



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

**SATURDAY 25th November 2023 at 2.30pm The Village Hall, Steeple Aston,
OX25 4SF**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Requests for urgent items of Any Other Business
3. Minutes of the General Committee meeting of 11th March 2023.
4. Matters arising
5. Correspondence
 - a. ART statement
 - b. Ashmolean One World handbells
 - c. CCCBR

INFORMATION AND REPORTS (circulated in advance where appropriate)

6. Case for Change update
 - a. Member communications (documents attached)
 - b. QR code
7. Reports from sub-committees
 - a. Education (Learning & Development Workgroup)
 - b. Towers and Belfries
 - c. Finance and General Purposes
8. Reports from
 - a. Central Council Representatives
 - b. Safeguarding Officer
9. Diary of Events & 15 year plan – attached.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

10. Subscriptions for 2024
11. Resident Ringing Members & Associate members
12. Non-resident Ringing members.
13. Peal fees for 2024
14. Guild Budget – see separate document.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING ITEMS

15. Any other business, as agreed at the start and OddBob Editor vacancy.
16. Concluding vote of thanks

Date of next General Committee Spring meeting & Bell Fund AGM – 9th March 2024

MINUTES OF GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held at The Village Hall, North Moreton, OX11 9AS on Saturday 11th March 2023 at 3:00pm following the ODBF AGM (2.45pm)

Attended by 34 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 Audio capability were in operation to aid hearing the meeting.

1. Apologies

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

2. Any other urgent items of business

None.

3. Minutes of the General Committee meeting on 26 November 2022

Clarification was requested by Server Manager Richard Stanworth about ODG membership database activities (under item 6). John Harrison and the Master confirmed that Member Mojo had not looked suitable in November 2022. Testing and exploration with other products is continuing.

3 recording errors were raised:

Secretary to remove Tower names from beside Proposer and Seconder.

Under item 12 the phrasing of the peal fees costs per rope and per handbell ringer was confused.

Under item 14 paragraph 3 the competition that incorporates ringing up and ringing down as a marked component of the performance is not 4 Counties (it is the Four Shires Guild of Bellringers).

The minutes were agreed with the above amendments on a proposal of Robert Newton, seconded by Alan Marchbank.

4. Matters arising.

Case for Change initiative,

As promised to the General Committee we are working on improving communications. Ken Darvill commended to the meeting the importance of this work.

Annual report

Guild Librarian, Doug Beaumont, recommended that we improved the Branch secretaries, procedures to aid creation of an accurate Guild report.

Raising and Lowering competition

Progress has been made on procuring a trophy for the competition. The meeting discussed options for when the competition could be held. Various difficulties emerged with certain suggested timings and so the F&GP were asked to consider options and put a considered proposal to members.

A decision on when the first competition will be held was therefore not made by the GC members.

Correspondence

None

5. 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.

An organiser is required for running the Steeple Aston course. Graham Clifton offered helpers for the course. Please contact Robert Newton if interested in running the course.

The Tower Leaders workshop was well attended and received positive feedback. Volunteers are requested to run future courses.

The Master proposed Lindsay Powell continued as a member of the Learning and Development Workgroup. All other current members agreed to continue with their involvement with the workgroup.

b) Towers and Belfries

The 13 members of the sub-committee were re-elected. Proposed Tony Crabtree and Seconded by Jenny Lewis. Clifton Reins will also join the sub-committee.

Many Zoom meetings have been held and the towers and belfries members had covered over 10% of the guild's belfries with their inspection/advice visits.

Most belfries had responded to advice to check for heat affects created by the hot summer of 2022.

The report in the meeting papers sets out the amount of work that has been undertaken in recent months.

The General Committee's attention was drawn to the several courses running in 2023. The sub-committee welcomes invitations to other towers.

c) Finance and General Purposes

The situation with membership system matters remains as reported in November 2022. A pilot has been running in Sonning Deanery to try out the potential use of MemberMojo tool by ODG. The IT system works at the Sonning Deanery level of email

interaction. 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 membership solution.

The meeting was 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 led by the ODG Treasurer Stuart Gibson. Updates on the task force progress will be provided and new requirements - addressed via the Master for approval in the first instance.

We are seeking members for public relations activities. There is no PRO and a volunteer would be most welcome. Currently the activity was around Ring for the King (RftK). The meeting discussed many aspects of RftK in a positive lively discussion. The main points are recorded below.

There have been over 1,000 enquiries from potential new learners. Pat and Robert Newton had been processing these as CCCBR and ART requested additional support.

The meeting was challenged by Alan Marchbank to ensure measurement of new ringers, retention, and development of ringers. It was recognised that it was not possible to attain 100% accuracy but branches could measure the changes through their subs processes. Tower registers were another possibility raised by Doug Beaumont. Jenny Lewis proposed that our focus should be on retaining and developing all ringers.

The meeting discussed that the timeline for training new ringers to ring for the coronation is tight. However, Richard Stanworth suggested that a backstroke pull assisted by the new ringer's teacher could ensure that they had participation in the coronation ringing.

Robert Newton observed that the CCCBR initiative targeting 2030, identifies that 50% of those ringing in 2030 are not ringers at the current time. It is critical therefore that RftK is seen as part of a longer process to attract, develop and retain new ringers. Pat Newton suggested that ringing for King Charles III, 75th birthday could be another step in the journey.

Over half the GC attendees had received new ringers from the Ring for the King publicity.

6. Reports from

- a. **Peal Secretary** – the meeting noted the report with thanks. The Peal Secretary requested that all peals are submitted,
- b. **Safeguarding Officer** – The Safeguarding Officer is embarking on an audit to check that all safeguarding training has occurred as per the report Q & A requirements.
- c. **Librarian** – the report was noted with thanks.
- d. **Website Manager** – The Website Manager advised the meeting that maintenance and re-organisation work continues behind the scenes. Thanks to the work undertaken by the Server Manager, Richard Stanworth, we now have a development

website which is a clone of the live site. Work is on-going to create a more modern and user-friendly look and feel which will be published as a new version soon.

- e. **Server Manager** – the report was noted with thanks. The Server Manager highlighted the opportunity for more server space to be made available with the additional work that he was undertaking.
- f. **Report Editor** – the Master requested that the Guild report 2022 was picked up for onward distribution within the branches. Thanks were extended to all for improving the accuracy of the report and to the Report Editor for her work.

8 Diary of Events

a. Ring for the King

It was clarified that ringing at a prescribed time was not required. But the target was to ring at every ringable tower. The Master requested that all performances were recorded on Billboard and a certificate would be downloadable to commemorate the ringing (as happened with the Platinum Jubilee). The Web Master, Andrew Goldthorpe reminded the meeting of the video recorded instructions that aided posting accurately.

John Chamberlain highlighted to the meeting the need to involve and inform the local community in the RftK activities.

b. 15-year plan

The Master raised the matter of the Spring GC meeting clashing with the ART conference. The opportunity to move the meeting by a week was proposed. Following much discussion from the GC members it was determined to leave the date as now.

c. Guild Festival

The Master advised GC members that the 2023 Festival 8th July 2023 preparations were progressing well. A poster was being designed. As noted at the November GC meeting arrangements for towers, the service and lunch were in development. Full details will be provided but all GC members are asked to save the date and encourage members to attend. The festival will be for ODG Guild members only. Individual invites will be sent.

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

The Master advised that the Deputy Master was standing down. Volunteers were required for this important role.

In addition we have 3 Stewards vacancies. The meeting discussed the steward role and concluded that stewards were not missed. The steward benefitted more than the members.

It was probable that next year there would be 2 further resignations – 1 being Odd Bob editor. GC member were asked to consider volunteers for these valuable roles.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

10 Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022

The accounts will be re-issued with the minutes (those in the meeting papers were from the November GC meeting in Shrivenham). However, the accounts in the Guild Report 2022 are the correct ones.

The Treasurer proposes to raise the subscription sum. Meeting discussion on this proposal was inconclusive. It was agreed that a well-argued case setting out the reasons for the change was prepared. The items cited as requiring funding were: Supporting Youth bands, Payment for new membership software, and enhanced IT activities.

11 Donations to the Bell Fund, the Ringing World and ART

The Treasurer proposed that £2000 was donated to the Bell Fund.

This was proposed by Stuart Gibson and Seconded by John Davidge. This was unanimously agreed by the meeting.

Donations to Ringing World and ART generated discussion by members. It was agreed by the meeting that a well-argued case was prepared to justify the donations.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING ITEMS

12 Any Other Business

The date of the 15th July 2023 has been agreed for the New Members Day event.

Alan Marchbank commended to the meeting the Chilton Branch Ringing Day on the May 1st Bank Holiday. There will be 30+ towers involved.

13 Concluding Vote of Thanks

The Master thanked North Moreton (ONB Branch) for hosting the meeting. Especial thanks were extended for the excellent refreshments, coffees, teas, and audio capabilities. The Village Hall was a good venue for a meeting of this size. The ringing had been enjoyable. The meeting closed at 4.35pm.