

Item 8 - General Committee Report for 2023 AGM

The General Committee has met twice in the past twelve months, both as in-person gatherings in churches.

The November 2022 meeting was at Shrivenham and agreed that for 2023 subscriptions and peal fees should remain at £8 and 50p per ringer, respectively.

The March 2023 meeting was at North Moreton and followed the AGM of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund.

At the March meeting this year it was agreed to recommend to the AGM that the following donations be made:

£2,000 donation to the Bell Fund

An argued case was requested for the AGM to justify donations to ART and the Ringing World

£ donation to the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART)

£ donation to the Ringing World.

The Treasurer proposes to raise the subscription sum for 2024. It was agreed that a well-argued case setting out the reasons for the change would be prepared for the 2023 November General Committee meeting. Items cited as requiring funding were support for our youth bands, and payment for new membership software.

The Master reported on progress revisiting the issue of reorganising the Guild's structure and meetings in the light of the Central Council's restructuring. The focus was on improving communications. Progress has been slower than desired as volunteer time to undertake the work is limited. Pilot testing of membership software systems continues.

The Learning and Development Workgroup (L&D) have organised a full set of courses this year. This workgroup is still without a chairman.

A new competition for Raising and Lowering has been proposed with a trophy sourced by the competition proposer Robert Newton. Work is underway on timings and format of the competition.

The Towers and Belfries Sub-committee (T&B) have held a full complement of courses which have been well attended. The T&B members have resumed inspections of towers for TMA, grant inspections and general advice, but would welcome more Guild members to help – you do not need to be a General Committee member.

The L&D and T&B workgroups have both comprehensively added material to the Guild website.

The 2023 Guild Festival is progressing well. Arrangements for towers, service and lunch were in development. The Festival in Oxford City will be on Saturday 8th July 2023.

Reports were received from the Peal Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, Librarian, Website Manager, Server Manager and Report Editor.

The Safeguarding Officer is embarking on an audit of safeguarding status in the Guild. A safeguarding report will be submitted at the 2023 AGM.

The Website manager advised that maintenance and re-organisation work continues behind the scenes. Thanks were extended to our Server Manager Richard Stanworth. Thanks to his work we now have a development website which a clone of the live site. There is also an opportunity for more website space, due to this work.

The work of the many contributors to the Guild report to improve its accuracy was commended and thanks extended to the Report Editor.

The Diary of Events was discussed. The recording of Platinum Jubilee ringing and ringing in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on BellBoard by ODG towers was noted.

Ring for the King was a useful vehicle to bring on new ringers. There had been over 1000 enquiries from potential new ringers. It was observed in addition to bringing in new ringers, developing and retaining ringers formed part of the Central Council's Ringing 2030 – Planning for the Future of Ringing. Recording ringing for the coronation on BellBoard was raised again and the video training on the ODG website about how to record highlighted.

Item 9 - Safeguarding Report to the General Committee

Following the changes in the previous year, things have been more stable in terms of safeguarding requirements coming from the C of E. Communication with members across the Guild suggests that there is a wide variation between parishes as to compliance.

An audit of safeguarding within the Guild has been completed and has highlighted some actions for development, most of which are linked to monitoring of compliance of Officers and youth group leaders at Guild level and monitoring of Guild Youth activities. This is being addressed. Responsibility for keeping records of compliance within the parishes remains with the PSOs. Some additions will be required when the policy is rewritten (review date July 2023) these are mostly to improve clarity of purpose.

The Guild website safeguarding section has a copy of the current policy, soon to be updated, as well as a useful checklist for towers to ensure that they are complying with C of E regulations. All ringers should complete Basic Awareness training, regardless of whether there are young or vulnerable people within the band.

A short presentation on safeguarding was prepared and delivered as part of the Tower Leaders Workshop held at Kidlington on Saturday 4 February.

June Wells

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