stocks of badges and the Membership Secretary holds Rule Books. Rule books are available free of charge but badges should be purchased (and resold to your members as required).

FIRST QUARTER PEAL CERTIFICATES

Blank, signed copies of first quarter peal certificates may be obtained from the Guild Secretary.

CHANGE OF BRANCH OFFICERS

You should notify the General Secretary, the Website Manager, the Server Manager, the Newsletter Editor and the Report Editor of changes of Officers, particularly the Branch Secretary. Changes of Branch Treasurer should also be notified to the General Treasurer.

NOTICES FOR GUILD ACTIVITIES

Notices will be sent to you by the General Secretary regarding Guild activities such as the AGM, Ringing Day, Festival, Striking Competitions and General Committee Meetings.

These notices should be distributed promptly as follows:

- Notices of meetings of the General Committee and the Bell Fund to yourself and to the Branch representative(s).
- Striking Competition notices to those concerned as described below.
- Other notices: at least one to each tower with members and spare copies to Branch Officers.

GUILD COMPETITIONS

The General Secretary will send you notices regarding the various Guild Competitions.

For the Six Bell Competition, your Branch will be represented by one tower band, either the winner of your Branch Competition or another selected by an appropriate procedure. The notice for the Guild competition should be forwarded promptly to the conductor/tower captain of the band concerned so that they can submit their entry form to the Deputy Master (or other organiser) by the due date.

Entry to the Guild Eight Bell Competition is for tower or Branch bands with no restriction on numbers. Again, notices should be forwarded promptly to likely entrants so that entry forms can be submitted on time.

In the Ten Bell Competition your Branch will be represented by a single band selected in a manner approved by your Branch members. The notice for this competition should be sent to the person(s) responsible for organising the band.

SECRETARIES' MEETING

As a Branch Secretary, we hope that you will be able to attend the annual Branch Secretaries' Meeting at which various Guild and Branch issues are discussed informally. The date of this meeting varies, but recently it has been on a Saturday morning in February using Zoom. The General Secretary will send a reminder of the meeting, possibly with a list of topics to be discussed, but please feel free to ask for any other items to be included. If you can give prior warning this would be appreciated, but items can be raised at the meeting if there is no time to give notice.