



November General Committee Meeting Saturday 23rd November 2024

St Thomas of Canterbury Goring-on-Thames RG8 9DR

Meeting commences at 2.30pm following the 10-bell striking competition at St Thomas, Oxford

Tea and cake will be available in the Canterbury room.

(The competition results will be given at St Thomas, Oxford)

Please notify the Secretary of items for AOB before the meeting; time-permitting additional AOB will be taken from the floor in Item 10.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the General Committee Meeting of Saturday 9th March 2024
3. Matters Arising
4. Correspondence
5. Reports from:
 - a) Learning and Development Workgroup – Chris Mundy
 - b) Towers and Belfries Committee – Tony Crabtree
 - c) Finance and General Purposes – Karen Pile
6. Verbal updates from:
 - a) Safeguarding Officer – June Wells
 - b) Membermojo status – Stuart Gibson and Jenny Bennett
 - c) Librarian – Doug Beaumont
 - d) Website Manager – Andrew Goldthorpe
 - e) Server Manager – Richard Stanworth
 - f) Report Editor – Heather Browning
 - g) CCCBR – Central Council Representatives
7. Diary of events – to be confirmed and circulated after this meeting
8. Financial matters – Stuart Gibson
 - a) Briefing on the CCCBR proposal to increase association subscriptions
 - b) Guild budget
 - c) Subscriptions and peal fees for 2025
9. 'Proposed Changes to the Guild Management Structure' – presentation by Chris Mundy, ODG Deputy Master
10. AOB
11. Concluding vote of thanks.

5a LEARNING and DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUP REPORT

Jonathan Cresshull has stepped down from this group for family reasons and we thank him for his significant contribution as Chairman particularly in relation to the Steeple Aston Course. Chris Mundy has been appointed as new Chairman.

The bands representing the ODG and the Bucks & Berks Young Ringers again performed creditably in the RWNYC in London, receiving praise from the judges in their respective sections: 8-bell method and 8-bell call changes. Regional practices for all our young members, not specifically related to preparation for the RWNYC, are now taking place throughout the Guild. Please encourage your young ringers to get in touch and take part if they are not already doing so.

The Radley Course in the spring was again very popular with five full groups. The feedback was generally very positive. Those wishing to ring Grandsire Triples could not be accommodated and a separate mini-course was organised to cater for them on another day. Next year's course will be held a little earlier, on 29th March. The recent Michaelmas Course was less well supported with just 17 applicants, split into three groups to cover Stedman Triples, Cambridge & Yorkshire Major or Cornwall, Bristol & London Major. Again there was positive feedback although fatigue towards the end of the day seemed to be an issue for some.

The Steeple Aston and Grandsire Caters courses will have taken place by the time you read this. We are grateful to those members of the L&D Workgroup who have taken on aspects of the Steeple Aston organisation, notably student applications and helpers, as well as those in the Banbury Branch arranging towers and pubs.

A review of the Focus, Terms of Reference and Activities of the L&D Workgroup has formed a major part of our recent discussions. In particular, there is concern that the teaching of Foundation Skills within the Guild is, at best, patchy. The group are looking at how best we can support individuals, towers and branches so that progression into method ringing is better facilitated. The discussions are ongoing. All feedback and thoughts on this area are welcome!

Chris Mundy – Chairman – Learning and Development Workgroup

5b ODG TOWERS & BELFRIES COMMITTEE REPORT

The T&B committee met in March 2024 by Zoom but the August meeting at Radley had to be cancelled; partly owing to the Chairman's house move! New members are very welcome. You don't need to be a belfry expert but if you are keen and willing to learn, you can gain a lot from the experience of the other members.

Various topics have come up this year from enquiries and inspections, including:

Emergency Lighting – It is really important that ringing chambers have proper “emergency” lighting; in other words, if there is a power cut or the fuse blows, the light switches automatically to battery operation. The ringers aren't left in the dark, even for a moment. The risk of being blacked out is too horrible to contemplate, yet many towers still don't have it. It is important to test the emergency light periodically and the onset of Autumn is clearly a critical time. If your light hasn't been tested recently, then you might still be at risk of black-out and you certainly won't get the marks credited to your next “Tower Maintenance Award” inspection sheet! You might have an emergency torch to help you get back down the stairs, but this doesn't count as Ringing Chamber emergency lighting.

Ash for Stays – there is increasing evidence that it's hard to find proper air-dried ash from healthy (not ash-dieback) trees. If you are replacing a stay, make sure you go to a reputable supplier. If you are making the stay yourself, then make sure it is correctly tapered, straight grained etc to maximise its ability to absorb impacts and minimise the risk of premature breakage.

Stretchy Ropes - Unfortunately, we are seeing increasing instances of stretchy (often new) ropes giving the perception that the bells are “going” badly with difficulty ringing and teaching on them. Towers should “stretch” all new ropes with heavy weights for a week or so. This will stretch out the sally and tail even if it has a man-made “pre-stretched” top end.

Courses - We ran a rope course at Radley in February, a basic belfry course at Church Enstone in April and a “Secrets of the Steeple Keeper” course at St Mary's, Mortimer in July. The total number of students was rather less than in 2023. This could be due to covid backlog or maybe variable success in publicising the courses through the existing guild distribution system. We hope that MemberMojo will reach more members. Email tbchair@odg.org.uk or tbsecretary@odg.org.uk if you fancy attending or indeed hosting a course.

Inspections and Advice - Much of the committee's work goes on between meetings and courses with inspections and advice. Our twelve members have visited or advised nearly 30 towers so far in 2024 including Bell Fund grant inspections. Please ask if you would like a visit either for general advice, a specific problem or a Tower Maintenance Award (TMA). Towers are encouraged to ask for a TMA inspection and may get a certificate (bronze, silver or gold) besides lots of helpful advice or suggested improvements.

The T&B page of the ODG website [Towers and Belfries - Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers \(odg.org.uk\)](https://odg.org.uk) continues to expand with useful material. You will

find contact details and the services offered by our members. If you can't find what you are looking for, please ask tbchair@odg.org.uk

Tony Crabtree – Chairman – Towers & Belfries Committee.

5c FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES REPORT

The Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee has met twice in person and once via Zoom in 2024.

We are seeking members for the Public Relations Working Group. However, new members events have been held led by the Master.

Richard Stanworth (ODG Server Manager) and Andrew Goldsmith (ODG Webmaster) reported on improvements to the guild server and website.

The valuable work of the Learning & Development Workgroup and Towers and Belfries was discussed and is reported under items 5(a) and 5(b).

The work of the MemberMojo (membership database) project has been discussed at each meeting. This significant piece of work has been supported by ODG branches with the loading of branch members onto the database proceeding to schedule. F&GP commend the excellent work undertaken to date and note the fortnightly full project Zoom meetings and frequent smaller meetings to get things done. A short status update with an opportunity to ask questions is on the agenda for the November 2024 General Committee meeting.

In addition, the F&GP have discussed the proposals to revise the Guild structure. Improvements have been made to the paper in the light of these discussions. The Deputy Master, Chris Mundy, will present the proposal to the committee when further work has been completed.

Karen Pile Hon Sec

CENTRAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT from Lucy Hopkins Till

This year's meeting of the CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS was held on 7th September in Exeter. The draft minutes were published in The Ringing World on 4th October. The minutes and recording of the 127th Annual Meeting are also available on the CCCBR website together with the relevant meeting papers and the recording of the Ringing 2030 Presentation on Bells in Changing Churches. 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.

Most of our ODG reps. have continued to be involved in the Workgroups : John Harrison(Digital Platform for the Council's Historic Archive Resources and Biographies co-ordinator)-Historical & Archive and (Methods)- Taxonomy and Technology, Lucy Hopkins Till (Development team lead)- Recruitment & Development, Graham John (Composition Team Lead and Methods)-Taxonomy and Technology and Tim Pett-Dove Database Steward. Katie Lane, ODG Master, is also one of the Trustees. This report includes just some key points from the meetings.

CCCBR AGM

Election of Fellows Chris Mew for his work on the Central Council, for the Ringing World and in safeguarding. Barbara Wheeler for her sterling work with Publications for 35 years.

The Trustees' Report The current Trustees are Tina Stoecklin(President) ,Vicki Chapman(Deputy President), Ernie de Legh-Runciman (Secretary), Fergus Stracey (Treasurer), Ian Roulstone, Clive Whittaker, Beverley Faber and Katie Lane (Ordinary Trustees).The role and duties of the workgroups were changed slightly during 2024 in the light of the Ringing 2030 Programme. Ringing for the Coronation was particularly well supported. However the national ringing centre has not proved to be viable. Much effort is focused on Ringing 2030.The Mobile Belfry is now in operation. Yellowyoyo has provided advice for rebranding of ringing which has already been used at the International Scout and Guide Jamboree in Essex. The President's Blog continues to be successful. The Council has continued its engagement with the Church of England's Safeguarding Training and Development team and scenarios related to bellringing are going to be included in the next edition of the "Basic Awareness" training course. The "Code for Ringing" was formally adopted by the Council in January 2024.

In the **Accounts for 2023**, the total assets of the Council were £419,257. However, the General Fund loss had risen to £18,712, primarily as a result of spending £16,613 for Ringing 2030. Nine grants were paid from the Bell Restoration Fund leaving a total of £33,200 in outstanding commitments. Resources Expended in 2023 exceeded Incoming Resources by £22,410.

The Executive and Workgroup Reports

The Executive Report. The Executive has met monthly online and held quarterly meetings with Workgroup Leads. It has also continued regular meetings with the Church Buildings Council, Historic England, Ecclesiastical Insurance, ART and The Ringing World. The Executive is of the opinion that the current affiliation fee is insufficient to sustain the current and planned work for Ringing 2030. *Historical and Archive WG* The CCCBR Library Collection has successfully been relocated to the Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust and continues to be both used and added to. Subscriptions from Friends of the Library help to maintain it. Work has continued on the development of the ringing history website, capturing images for the peal board database, updating the Rolls of Honour, maintaining biographical information through obituaries and maintaining records of society badges, certificates etc

Public Relations WG This has been renamed “ Ringing 2030 Marketing”. A short film called “What do you enjoy about Bellringing?” was produced for the CCCBR You Tube channel. Bands were also encouraged to ring for the 80th anniversary of D-Day and there was further promotion of Bell Sunday this year.

Stewardship and Management WG This has now been split into two groups, the second one named “Ringing 2030 Environments” Members of the Workgroups continue to respond to an assortment of enquiries from various sources, update and add to documentation.

Technical and Taxonomy WG Reorganisation of the workgroups has resulted in the ICT team now reporting directly to the Executive as a support service. A draft report of Accepted Method Extensions is now available. The Methods and Composition Libraries continue to be maintained.

Volunteer and Leadership WG This workgroup has been renamed “Ringing 2030 Recruitment and Development” and tasks have been adjusted to focus on that particular project. The Development Section has continued to supply and develop training posters for towers and 3D printed model bells. The North West Ringing Course is established and plans are progressing with the South West Ringing Course.

Young Ringers-Schools and Young Ringers WG This workgroup is a merger of the former “Schools and Youth” and “Universities and Colleges” workgroups. Material supporting young people undertaking a Duke of Edinburgh Award has been developed further. An on-going project is the virtual hub for university ringing. *Technology for Ringing 2030* is a new workgroup which has been set up to create a Ringing 2030 digital platform.

Ringing 2030 Environments is another new workgroup focusing on safe and secure environments and technical and leadership training.

Support Services

Publications has a new team.

Performance Analysis Peal numbers had increased slightly to 3,629 and most peals were still of Major. The Yorkshire Association was marginally the leading affiliated society, followed closely by the Ancient Society of College Youths. Quarter peal numbers had increased by more than a thousand to 16,090, the majority being doubles this time and again the highest number were rung in Kent.

Safeguarding, Membership, ICT, Small Societies and Public Relations continue to provide their services .

External Liaison Simon Linford has now established an important relationship with the Association of Festival Churches and is maintaining a high profile in the Heritage Religious Buildings Alliance. It is estimated that 10 - 15% of churches might close over the next ten years.

Stewards *The Bell Restoration Fund, Dove Database, Fred Dukes International Bell Fund, Carter Ringing Machine* stewards continue their work.

The Touring Tower is now fully operational and is now under the wing of the Mobile Belfries Trust.

Forward Plan The President explained the “Three Pillars” of Ringing 2030 – Publicity and marketing – recruitment and development – quality environment.

Financial Update The Treasurer reported that overall there had been a £25,075 spend with Yellowyoyo which is now complete. There being no upper limit on the value the Executive can authorise, John Harrison encouraged Council Members to read Executive Reports closely and feedback responses to them.

Elections of Trustees Fergus Stracey was elected Treasurer and Peter Harrison was elected Ordinary Trustee.

Motions were carried to extend the maximum term of service of Stewards from six years to nine years and to increase the Annual Subscription to 40p per Affiliated Society member from January 2025 and £1 from January 2026.

Attendance at the meeting was 152 out of a possible 220. 41 members were absent and 27 positions were vacant.

Next Year's Meeting will be held on Saturday 6th September hosted by the Yorkshire Association

THE RINGING WORLD LTD AGM There was a £34K surplus this year owing to royal events. In addition to the sales of merchandise, the Company received donations and legacies amounting to £67K. There are 2300 subscribers to The Ringing World.