



OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

**SATURDAY 26 November 2022 at 2:00pm following 10 bell striking competition
(results 1.45pm)**

**St. Andrew's Church, Church Walk, Shrivenham, Swindon SN6 8AQ (parking &
other details below)**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Requests for urgent items of Any Other Business
3. Minutes of the General Committee meeting of 12 March 2022
4. Matters arising
 - a. ODG Case for Change – update on consultation returns
5. Correspondence - none

INFORMATION AND REPORTS (circulated in advance where appropriate)

6. Reports from sub-committees - see separate documents
 - a. Education (Learning & Development Workgroup)
 - b. Towers and Belfries
 - c. Finance and General Purposes
7. Central Council Representatives Report
8. Diary of Events - attached

FINANCIAL MATTERS

9. Subscriptions for 2023
10. Resident Ringing Members & Associate Members
11. Non-resident Ringing Members
12. Peal fees for 2023
13. Guild Budget – see separate document

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING ITEMS

14. Any other business, as agreed at the start
15. Concluding vote of thanks

Item 3

MINUTES OF GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held at St Mary's Church, Wendover on Saturday 12 March 2022 at 2:40pm and attended by 38 Committee members.

The meeting was chaired by Catherine Lane, Master, who welcomed members to the meeting and told them that the meeting would be recorded

1. Apologies

20 apologies for absence were received. A list of members attending will be recorded.

2. Any other urgent items of business

John Harrison asked that we consider reorganising the Guild management and the role and setup of this committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 27 November 2021

The minutes were agreed on a proposal of Ken Davenport, seconded by Alan Marchbank.

4. Matters arising

a) Oxford Botanic Garden 400th Anniversary

Catherine Lane reported that we are in contact with the Gardens about their vast PR exercise leading up to the anniversary on 15th July. They have asked that bells be rung particularly in Oxford about 2:15pm. It would be nice if as many towers as possible throughout the Diocese could ring some time that day.

b) F.E.Robinson Bowl

The rose bowl was shown to those members present, together with a box made by Charles Morrish. The plan is that it would be held with the Master's artefacts and would be on display at Guild meetings and events such as the Festival. It is insured.

c) Registering the Guild as a Charity

In response to a query from Robert Newton, Stuart Gibson said that there had not been any progress on this matter, although it was on his to-do list. Ken Darvill pointed out the advantage of gift aid particularly for donations supporting youth ringing. The Treasurer will progress this matter.

5. Correspondence

Ken Darvill reported that he had received a consultation email from the Central Council looking towards a revised basis for their affiliation fees based on membership. For our Guild this will result in a slight increase in the fee. Later they will be seeking to reduce the number of representatives from each society.

6. Reports of and elections to subcommittees

a) Education (Learning and Development Workgroup)

Robert Newton reported that the Training Meeting had been postponed and notice would be sent shortly about the new date of 30th April. He urged members to promote the e-bells which are available to borrow and potentially purchase.

The following General Committee members were elected to the Workgroup, proposed by John Wells and seconded by Jenny Page: Robert Newton, Tony Crabtree, Patricia Newton, Elizabeth Mullett, Lindsay Powell and Colin Lee.

b) Towers and Belfries

Tony Crabtree reported that there had been a lot of demand for inspections. There are 13 current members of the Workgroup. Tony Crabtree, Alan Marchbank, John Davidge, Chris Potter, Philip Dobson, Graham Clifton are the General Committee members seeking election. Jon Chamberlain proposed their election, seconded by Patricia Newton, which was carried.

Tony Crabtree reported that geographical coverage across the Guild is good but new members are welcome. Anyone interested should contact him.

Face to face courses have resumed with three recent ones.

The report was accepted unopposed, proposed by Tony Crabtree and seconded by Stuart Gibson.

c) Finance and General Purposes

Ken Darvill reported that three General Committee members require election – Robert Newton, Alan Marchbank and Graham Clifton are the current additional members.

The report was accepted and the members re-elected unopposed, proposed by Angela Darvill and seconded by Ruth Groves.

7. a) Peal Secretary report

Ken Davenport's report was noted.

b) Safeguarding Officer report

June Wells pointed out that it is mandatory for tower captains and those involved with teaching children to take the Foundations course, but this is down to the parish to impose not the Guild. Similarly all ringers should undertake the Basic Awareness training. There was some debate about the appropriateness of asking minors to be expected to undertake this training and whether this age limit should be 16 or 18 years of age. June undertook to discuss this issue with the Diocese and to circulate the further information that she had received from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer within the past couple of days.

c) Librarian's report

Doug Beaumont reported that he had received a box of papers accumulated by Bill Butler and passed on to the Guild by his son. These included one of J J Parker's notebooks. Katie Lane pointed out that historic minute books and the like from Branches should preferably be passed on to the Guild Library.

d) Webmaster's report

Andrew Goldthorpe is gradually improving the layout and content of the website. There was an appeal for everyone to pass on interesting news and information to Andrew and for anyone with graphic design experience to help with updating the maps.

e) Server Manager's report

Richard Stanworth reported that he is still looking to move to a new server but without losing the current facilities on the existing server. Several members highlighted the benefits of the mailing lists which we would not want to lose. Robert Newton pointed out that a section of the report is missing. The fourth paragraph should read: "As well as looking at a server upgrade in order to increase the memory, I am currently investigating alternative suppliers who can provide a significant increase in resources for about half the current server cost."

f) Report Editor's report

Heather Browning pointed out the new front cover with the coloured Guild logo. Katie Lane thanked Heather for all the work that she put into producing it and in such a tight timeframe.

8. Diary of Events

Ken Darvill highlighted the Ringing Day in May based around the Sonning Deanery Branch and the Guild AGM on 21st May combined with the Eight-Bell Striking Competition.

9. Posts specified in Rule 9(c) and (f) (iii): Notification of officers not willing to stand for re-election

Catherine Lane reported that two posts would fall vacant and strongly encouraged members to come forward to help fill them. The posts are:

1. General Secretary, to replace Ken Darvill, who will be stepping down, although we do have a volunteer to take over
2. Steward to replace Bobbie May, who will be stepping down. Katie Lane urged members to look for a replacement to cover the Reading, Sonning Deanery and Newbury Branches.

10. Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2021

The accounts have been published and Susan Read was thanked for her work on them. As was to be expected, we ran at a deficit last year of about £2,000, with subscriptions down by about 200 members.

The accounts were accepted, proposed by Stuart Gibson and seconded by Alan Marchbank.

11. Donation proposals for the 2022 Annual General Meeting

The following proposals by Stuart Gibson were made, seconded by Tim Pett:

£2,000 donation to the Bell Fund

£200 donation to the Ringing World

£500 donation to the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART).

Graham Clifton proposed that the Ringing World donation be £500. John Harrison proposed donations of £500 to the Ringing World and £750 to ART, seconded by Robert Newton, adding that we should be encouraging ringers to subscribe to The Ringing World. This was agreed. Subsequently however in view of some confusion about what had been agreed, the votes were retaken on an individual basis and then the following were agreed by members:

£2,000 donation to the Bell Fund

£750 donation to the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART)

£750 donation to the Ringing World.

12. AOB

a) Use of Microphones

Sue Davenport raised the point that in buildings such as this church microphones would help. She asked that for future meetings we try to obtain them and the related equipment.

b) Guild Governance and Management Structure

John Harrison asked that we readdress the issue of whether the current structure is right for the long-term good of the Guild. Katie Lane thought that it was a good idea.

c) Striking Competition Judges

Tony Crabtree appealed for suggestions for judges, particularly for the eight-bell competition.

13. Thanks

Catherine Lane thanked Chiltern Branch and Wendover for hosting the meeting. The meeting closed at 3:47 pm.

Item 6a

Learning & Development Workgroup Report

The group met twice, via Zoom, in April and October. Some successful in-person events have also been held: the Radley Course and the Training Meeting in April, and a Grandsire Doubles Conducting Course and the Michaelmas Course in September. At the time of writing, the Steeple Aston Course (29th October) and a Grandsire Caters Course (5th November) are anticipated. A wide disparity in numbers of applications for similar courses (eg. Radley, which was oversubscribed, and Steeple Aston) has been noted.

The Training Meeting at Witney at the end of April was attended by a dozen people representing ten branches. There was optimism about the ways in which ringing has recovered as we come out of the pandemic. Elizabeth Mullett gave an invaluable and detailed presentation about online resources. Much discussion centred on leadership and this is an area on which we intend to concentrate at the next Training event on 4th February.

Our congratulations to the two groups of young Guild members who performed so creditably in the RWNYS at Exeter in July. The Bucks & Berks Young Ringers were particularly pleased with their highest placing in the competition so far: 3rd in the Call change section. The representative Guild band was placed 4th in the Method ringing section. Sincere thanks are due to all the adults who support and train these squads.

Robert Newton (Secretary)

Item 6b

ODG Towers & Belfries Committee Report; March – October 2022

The Towers & Belfries Committee has met twice since the March General Committee; 14th April and 24th August in person. We agreed to meet again in January 2023 by Zoom and in person; April & August.

We discussed and progressed issues relating to

- stretchy terylene topped ropes,
- revitalising the TMA (Tower Maintenance Award) system following covid,
- post-covid belfry inspections (April),
- dry weather belfry inspections (August)
- inspection documentation storage and retrieval, non-ringing steeple keepers
- previous and future belfry courses – aiming to provide at least four p.a.

- mileage costs of attending meetings
- The Bell Fund
- Suggested inspection report templates and

reporting and discussing advice and inspections for: Fulmer, Lower Basildon, Ruscombe, Witney, Stoney Stratford, Windsor St John's, Aston Clinton, Slapton, Ufton Nervet, Woodeaton, Whitchurch, Little Rollright, Iver, Chastleton, Little Compton, North Leigh, Lathbury, Halton, Little Milton, Great Haseley, Stoke Lyne, Bledlow, Ivinghoe, Sandhurst, Wokingham, Finchampstead, Padworth, Stratfield Mortimer, Wargrave, East Hendred, West Hendred, Lambourn, Reading, St Mary & St Laurence, Hughenden, Kencot, Oxford St Aldates, Combe (near Newbury), Theale, Whitchurch, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal.

A particular concern has been the extreme dry weather and the extraordinary quantity of loose nuts & bolts in belfries all over the Guild. We have been working hard to alert, educate, correct and generally mitigate the problem.

We ran a general belfry course at Ambrosden in October and a rope course later in October at Steeple Aston (using the hall while the ringing course students were out at the towers). We have two rope courses planned for 11th Feb and end of October 2023. There will hopefully be a general belfry course at Shaw-cum-Donnington on May 13th 2023. There may be other courses depending on invitations from host towers.

Sincere thanks to our thirteen hard working volunteer members; Anthony Williamson (Secretary), Phil Roberts, Alan Marchbank, Andrew Salter, Chris Potter, Len Palfrey, David Bardwell, Graham Clifton, Philip Dobson, John Davidge, Mark Curnow and Steve Vickars. We would welcome new members.

Tony Crabtree – Chairman

Item 6c

Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Report: March – October 2022

The Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee has met twice in person since the March General Committee meeting.

The meeting heard reports from the Server Manager, Website Manager and Treasurer. These reports covered progress on the OGD server upgrade, Mail Lists, Issues with some mail addresses, and progress with MemberMojo (the membership database software system) trial. The sub-committee has established a small task force to create a set of short, and longer plans that address the current challenges plus ensure the future ways of working with the membership database,

website and mail lists fits ODG's needs. F&GP thanked all those working hard to pilot the membership software and perform essential server and website work.

There were no reported safeguarding matters.

We have renewed the OGD Zoom subscription.

In the absence of a PR sub-committee any matters have been handled by the Master, Deputy Master, Treasurer, and Hon Secretary. The OGD website publishes these matters.

An enjoyable new members event was held on the 23rd July 2023 at the Treasurer's home. We propose to continue with these improving the events by including more details about the guild's work and holding the events regionally to enable more new members to attend.

We discussed the membership fee and determined that there would be no change to the £8.00 fee. Should new monies be required to fund specific needs that are not within our budget scope we will consider any fee change then.

Karen Pile - Secretary

Item 7

CENTRAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT

This year's meeting of the CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS was held on 3rd September at Nottingham Trent University. Minutes for the 125th Annual Meeting of the CCCBR will appear on the CCCBR website in due course. Full reports from the Executive, Workgroups, Support Services, and Safeguarding team, for the period to May 2022, are available in the 2022 Annual Meeting Papers online at [cccbr.org.uk/ABOUT/ANNUAL MEETINGS AND BUDGET/ANNUAL REPORTS/2022](http://cccbr.org.uk/ABOUT/ANNUAL_MEETINGS_AND_BUDGET/ANNUAL_REPORTS/2022). Members of The Ringing World Ltd are, by right, all those members of the Central Council who indicate a willingness to be company members before the AGM, which is held on the same day as the Council meeting. Several of our ODG reps. have continued to be involved in workgroups this year: John Harrison-Historical & Archive, Lucy Hopkins Till- Volunteering & Leadership, Graham John (Leader) and Tim Pett (Dove Steward)- Technical & Taxonomy.

This report includes just some key points from both meetings.

The Executive Report noted that some towers are still very aware of the risks of poor ventilation. Online guidance is now available on Devon call change ringing and calling and conducting. The Executive also considers that further development is needed for the Women in Ringing initiative.

Safeguarding The Safeguarding Officers have continued to help navigate the changes in the Church of England's shifting safeguarding training requirement.

Support Services

The *Performance Analysis* report showed that peal numbers for 2021 were, unsurprisingly, still significantly down. The ASCY was, by far, the leading affiliated society, although the ODG was among the top ten for both tower and hand bells. Major was still very much more popular than peals on other numbers and surprise methods most popular of all. Quarter peals were up by circa 50%, the majority being minor and the highest number being rung in

Kent and Oxfordshire.

The report from *Publications* indicated that, although sales fell again, the most popular titles were still Dove 11, New Ringer's Book, Ringing Circles, Manual of Belfry Maintenance and Sherbourne Teaching Aids.

The *Bell Restoration Fund Grants Panel* allocated amounts ranging from £100 to £2000 (the maximum allowed) to 36 towers, totalling £36,000. Their policy is that, when funds are available, these are dispersed in total.

Work Groups

Senior Stakeholder Liaison Workgroup report indicated that relations with Church House, the Church Buildings Council and Historic England are in a good place.

Stewardship and Management Workgroup this year purchased specialist equipment to measure tower movement. It is in the process of revising its advice on belfry upkeep, which will be available digitally. Information on ringing has also been prepared for Environmental Health officials. Judges were provided for the Westley award for Church Bell Maintenance. Advice continues to be provided on a number of topics, particularly electrical equipment in towers.

The *Volunteer and Leadership* Workgroup ran a successful training course in the North West and is embarking on a "Promoting Decent Striking" project.

The *Young Ringers- Schools and Youth Groups* Workgroup has recently tested curriculum-based school lessons in Mathematics, English, Science, History, Geography, Drama, etc. using bell ringing as a platform. Work has also been completed to revamp the Bluebells' Challenge withing the Guides and an Occasional Badge along similar lines for the Scouts. A "Tower Visit" video has also been produced to support these. Additionally, a framework has been drawn up to help manage and measure progress of D of E candidates.

The *Young Ringers – Universities and Colleges* Workgroup has produced A Level standard material that explains the basics of change ringing from a maths perspective, together with suggestions for research projects. This was shared with two mathematics schools. Work has also taken place to put new college entrants in touch with local ringing societies. In addition, a Summer school was planned to provide ringing students with the skills required to teach new university recruits.

The *Historical and Archive* Workgroup has been completing work regarding the recording of belfry artefacts and further work on the Rolls of Honour, biographies, ringing artefacts, *et al.* Search for a new home for the CCCBR library has also been a key activity.

The *Public Relations* Workgroup has been working on producing short videos for advertising purposes and a longer one to show what ringing is about. It has also run photo competitions, which have produced useful promotional resources. Ringing for the UN COP26 Climate Change Conference unexpectedly gathered a lot of welcome press interest. Ringing for HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee provided a great opportunity to link with local and national media. Bells on Sunday recordings have increased and there is a channel dedicated to PR on Ringing Forums.

Highlights for the *Technical and Taxonomy* Workgroup include establishing Ringing Forums, work on the Framework for Method Ringing v2 and extending and improving the new Dove database and its scope. Regular updating of the Methods Library continues. A new website has been set up for Doubles Variations and Calls and the group continues to do much work

regarding compositions.

Forward Plan for 2023 Plans are still going ahead to create a National Ringing Centre in Northampton and to build a mobile belfry to take ringing demonstrations to schools and large events. There are also plans to improve branding and marketing.

Motions were passed to base affiliation fees on membership and to implement the Hon. David Bleby QC's recommended improvements to Rules and Standing Orders in his Technical Review report.

Financial Update The General Fund balance brought forward at the end of December 2021 was £178,735 and the accounts were expected to break even or show a small surplus over the course of 2022.

Next Year's Meeting will be held on Saturday 2nd September in Ipswich.

At the RINGING WORLD LTD AGM the chairman reported that with the resumption in ringing activity and various cost savings the overall deficit was only £12,636 this year. Sales of diaries, calendars and other merchandise produced an improved net income after expenses of £24,463. However, the number of postal subscribers has dropped by 160 to 1912.

Lucy Hopkins Till

Item 7



Oxford Diocesan Guild
of Church Bell Ringers

DIARY OF EVENTS from January 2023

2023

Rope Splicing Course Saturday 11 th February	Radley
Spring General Committee Meeting Saturday 11 th March	ONB Branch
Commonwealth Nations Ringing Saturday 11 th March	
Radley Course Saturday 15 th April	Radley
St George's Day Sunday 23 rd April	
Ringling Day Monday 1 st May	Chiltern Branch
Kings Coronation Ringing Saturday 6 th May	
General Belfry Course Saturday 13 th May	Newbury Branch
AGM & 8 Bell Striking Competition Saturday 20 th May	W&W Branch
Guild Festival Saturday 8 th July	Oxford City
New Members' Welcome Saturday 22 nd July (tbc)	

Michaelmas Course
Saturday 23rd September

6 Bell Striking Competition
Saturday 7th October

Chipping Norton Branch

November General Committee Meeting
Saturday 25th November

Banbury Branch

10 Bell Striking Competition
Saturday 25th November

Banbury Branch

Steeple Aston Course with
Rope Splicing, Rope Maintenance and Management Course
Saturday 28th October