



Oxford Diocesan Guild
of Church Bell Ringers

General Committee Meeting

Saturday 22 November 2025, 2.30pm

Meeting location – Kirtlington Village Hall, South Green, Kirtlington, Oxon, OX5 3HJ

Ringling is available at Kirtlington Church from 1.30pm, please park near the Village Hall and walk across the corner of the playing field to the church

Parking instructions: park at the village hall - take one of the two lanes in front of the houses on each side of the green, opposite the Dashwood Arms

Light refreshments (tea and cake) will be available after the meeting, the local organisers need names asap for tea bookings, especially by 10 November.

Email Pam Holley secretary@bicester.odg.org.uk

Please send apologies for the meeting to secretary@odg.org.uk

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies
 - 2 Minutes from General Committee meeting held on 8 March 2025
 - 3 Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
 - 4 Correspondence received
 - 5 Written reports received in advance from the following sub-committees:
 - i. Learning and development workgroup (Robert Newton)
 - ii. Towers and belfries (Tony Crabtree)
 - iii. Finance and general purposes (Katie Lane / Heather Browning)
 - 6 Verbal updates to be given in the meeting from the following:
 - i. Safeguarding Officer (June Wells)
 - ii. Website Manager (Andrew Goldthorpe)
 - iii. Server Manager (Richard Stanworth)
 - iv. Report Editor (Heather Browning)
 - 7 Future of the Guild Library – report attached (Doug Beaumont)
 - 8 Financial matters (Stuart Gibson)
 - i. Accounts for the year ending 2024
 - ii. Donations to the Bell Fund, Ringing World, ART
 - 9 Guild striking competitions (Chris Mundy)
 - i. meeting will be asked to vote on change of criteria, statement included in circulated papers
 - 10 Guild rule change (Chris Mundy)
 - i. meeting will be asked to vote on proposed rule amendments, document included in circulated papers
 - 11 Diary of events
 - 12 AOB – *please notify the Secretary of any AOB items before the meeting, time-permitting additional AOB items can be taken*
 - i. Update on MemberMojo (Stuart Gibson)
 - 13 Concluding vote of thanks
-

Agenda item 5i

Learning & Development Workgroup report for General Committee Meeting, November 2025

Key dates for 2026

- 11th April - Radley Course
- 4th July - RWNYC, Nottingham
- 26th September - Michaelmas Course*
- 24th October - Steeple Aston Course*
- 7th November - 10-bell Course*

The RWNYC in Birmingham provided another inspiring opportunity for young ringers from around the country to come together for a fun-filled festival of ringing. The Bucks and Berks Young Ringers, drawn from the EBSB and Sonning Deanery branches, enjoyed their best ever result: second in the 8-bell call-change competition at Erdington. The band representing the rest of the Guild in the 8-bell method ringing section at Edgbaston was placed third. Interestingly, both bands were awarded the same score: 8.5/10. Congratulations to all the youngsters who took part.

This year's Michaelmas Course had sufficient applicants for just three groups, with the majority opting for Cambridge and/or Yorkshire S Major. Surprise Minor and Superlative and Bristol S Major were also available at either end of the spectrum. Some follow-up practices are being arranged so that the students can build on what was achieved during the day. We are grateful to our tutors, and to the very dependable helpers who provided a solid framework during more than four hours of ringing.

Jon Chamberlain and Louise Gill took on the organisation of the Steeple Aston Course, which went very smoothly. Again, our heartfelt thanks go to them, to the five tutors and all those involved; not least Vicky Clifton for her delicious evening meal. As was the case with Radley, the number of applications exceeded the places available but it is of concern that only one fifth of the applicants were aged 55 or under.

The workgroup continues to seek ways of supporting the development of Foundation skills throughout the Guild. Occasional M2F courses are available for members to attend and find out useful techniques to adopt in working with their learners. We encourage co-operation and mutual support between neighbouring towers in sharing expertise in teaching on an ad-hoc or a more formal basis. We continue to look for venues which could be centres of development for members in the surrounding area.

Robert Newton, Secretary

Agenda item 5ii

ODG TOWERS & BELFRIES COMMITTEE'S REPORT FOR 2025 AUTUMN GENERAL COMMITTEE

The T&B committee continues to mix in-person Summer meetings with Zoom in the dark months. New members are very welcome. You don't necessarily have to be an expert in towers or belfries. That will come with time as it has for all of us.

Our October meeting included a discussion on church closures. It followed the DAC Bell Advisors' Conference in Leeds which was reported in the 2nd May RW. A short article follows this report.

Recent enquiries include:

Stretchy ropes: These continue to be an issue and the symptoms aren't always recognised as a rope problem. A recent enquiry related to a bell that had become "hard to set". Yes, the bell was indeed "fine-set", which didn't help, but the rope was stretchy and made the setting action just a little too tricky. Remember to "stretch" new ropes before ringing. Although most new ropes have a "pre-stretched terylene" also called "polyester" top end, much of the stretch is often in the sally and tail so the rope must still have a heavy weight (25+kg) hung on it for a week or so before ringing. Get back to your supplier sooner rather than later if there is still stretch; especially in a man-made top. It may never disappear.

Internal sound: We have also had enquiries regarding the sound in the ringing room. In each case it was too loud for ease of ringing, conducting or general comfort. The remedies can be wide and varied and each case needed to be examined carefully. We cover this subject in our Belfry courses and if you want to learn more, then sign up for a course.

Over the last few years, we increased the courses we run to three or four belfry and rope courses per year averaging 16 students per course. We ran three in 2025, the most recent at Wantage. We think the new MemberMojo communications network is reaching more ODG members than the existing network so we expect the take-up of places to continue. Any Branches wishing to run a local course are welcome to ask for help. The courses are pitched at all levels. You can look at a particular topic or indeed something you spot during the course that you hadn't considered before! We are looking for locations and dates for 2026 courses and will publish details when known. Email tbchair@odg.org.uk or tbsecretary@odg.org.uk if you fancy attending or hosting a course.

Our members did general/Bell Fund/TMA inspections or corresponded with the following towers since the last General Committee:

Sunningwell, Buscot, Goosey, Eynsham, West Hendred, Littleworth, Shabbington, Goring on Thames, Sreatley, Wantage, Tetsworth, Langford, Shilton, Stanford in the Vale, Kencot, West Challow, Chalfont

St Peter, Stowe, Shinfield, Middleton Stoney, Buckingham, Stoke Mandeville, Chesham, Sutton Courtenay, White Waltham, Willen, Bradwell, Clifton Reynes, Woodstock, Hanslope, Buckingham, Caversham, Tadmarton and Theale.

Please ask if you would like a visit either for general advice, a specific problem or a Tower Maintenance Award (TMA) for which you 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://www.odg.org.uk/towers-and-belfries) 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.

What future for Churches and Bells?

The DAC Bell Advisors' April Conference in Leeds focused on church closures and the effect on bells. This was reported in the 2nd May Ringing World.

How will declining Church use impact the future of bells and bell ringing? When a Church falls into disuse what happens to the bells? How should a body such as ODG respond?

There are complex processes which should be followed before official closure or disposal explained in the following link which also mentions bell ringing groups <https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/20210831-doc-library-determining-church-building-futures.pdf>. It also provides links and examples of how Churches may transform for community purposes but gaps may exist between procedures and there actually being people at local level to implement them.

Can bell ringers play a role in picking up intelligence of potential closures to ensure rings remain available for future generations? Do we as ringers actually understand the historic significance of rings within our local towers? Do we know what protections may exist through old documents or statutory listings to protect bells or ensure they are maintained in a usable form? Can/should we do anything to at least try and prioritise which rings survive in usable forms?

Sadly, we already know of rings lost through Church disposals in the past and examples of towers where shortly before closure significant investment in the bells may have been made. How might we help the Bell Fund Trustees to prioritise grant awards towards significant rings or Churches least likely to close?

The Bell Fund, thanks to some generous donations, bequests and beneficial investment performance, wants to increase its support for projects with good long-term prospects. Unfortunately, history points towards some applications agreed in principle never developing into completed projects but also some potentially sound projects failing to develop through a lack of suitable local expertise to develop and deliver them. What can ODG and its bell fund do to help such projects move from dream to reality?

Hopefully this short article will have you all thinking about the future but remember an organization with ageing volunteers and limited time will need your help if it is to ensure resources are used to best effect in preserving important installations and ensuring ringing continues into the 22nd Century and beyond.

Chris Potter for ODG T&B Committee

Agenda item 5iii

Report from finance and general purposes committee

The Finance & General Purposes Sub-committee met on 10 September 2025, with apologies received from several members. The minutes from the previous meeting held on 27 January 2025 were accepted, and all action points from that meeting were confirmed as achieved. Matters arising included a note on Life Members, some of whom contribute additional donations to a second Branch.

Under safeguarding matters, correspondence from the Safeguarding Officer, June Wells, was discussed. Although no major safeguarding concerns were reported, she raised the point that Association Safeguarding Officers should ideally be appointed by the executive rather than elected by the membership, to ensure both suitability for the role and continuity if a mid-term vacancy occurs. The sub-committee was asked to consider this suggestion ahead of any proposal to the AGM, especially as organisational changes are currently underway.

The proposed streamlining of the Guild's operational structure was discussed, with all feedback reviewed and responses summarised. While some comments related to Rules not directly tied to restructuring, these will be addressed after the 2027 AGM. Amendments for voting are scheduled for the November General Committee Meeting.

The implementation of Membermojo (MM) for membership management was also covered. MM has provided accurate membership numbers and future enhancements include online subscription payments. Training has been arranged for Officers and Branch secretaries due to confusion over email lists, and Mailman is being phased out to simplify systems. Members are encouraged to join Branch mailing lists and keep their MM data updated to receive communications. Dedicated training and contact emails have been established.

Other topics included the pending date for the Radley Course, with plans to obtain generic contact addresses for organisers and add them to the event diary. Under any other business, the committee is reviewing increased consistency across Guild and Branch websites. In the 6 Bell Striking Competition, there was discussion about allowing Youth Teams to participate, with general support for their inclusion; current Rules prevent this, but a review is planned for future competitions.

Agenda item 6

Oxford Diocesan Guild - future of the Guild library.

Part I

1. Introduction.

1.1 The post of librarian has been advertised for a year or more following the current librarian's indication that he would like to finish in the post. Two Guild members have expressed an interest in the post, but neither has the space to accommodate the amount of material that the library holds.

1.2 It is likely that the considerable size of the library is an important factor in making it difficult to find a replacement librarian. The availability of a great deal of on-line information about bellringing, rendering the library facility to some extent redundant, is likely to be another significant reason.

1.3 It is therefore generally thought that it will be necessary to rethink the current library model. At the Guild Committee Meeting in March 2025 the librarian was asked to set up a group of Guild members to suggest a way forward.

1.4 This document gives the background to the initiation of this project, outlines how the project can be taken forward and discusses the order in which the tasks should be undertaken.

2. Original initiation of the project

2.1 In late 2024, at the request of the Guild Master, the librarian made contact with the Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) to find out if the OHC would be in a position to take in any or all of the contents of the Oxford Diocesan Guild library, with members of the Guild being able to access books and papers on request.

2.2 The OHC replied that:

- the OHC may well accept the Guild's own archive material such as minute books and branch newsletters. This includes material relating to branches outside Oxfordshire, ie the whole Guild, since the History Centre is the nominated repository for Oxford Diocesan records.
- the Centre is less likely to take the published books.

2.3 At the March 2025 GCM meeting, the librarian recommended that before any items were conveyed to the OHC they should be considered for scanning for the Guild's electronic archive. Further information about the electronic archive is given in Appendix A.

2.4 So the OHC option presents a way forward for dealing with the archival material in the library. This constitutes an estimated 30% of the library material.

3. Library material other than minute books and branch newsletters

3.1 The other material in the library, so about 70%, consists of Bell News/Ringing Worlds (25%), published books (35%) and other miscellaneous items (10%).

3.2 An early decision would be needed as to whether a cut-down version of the library, say up to 3 bookcases should be retained. It is felt that efforts should be made to retain some storage facility within a Guild member's residence.

3.3 Assuming there is agreement to keep a restricted number of bookcases/boxes, and to retain the librarian/archivist post, it would need to be decided which of the miscellaneous items to keep. In summary these are:-

- Published books with inscription or letter, bequeathed or donated to the Guild
- Collections of books, such as the W.H.Fussell collection, Alan Pink collection
- Set of 13 handbells in case
- Illuminated Guild peal book
- Peal books of various Guild members, some illuminated
- Early Guild membership certificates and other miscellaneous items, photographs, papers.
- Guild annual reports. There are bound copies of these: the librarian arranges for four copies to be bound at five to seven year intervals. One set is held in the library, along with an 80% complete set of stand-alone reports. One set is kept by each of the Master and the Guild secretary. The fourth set is thought to be held by a Guild member. The General Committee should decide how many of the four copies should continue to be kept. It is quite possible that the OHC will be willing to accept one of the copies. A decision will also be needed as to whether to continue binding sets of annual reports
- Oddbob. There is one bound set of Oddbobs in 7 volumes and a set of stand-alone Oddbobs. The librarian arranges for the Oddbobs to be bound. It is quite possible that the OHC will be willing to accept one or the other set of Oddbob. A decision will be needed as to whether to continue binding sets of Oddbob.

3.4 The following two items each constitute perhaps 20%-30% of the library material:-

- The set of Bell News/Ringing Worlds. The library has a complete set of both publications. Some of the early ones have the name G F Coleridge written inside the cover so were presumably originally retained and bound by him. Therefore they have a strong link to the Guild. Between them the volumes occupy 330cm of shelf space, more than 2 of the bookcases. It is unlikely that the OHC would take them since they are in effect published books and do not originate within the Guild. Therefore it will need to be decided how they should be dealt with. One option might be to keep them in a Guild member's residence separate from the librarian's, if a willing member can be found, either in bookcases or in archival boxes.
- Published books about ringing, without donor or other inscription. It will need to be decided how they should be dealt with.

4. Order in which tasks should be tackled.

4.1 Establish what the Guild wishes to do concerning the library:

- i) cut down its size to no more than 3 bookcases or
- ii) dispose of everything in the library or
- iii) other option that is formulated. Unless everything is to be disposed of, it will continue to be necessary to appoint a librarian.

4.2 Start work on dealing with the archival material:-

- options for scanning the Guild/branch minute books, newsletters and other papers should be explored
- the suitability of the current electronic archive should be reviewed as mentioned in Appendix A. Take any actions prompted by the review
- the OHC should be approached to ask them which items of the Guild archival or indeed any other library material they would be willing to accept.

4.3 The processing of archival material is likely to take some time - two, three years or more. So once the work on the archival material is underway, the Guild should start to deal with the published books, and the Bell News/Ringing World.

5. Bookcases

There are seven bookcases in the library. If it is decided to dispose of any library material an option would be to offer the bookcases to go with batches of books.

6. Publicising the changes

Articles in future issues of Oddbob will provide information about how the library is changing. At least one of the articles should be prominently advertised to make sure that as far as possible Guild members are aware that major changes are happening.

Oct 2025

Appendix A to Library report - Guild electronic archive

Background to the current electronic archive.

The current electronic archive (at <http://www.archives.odg.org.uk/>) was set up in 2016 and is maintained by the librarian. It contains about 70 Guild annual reports, about 80% of the Oddbobs and a small number of other items. It is written in the html formatting computer language.

Transfer of Guild archives to OHC

Any item transferred to the OHC would, without being available in the Electronic Archive, be difficult to access by Guild members: a visit in person to the OHC in Cowley would be necessary. Before transfer to the OHC, all material should therefore be considered for scanning and placing on the Electronic Archive.

The current arrangements for scanning material would need to be overhauled to speed up the process. Options would be: i) recruit a cadre of Guild members, perhaps devolving the task to branches willing to take it on ii) seek a commercial organisation to carry out the scanning.

Review of electronic archive

The current archive website was set up in a somewhat ad hoc manner and should be reviewed to check whether it is suitable for future requirements. If necessary rewrite it, for instance to make it more compatible with the Guild website.

Agenda item 9

Guild striking competitions.

The proposal is that to encourage the Guild's Youth ringers, we allow Youth Bands to enter the Guild striking competitions.

The Deputy Master suggests we phrase it that "Any band which represents the Guild in a national or regional Youth striking competition is allowed to enter the 6, 8 or 10 bell striking competition".

He wonders whether we add "*or any other Youth Band at the discretion of the Executive (if the proposed rule amendments are passed), or the F&GP Committee (if the proposed rule amendments are not passed)*" in case there is no Youth striking competition in any particular year?.

Agenda item 10

Guild rules changes

Oxford Diocesan Guild

of

Church Bell Ringers

RULES

(As at May 2016 amended 6-11-25)

BRANCH RULES

(As at 21 May 2011 amended 6-11-25)

Published by:

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

1. NAME

The name of the Guild shall be "The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers" hereinafter referred to as the "Guild".

2. INTERPRETATION

In these Rules, except where the context otherwise requires:-

the singular includes the plural and the masculine includes the feminine,

"the Diocese" means the geographical area which from time to time comprises the Diocese of Oxford in the Church of England,

"member" means a member of the Guild in any category,

"voting member" means a member entitled under these Rules to vote,

"Officer" means any of the persons mentioned in Rule 9(a), (b), (c) (i) and (c)(ii).

"Branch" means a Branch of the Guild duly constituted under Rule 19.

3. OBJECTS

The objects of the Guild are:-

- (a) the encouragement of the attendance of its members both at service ringing and at public worship;
- (b) the recognition of the position of ringers as Church workers;
- (c) the recruitment and training of new ringers, so that there may be regular service ringing in all the towers within the Diocese where the bells are ringable;
- (d) the promotion of interest in the care of all the bells within the Diocese; and
- (e) the promotion of the art of change ringing.

4. AFFILIATION

The Guild may be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and shall, if so affiliated, abide by the rules and decisions thereof.

5. MEMBERSHIP

There shall be the following categories of membership:-

(a) Resident Ringing Members.

To become a Resident Ringing Member a candidate must:-

- (i) be competent to ring for Sunday Service;
- (ii) live within the Diocese or ring regularly at a church within the Diocese and either
 - (iii) be elected on the proposition of a voting member at a General Meeting of the Guild or of a Branch or
 - (iv) be elected before starting for a peal by the voting members then present. Such election shall be of no effect unless ratified at a subsequent meeting of the Guild or of a Branch.

(Guidance note- a member who has been a Resident Ringing Member for at least 30 years and who has given meritorious service to the Guild or a Branch may be proposed for a Distinguished Membership Award by two members of the Guild. This proposal, which should include a citation of the reasons for it, should be sent to the General Secretary. If approved by the Executive, the names of those proposed for a Distinguished Membership Award will go forward for ratification at the Guild AGM.)

(b) Non-resident Ringing Members.

To become a Non-resident Ringing Member a candidate must:-

- (i) live outside the Diocese and either
- (ii) be elected on the proposition of a voting member at a General Meeting or
- (iii) be elected by the voting members present before starting for a peal.

Whenever a Non-resident Ringing Member is elected before starting for a peal the conductor of the peal shall forward his subscription to the Peal Secretary together with his name and address and the date and place of the election. Such election shall be of no effect unless ratified at the next Guild Annual General Meeting.

(Guidance note - a Resident Ringing Member may become a Non-resident Ringing Member in accordance with Rule 8(b) and a Non-resident Ringing Member may become a Resident Ringing Member in accordance with Rule 8(c).)

(c) Life members.

A Resident Ringing Member may become a Life Member at any time by paying a lump sum equal to 25 times the annual subscription current at the time. A Life Member shall retain his membership regardless of his residence.

(d) Honorary Members.

Anyone appointed or elected to be the President or a Vice-President under Rule 9 who is not already a voting member shall become an Honorary Member. Anyone who is not a voting member and who is considered to have given meritorious service to the Guild may be elected as an Honorary Member by a General Meeting of the Guild or of a Branch.

(e) Associate Members.

A person ineligible for membership as a voting member and who takes an active interest in the Guild or a Branch may be elected as an Associate Member at a General Meeting of the Guild or of a Branch.

(f) Honorary Ringing Members.

A person who was elected an Honorary Ringing Member before the 2009 AGM.

6. ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE AND HOLD OFFICE

- (a) Members of the following categories and no others shall be entitled to hold office and to vote at all meetings of the Guild or of the Branch of which they are members, including meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which they are members:-
Resident Ringing Members, Life Members, Distinguished Members, Honorary Ringing Members and Honorary Members.
- (b) Non-resident Ringing Members and Associate Members may attend meetings of the Guild or of its Branches. They shall not be entitled to be elected to any committee or sub-committee of the Guild or of a Branch but may be co-opted by any such committee or sub-committee which has power to co-opt. When attending a meeting a Non-resident Ringing Member or Associate Member may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the person presiding at such meeting.

7. EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION

- (a) Any member may be expelled or suspended from membership on the ground that he has by word or action brought discredit to the Guild, provided that the procedure laid down in this Rule is followed.
- (b) A proposal to expel or suspend a member may be made only by:-
 - (i) a resolution of a Branch or
 - (ii) a proposal signed by not less than five voting members

- (c) Any such proposal shall be sent in writing to the General Secretary who shall within 28 days convene a meeting of the Executive, of which at least 14 days notice shall be given to the members of the Executive, to the member concerned and to the Branch or members making the proposal.
- (d) The member concerned shall be entitled to be present and to speak at any meeting of the Executive when such proposal is considered but shall withdraw when the Executive considers its decision. A representative of the Branch or of the members making the proposal shall also be entitled to be present and to speak but shall also withdraw when the Executive considers its decision.
- (e) After hearing the case for the proposal and for the member concerned, the Executive shall decide whether or not the member concerned should be expelled or suspended from membership for a specific period. Such decision shall be final.
- (f) The Executive may draw up rules for the conduct of hearings under this Rule and, if so, such rules shall be communicated to the parties concerned.
- (g) A member expelled under this Rule shall not be re-admitted to membership within two years and then only with the consent of the Executive after notice of proposed re-admission has been given on the agenda. Any money owing by the expelled member to the Guild shall become payable immediately on expulsion and any property of the Guild in his care or possession shall be returned immediately to the appropriate officer.
- (h) A member suspended under this Rule shall return immediately to the appropriate officer any property of the Guild in his care or possession and shall not be re-admitted to membership after suspension unless such property has been returned and any money owing by him to the Guild has been paid.

8. SUBSCRIPTION

- (a) Resident Ringing Members, Distinguished Members and Associate Members shall pay an annual subscription of such an amount as shall from time to time be decided by the Executive. Such subscription shall be payable on election to membership and thereafter annually on 1st January in respect of that calendar year and shall be paid to the Treasurer of the Branch to which the member belongs. Any Resident Ringing Member or Associate Member whose subscription shall be unpaid by the 31st March in the year in which it is due shall thereupon cease to be a member of the Guild and shall not be re-admitted to membership unless the subscription for that year is first paid, provided that a Branch may resolve to excuse such payment after notice of such proposal has been given in accordance with Branch Rule E.
- (b) A Resident Ringing Member who ceases to meet the condition of Rule 5(a) (ii) may become a Non-resident Ringing Member without further election either on payment of the amount of the Non-resident Ringing Member's subscription, or without further payment if he has previously paid annual subscriptions of a total not less than the amount of the Non-resident Ringing Member's subscription. Such change of status shall be communicated by the Branch Secretary to the General Secretary.
- (c) A Non-resident Ringing Member shall, immediately on election, pay a subscription of such amount as shall from time to time be decided by the Executive, such subscription to be paid as provided by Rule 5(b). A Non-resident Ringing Member who subsequently qualifies as a Resident Ringing Member under Rule 5(a) (ii) shall thereupon cease to be a Non-resident Ringing Member but shall, without further election, become a Resident Ringing Member and shall be required to pay the annual subscription from 1 January following the date of his qualification.

- (d) Following election under Rule 5(a) or qualification under paragraph (c) of this Rule a Resident Ringing Member shall be issued with a certificate of membership and with a copy of the current Rules of the Guild.

9. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

- (a) The Lord Bishop of the Diocese shall be invited to be the President of the Guild.
- (b) The Bishops Suffragan of the Diocese, the Archdeacons within the Diocese and the Deans of Christ Church and Windsor shall be invited to be Vice-Presidents. Other persons who have performed meritorious service for the Guild may be elected Vice-Presidents at a General Meeting.
- (c) There shall be:-
 - (i) A Master, a Deputy Master, a General Secretary, a General Treasurer and a PR & Communications officer. These officers shall make up the Executive Committee (known as the Executive). The Executive may co-opt up to three additional members.
 - (ii) a Librarian, an Editor of the Report, a Peal Secretary, five Stewards of the Guild, all of whom shall be change ringers. Additional officers may, from time to time, be appointed by a General Meeting after consideration of a report by the Executive and
 - (iii) Representatives of the Guild to serve on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers shall be elected from time to time so as to comply with the rules of that organisation.
- (d) All such persons as are mentioned in Rule 9(c) shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting from among the voting members present or who shall have agreed to be nominated. Those elected shall hold office from the end of the meeting at which they were elected until the end of the next following Annual General Meeting, provided that the persons elected as representatives of the Guild to serve on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers shall serve until the expiration of their period of office under the rules of the Central Council.
- (e) There shall be a Scrutiny Committee consisting of:
 - (i) those Vice Presidents of the Guild who are change ringers;
 - (ii) a Branch spokesperson from each Branch, selected by the Branch.
- (f) The Scrutiny Committee shall elect a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from its members.
- (g) Should a vacancy arise among the officers, the Scrutiny Committee shall appoint a substitute (decided at a general or extraordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee) who shall hold office until the end of the next Annual General Meeting, provided that, if the appointment is urgent in the opinion of the Master or, in his absence, the Deputy Master, it may be so made by the Executive.
- (h) The Executive shall have the power to manage and administer the Guild's property and affairs in pursuit of the Guild's objects and in accordance with its rules and policies
- (i) The property, funds and assets of the Guild will be vested in the Executive.
- (j) The Executive will only exercise the following powers with the specific approval of the Scrutiny Committee:
 - (i) Borrow money
 - (ii) Acquire or dispose of significant assets
 - (iii) Make any decision or take any action which reduces or places at risk the Guild's total assets by more than 30% of their value (as reported to the most recent Annual General Meeting).

- (k) The Scrutiny Committee shall have the following powers:
 - (i) To call an Extra-ordinary General Meeting of the Guild's members if it has material concerns about the conduct of the Executive or members of the Executive which cannot be resolved between the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee
 - (ii) To report to members of the Guild on its work and dealings with the Executive at the Annual General Meeting.
- (l) The Executive shall report to the Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis and not less than four times a year.

10. GENERAL MEETINGS

- (a) A General Meeting to be known as the Annual General Meeting shall be held each year. The business to be transacted at the Annual General Meeting shall be:-
 - (i) to receive from the Executive a report and audited accounts for the previous year;
 - (ii) to elect the officers of the Guild in accordance with Rule 9;
 - (iii) to appoint an Independent Examiner who shall be appropriately certificated;
 - (iv) other items placed on the agenda by the Executive or Scrutiny Committee and any further business allowed by the chairman.
- (b) The General Secretary, whenever requested by the Executive or Scrutiny Committee, or in writing by any 25 voting members, shall, within 28 days of receipt of such request, convene an Extraordinary General Meeting. In case of emergency, the President, the Master or the General Secretary may convene such a meeting at his own discretion.
- (c) Not less than 14 days notice in writing of any General Meeting specifying the date, time and place and the business to be transacted at such meeting shall be given to the tower correspondent of each tower within the Diocese at which there are voting members of the Guild. Whenever possible, notice of such meeting shall also be given by publication by "The Ringing World".
- (d) No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum of 50 voting members are present. Every voting member present shall have one vote and matters shall be decided by a simple majority except where otherwise stated in these Rules. In the case of an equality in the voting the chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
- (e) The Master shall take the chair, whenever possible, at all General Meetings. In his absence the Deputy Master shall take the chair but if he also is absent, the meeting shall elect an officer to take the chair.

11. MANAGEMENT

- (a) The management of the Guild shall be entrusted to the Executive, which may regulate its own proceedings and generally exercise all such powers of the Guild as are not required by these Rules to be exercised by a General Meeting or specifically by the Scrutiny Committee. The Scrutiny Committee and Branches shall fix their own quorums.
- (b) The Executive may from time to time appoint, revise or dissolve any sub-committee as it considers necessary. The terms of reference of any sub-committee shall be as determined by the Executive from time to time.
- (c) The General Secretary shall, if possible, attend all General Meetings and meetings of the Executive. He, or his deputy, shall keep the minutes of such meetings in duplicate (the duplicate copy being in the care of the Librarian), conduct all the correspondence of the Guild, except in matters relating to finance, issue notices of meetings and carry out such other duties as are required for the general running of the Guild.

(d) A register of members shall be kept by such person as the Executive shall agree.

12. FINANCE

- (a) The property of the Guild, both real and personal, shall be vested in the Executive. Cheques, electronic bank transfers and other orders drawn on the Guild banking accounts shall be signed/made by the General Treasurer or by a member appointed by the Executive to sign cheques/make such transfers; save, however, that cheques/transfers for more than five hundred pounds must be expressly approved by the Executive.
- (b) The General Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that satisfactory arrangements exist for the safe receipt and banking of all monies due or paid to the Guild and the efficient payment of all expenses incurred by the Guild. He shall keep such accounts as the Executive may direct. At the Annual General Meeting he shall present an independently examined statement of accounts made up to the previous 31st. December. He shall be responsible for investing any funds which are surplus to current needs, subject to the approval of the Executive.

13. LIBRARY

- (a) The Librarian shall have the care and maintenance of the Guild Library, the duplicate minute book, the first Guild peal book, the list of peals together with the bound copies of the Annual Reports containing such peals, the Roll of Honour and such other property belonging to the Guild as may be placed in his care by the Executive. He shall issue and receive books in accordance with paragraph (b) of this Rule.
- (b) Books and the Guild handbells may be borrowed by any member in accordance with such conditions as may from time to time be determined by the Executive.
- (c) The Librarian shall be empowered to purchase suitable books.

14. CUSTODY AND INSURANCE OF GUILD PROPERTY

- (a) All Guild property, other than that mentioned in Rule 14, shall be in the care and custody of such person as the Executive may from time to time direct.
- (b) The Guild property mentioned in Rule 13 and all other Guild property shall be adequately insured by the Guild.

15. DAMAGE

The Guild may pay the cost of any damage to bell or gear occurring during a Guild function.

16. DISSOLUTION OF THE GUILD

The Guild shall not be dissolved nor its funds divided or disposed of except by a majority of three quarters of the voting members present at a General Meeting of which not less than 28 days notice in writing has been given to the tower correspondents of each tower within the Diocese having voting members of the Guild and such notice shall have specified the intention to propose such a resolution.

17. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

No motion shall be put in the agenda at any General Meeting except as specified in Rule 10(a) unless a notice in writing specifying the resolution to be proposed shall have been given to the General Secretary not less than six weeks before the date of the General Meeting at which such resolution is to be proposed.

18. ALTERATION OF RULES

Alterations or additions to these Rules or to Branch Rules shall not be made except at a General Meeting after consideration of a report by the Executive and agreement by the Scrutiny Committee. All such alterations or additions must be approved by three quarters of the voting members present.

19. BRANCHES

In order to advance its objects and to make for better organisation the Guild shall be divided into Branches based on geographical areas. Any reorganisation of Branches shall take place only with the consent of the towers and Branches involved. Such reorganisation shall be subject to approval by the Executive.

20. ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive shall decide each year whether to publish a report on the activities of the Guild (but to also be agreed by the Scrutiny Committee) and shall decide the content of any such report.

21. PEALS

(a) A peal will be recognised by the Guild only if it complies with the following conditions:

- (i) The peal must comply with the Rules of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers;
- (ii) All participants must be members of the Guild or provisionally elected in accordance with Rule 5(a) or (b);
- (iii) The conductor of the peal shall submit to the Peal Secretary details of the peal including participants and the composition (for seven or more bells), details of provisionally elected members and the appropriate peal fee as determined by the Executive. This submission must be received by the Peal Secretary within one month of the peal being rung.

(b) A peal may be rejected by the Guild after publication by "The Ringing World" if it is subsequently found not to comply with any of the conditions of paragraph (a) of this Rule.

BRANCH RULES

- A. Branch members must be voting or Associate Members of the Guild. Only members of the Branch may vote at Branch meetings.

(Guidance note - Voting Members of the Guild may vote in the Branch through which their Guild Subscription is paid. They may become voting members of additional Branches, by paying to them the Branch portion of the Guild Subscription. Regardless of the number of Branch memberships held, Voting Members of the Guild have only one vote at any Guild meeting.)

- B. There shall be a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of each Branch (hereinafter referred to as "the Branch officers"). Every Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting each year and the Branch officers shall be elected at such meeting from among the voting members of the Branch. They shall hold office from the end of such meeting until the end of the next following Branch Annual General Meeting. If the Branch so resolves the same person may hold the offices of Secretary and Treasurer. Additional officers of the Branch may from time to time be appointed at the Branch Annual General Meeting.
- C. There shall be a committee of each Branch consisting of the Branch officers, a representative of each tower of the Branch at which there are Branch members and the Branch spokesperson who serves on the Guild Scrutiny Committee.
- D. Should a vacancy arise among the Branch officers, it shall be filled by the Branch in general meeting or by the Branch committee and the person so appointed shall hold office until the end of the next following Branch Annual General Meeting.
- E. The Annual General Meeting of the Branch shall be held each year at such time as each Branch may decide, when the Branch officers shall be elected and general business transacted. Not less than 14 days notice in writing of the date, time and place and the business to be transacted at the meeting shall be given by the Branch Secretary to the Guild Executive and to the correspondent of each tower of the Branch at which there are Branch members. The branch may decide how to select its spokesperson on the Guild Scrutiny Committee.
- F. The Branch Treasurer shall collect the subscriptions of the Branch members who are Resident Ringing Members and Associate Members and shall forward to the General Treasurer by the 31st March each year such proportion of the subscriptions as shall from time to time be decided by the Executive, the remainder of the subscriptions being retained for the use of the Branch. The Branch Treasurer shall submit an audited statement of accounts to the end of each calendar year at each Annual General Meeting of the Branch and shall forward a copy of such statement to the General Treasurer by 30th April following.
- G. The Guild may pay the cost of any damage to bell or gear occurring during a Branch function, provided that notice of any such damage shall be given as soon as possible to the Guild General Treasurer by the Branch Secretary.
- H. Each Branch may regulate its own proceedings and make rules for the conduct of its business provided that such rules are not inconsistent with the Guild Rules and these Branch Rules. Should any such inconsistency occur, the Guild Rules and these Branch Rules shall prevail.

Agenda item 11

Diary of Events



Forthcoming Events – 2025 & 2026

Saturday 22nd November – Autumn General Committee & 10 bell competition Kirtlington and Long Crendon

Sunday 23rd November 10 & 12 bell practices Olney 3-5pm

Saturday 14th March 2026 Spring General Committee Meeting Chipping Norton Branch

Saturday 11th April (tbc) Radley Course

Saturday 2nd May AGM North Bucks Branch