

## MINUTES OF GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held at St. Andrew's Church, Church Walk, Shrivenham, Swindon SN6 8AQ on Saturday 26 November 2022 at 2:00pm following the 10-bell striking competition (results 1.45pm).

Attended by 29 Committee members (apologies and attendees recorded in the ODG Attendance Book).

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

A microphone and 'Hearing Loop' capability were in operation to aid hearing the meeting.

### 1. Apologies

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

### 2. Any other urgent items of business

Robert Newton requested that the matter of Raising, and Lowering was discussed.

### 3. Minutes of the General Committee meeting on 12 March 2022

The minutes were agreed on a proposal of Ken Davenport (Beaconsfield), seconded by Amy Herlihy (Drayton St Leonard).

### 4. Matters arising

ODG Case for Change – Update on consultation returns

The Master reported that a questionnaire with case for change paper was sent to a broad range of ringers in the branches. These ringers represented the following: secretaries, branch chairs, new recruits, long serving members, trustees, past masters, IT/Web specialists, members with no branch or Guild responsibilities, education committee members, towers, and belfry members, CCCBR reps, Guild stewards, & members with close connections to the clergy.

There were 10 returns which on analysis provided the following 4 topics for development. These 4 topics identify **Why?** And **How?** Actions.

We will work on these 4 topics:

- I. Communications
- II. Volunteers
- III. Membership matters which include information about current members, maximising recruitment and developing the potential of every ringer
- IV. Building the dialogue and relationship between the Diocese, Church community and ringers (this topic not identified in the returns, but we felt was part of our remit – the church owns the bells)

It is apparent that for most of our ringers, their desire is to ring and enjoy themselves and not be involved in central administration. The Master completely understood this.

Therefore, looking forward we will do 2 things:

- Concentrate on maximising ringing and enjoyment
- Minimise administration

The Master has spoken with John Harrison who has extensive experience of the above matters and the way to bring through appropriate change. His advice was that *'it would take time and cannot be rushed'*.

It is probable in the following months another progress document will be sent out for your response.

The meeting was asked for comment. There was none.

The Master asked if the meeting agreed to continue the ODG changes consultation as set out above.

The General Committee agreed that we proceed as above.

## **5. Correspondence**

Although the agenda said there was no correspondence - The Master has received an email from Barry W M Cowper who has served the ODG with distinction for many years, recently as a guild trustee. He has resigned with immediate effect. We will be looking for a new ODG Trustee.

## **6. Reports of and elections to subcommittees**

### **a) Education (Learning and Development Workgroup)**

We are still without a chairman for this subcommittee. We welcome anyone who would like to join this subcommittee. Contact the Hon Sec or Master if you are interested in taking on this role.

Robert Newton reported that there was a new course next year which will be added to the Diary of Events. It is a Training event to be held at Kidlington on the first Saturday of February 2023 (Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February).

### **b) Towers and Belfries**

Tony Crabtree reported that the unprecedented hot weather had affected belfries requiring careful checks to be performed. It had taken several email prompts to get towers to investigate this issue and the GC were advised that not all towers had planned for checks. This was a potentially scary/risky situation as wheels, bolts stays, etc. were in a dangerous state.

The General Committee's attention was drawn to the several courses running in 2023.

### **c) Finance and General Purposes**

Catherine Lane advised that she had new information on the status of the Membership Mojo IT system (software to manage simple club membership [www.membermojo.co.uk](http://www.membermojo.co.uk)). A pilot has been running in Sonning Deanery to try out the

potential use of this IT tool by ODG. The IT system works at the Sonning Deanery level of email interaction but may regrettably not be suitable for use throughout the Guild. The alternative IT tool 'Love Admin' had already been dismissed as not fulfilling ODG needs. We are therefore moving slowly forward with finding a robust cost-effective solution.

Stuart Gibson will be exploring further software solutions.

Karen Pile advised that a small task force within the F&GP committee has been set up to establish short, medium and long term solutions for the IT, email and membership matters as these are an integrated set of matters that no one piece of software can address. Updates on the task force progress will be provided and new requirements - addressed via the Master for approval in the first instance.

## **7. Central Council Representatives Report**

The report was noted. Lucy Hopkins Till had nothing further to add.

Tim Pett endorsed the report's content although he had not contributed to its writing.

Tim had no further additions or amendments to make.

## **8 Diary of Events**

The Master highlighted to GC members that the 2023 Festival was progressing. Towers had been booked. The outstanding item was the venue for lunch. Managing costs made this difficult. Stuart Gibson is in communication with Christ Church about the use of the Master's garden. Another option is for us all to bring a picnic lunch to eat on Christ Church Meadow.

The AGM is scheduled for the Witney and Woodstock Branch. As the AGM date coincides with Witney fair the AGM will be held at Broadwell. The AGM will be held in conjunction with the 8-bell striking competition. Broadwell is a new tower (just over a year old). It had been an unringable tower for 100 years. Within walking distance to the church is an old barn and old farmhouse. It is a beautiful rustic setting which should be enjoyable. We are looking into holding the AGM in the barn.

There are 2 new dates:

Saturday 4th February is a Tower Leaders Training event at Kidlington.

Saturday 30th September is the Michaelmas course.

The Diary of Events will be updated.

The Website Manager's daughter is unwell so there may be a delay before the Diary of Events and other papers will be published on the ODG website.

## **Financial Matters**

Stuart Gibson (Guild Treasurer) was available at the end of a phone to take any questions – there were none.

Alan Marchbank advised that the financial report showed that North Bucks had not paid their subscriptions. This has been resolved and payment made. The report therefore shows the situation before payment resolution. There was a delay due to difficulties in identifying where to send the subscriptions.

The Master noted that ODG have several key vacancies. One is that Assistant Treasurer which caused the issue above.

#### **9 Subscriptions for 2023**

It was recommended that the subscriptions stay as now.

This was proposed by June Wells and Seconded by Colin Lee.

All in favour – no abstentions

#### **10 Resident Ringing Members & Associate Members**

It was recommended that the subscriptions stay as now. The figures remain (£8.00, split £5.00/£3.00 Guild/Branch)

This was proposed by Rob Needham and Seconded by Robert Newton

All in favour – no abstentions

#### **11 Non-Resident Ringing Members**

It was recommended that the subscriptions stay as now. £8.00

This was proposed by Robert Newton and Seconded by Alan Marchbank.

All in favour – no abstentions

#### **12 Peal fees for 2023**

It was recommended that the charges remain as now. 50p per rope (per participant on handbells)

This was proposed by Alan Marchbank. Seconded by Tim Pett.

All in favour – no abstentions

The Master advised that the Treasurer thought it likely that all fees could go up after next year subject to fund requirements for agreed circumstances.

#### **13 Guild Budget**

The budget will be discussed and put forward for approval at a future meeting.

#### **14 Any Other Business**

##### **Raising and Lowering**

Robert Newton spoke to the need to improve raising and lowering standards. Many towers do not ring up and down. It's a skill we often neglect. It requires more attention.

Robert proposed that he would donate a trophy for a dedicated ringing up and down yearly competition. The competition could be combined with a striking competition.

There are greater capabilities in other areas because of the addition of raising and lowering as part of striking competition marking. Ringing up and down was therefore an important part of the performance. Tony Crabtree advised that 4 Counties (includes Oxfordshire) include marking for ringing up and ringing down in their competition. St Andrew's Church Shrivenham had won this trophy on many occasions.

The Master & Tony Crabtree (Deputy Master) were in favour of the proposal and putting on ringing up and down courses.

Thanks were extended to Robert for championing this matter and the donation of a special trophy for ringing up and ringing down.

Tony Crabtree advised that there will be a raising and lowering course in Vale of White Horse early in the New Year to which all are welcome.

### **Guild Report**

The Master reminded GC members that the Guild Report would be in preparation by Heather Browning shortly. The form will be issued shortly. The Master requested the secretaries check the membership, practice nights, long service certificates (e.g., are there members that are due certificates?) plus all the small details are cross checked. We wish to make amends for all those due long service awards.

Doug Hird raised that there are errors in the OGD map. Doug Hird can do the amends. The Deputy Master will be in touch as he has an interactive map. It was noted that fixing the map would be a huge step forward.

### **Use of Microphones & Loop**

Sue Davenport thanked those that had arranged for the loop and microphone to be in place.

### **Odd Bob magazines**

Rob Needham reminded the meeting to pick up their branches bundle of Odd Bob magazines.

## **15 Concluding Thanks**

The Master thanked Vale of the White Horse for hosting the meeting. Especial thanks were extended for the excellent ringing lunch, coffees, teas, and IT capabilities (screen projection from tower, loop and microphone). Thanks, were also extended to those making a longer journey to the edge of the guild's geographic area. The meeting closed at 2:41 pm.