

## ***Minutes of the Sonning Deanery Branch Committee Meeting, Sonning, 17/11/2012***

**Apologies** were received from Ken Davenport.

Those present were: Simon Milford, Rob & Pauline Needham, Pam & Andrew Elliston, Sue Davenport, John Harrison, Steve Wells, Andrew Dugdale, Lesley Graves, Jill Betts, Aidan Hopkins, Jacqui and Martha Hazell, and Joyce Crockford. Towers not represented were: Binfield, Barkham, Finchampstead, Hurst, Sandhurst St Michael, Sandhurst Immaculate Conception, Twyford and Wargrave.

### **Matters Arising from Minutes of 2011 Committee Meeting**

The 8-bell striking trophy had been found and presented at this year's competition. It was proposed that in future the minutes of this meeting would be discussed and accepted at the AGM in February rather than at the next November meeting.

### **Financial update**

We have 169 members, eleven more than last year; Sandhurst RC no longer had any members. The Deposit Account balance was £3083 and had earned £17.17 interest. There was £487 in the Current Account, from which £1500 had been transferred into the Deposit Account. The lack of expenditure on the newsletter had greatly improved the finances this year. The branch accounts will be shown at the AGM and how much should go to the bell fund will be decided then. Most tower funds belong to their PCCs, though there may be funds reserved for specific items such as ropes, bells, peal boards or repairs.

### **Striking competitions**

The small number of entries for the 8-bell competition is symptomatic of a general malaise of the present time, with people working longer hours and having less time for branch practices or striking competitions. It is unacceptable that the judges are not certain whether they will be required until very close to the actual competition date. It has been suggested that our branch 8-bell competition should become a joint competition with Reading Branch; they currently have no 8-bell competition and will be discussing the suggestion at their committee meeting. Having won the branch 6-bell competition, Sonning had been unable to raise a team to enter the Guild competition. Perhaps the branch should have a mechanism for choosing an alternative team if the winners cannot attend.

### **2013 Branch Practices & Committee Meeting**

A provisional schedule of venues for the coming year was offered, leaving the times of the practices open for discussion (apart from the March practice at Barkham, which had been arranged for 10.30 to noon). It was agreed that the pattern of attendance at practices during the last two years would be analysed in relation to date and time. Some delegates considered that the coloured cards are an outdated feature, whereas others thought them a useful source of information. It seems that the print run could be shorter and cheaper in future. The term 'committee meeting' does not intuitively give a good idea of its constitution or function. It is actually a business planning meeting before the AGM to which every tower should send a representative. Support was expressed for changing the relevant branch rule.

### **Officers for next year**

Nominations are needed for Ringing Master, Secretary and one branch rep. The vacancies will be put on the branch website together with the corresponding job descriptions.

### **Response to 'The Future of Ringing'**

A questionnaire had been sent from the guild to all branches as part of the National recruitment survey. There was much discussion about specific items in the survey and it was agreed that John Harrison would complete the questionnaire on behalf of the branch. The main points discussed were possible ways of attracting new ringers and teaching them. Suggestions included Heritage open days, contacts with Youth clubs, Church newsletters encouraging people to visit the tower after the service with demonstrations of ringing, and tied-bell practices. It was stressed that every tower should have at least one competent teacher. There is a new national scheme for training teachers of ringing which had been attended by Jacqui Hazell who said it was comprehensive and well planned, starting with bell handling and ending with a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor. It was thought that towers may need to help each other to make progress.

### **Daytime Practices**

Now that the branch ringing master John Manley has moved away, John Harrison has taken over the organization of daytime practices, keeping them at Binfield as the Binfield band have benefited from them; in two of the three months since the change, there have been too few people interested to make the practice viable, possibly owing to holidays. Since many of the Binfield ringers normally attend daytime practices, there is no Tuesday evening practice at Binfield if daytime practice has been held.

### **Branch events**

Suggestions included quiz night, skittles and antiques roadshow. An outing was being organized by Waltham St Lawrence for 27 April 2013. It was hoped that a branch outing would also be arranged but no date was agreed.

### **Any other business**

New members can be elected at any branch meeting, the full fee being payable immediately regardless of how much of the year remains. Sean Cannon of Shottesbrooke was proposed by Jacqui Hazell, seconded by Rob Needham and elected nem con.

Pam and Andrew Elliston  
20/11/2011.