

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH

Annual General Meeting, Saturday 15th February 2014, Binfield

MINUTES

[Text in these minutes that looks like this is for clarification and was not discussed at the meeting.]

The meeting stood in memory of John Harper (Binfield), Eddie Martin (Easthampstead), and Geoff Ellis (Twyford).

There were 31 Branch members present and the chairman welcomed James Champion (Guild Sec.) and Katie Lane (the Guild Steward for our branch). Apologies were received from the Guild Master and Guild Librarian.

Apologies from Branch members were received from Mary Ede, Aidan & Liz Hopkins, Alex Maberly, Derek Titford, and Simon Graves.

Rob Needham, the Secretary, said that all documents to be discussed at the AGM had been on the Branch website for some time and that he hoped members had read them and had come prepared with corrections or comments. To save trees and Branch funds he had printed a limited number of copies of documents.

Minutes of previous AGM (Feb. 2013). Acceptance of the minutes of the 2013 AGM was proposed by Graham Slade, seconded by Ken Davenport and accepted without dispute. **Matters arising.** John Harrison asked if the Sonning 'recruitment' leaflet had been made available and the Secretary said it had been offered by email to towers in the branch but he did not know whether any tower had made use of it.

Minutes of previous Business Meeting (Nov. 2013). Acceptance of the minutes of the 2013 Business meeting was proposed by John Harrison, seconded by Graham Slade and accepted without dispute.

Matters arising. John Harrison asked if the Secretary had issued ideas on how to attract new ringers (as offered under the heading *Future of the Branch*) and Rob Needham said that he hadn't.

Branch Officers' Reports

Acceptance of the **Secretary's report** was proposed by David Fawcett, seconded by John Harrison and accepted without dispute. There were no matters arising.

Acceptance of the **Treasurer's report** was proposed by Steve Wells, seconded by John Harrison and accepted without dispute. **Matters arising.** Steve Wells asked if there were any 'rules' about the transfer of monies from the General to the Bell Fund; he pointed out that money in the Bell Fund could not be used for general expenses. John Harrison thought that any transfer had to be agreed by a general meeting of the branch. Steve Wells suggested that some of the General Fund should be available for supporting towers with education and training projects such as installing a ringing simulator. John Harrison said that the Guild also had a grant procedure for supporting education/training plans.

The meeting was asked if any work on Branch bells was known to be 'in the pipeline' that would seek support from the Bell Fund. The only tower known about was Twyford, that might, in the future, have a re-hang, but no request or estimate of costs had been submitted to the Branch. Rob Needham offered to discuss this with Twyford to get some idea of timescale.

This last year the branch has had no Ringing Master so there was no Ringing Master's report.

The **Branch Representative's report** was presented. There were no matters arising.

The **Newsletter Editor's report** was made verbally at the meeting. Alison Clayton said that there had been 4 issues during the year and she thanked the contributors. There were no matters arising.

The **Bookstall Officer's report** was presented. John Harrison asked how the sales compared with previous years and Andrew Elliston said he thought the sales were up on the previous year.

The **Training Officer's report** was presented. John Harrison said that he was seeking attendees from the Branch for a *Maintenance Course* and if there were enough takers the ODG would run the course. Ken Davenport asked how many attendees were required and John reckoned about eight.

After John Harrison had asked the meeting to delete part of the report that was incomplete, the amended **Webmaster/Postmaster report** was presented. John urged members to give him their email address if they wished to be on the members' email list or when their email address changes.

Election of New Members. Fiona Kemm (proposer Rob Needham, Sonning), Rebecca Stoneman & Hannah Slyfield (proposer Hugh Dempster, Finchampstead), Terry Gill & Domhnall Fallon (proposer Dave Creasey, Binfield), Darren Smith & Michele Kirkland (proposer Judith Atkinson, Arborfield) were seconded by Steve Wells and elected nem con.

Geoff Harvey (Sonning) [*and Joyce Crockford (Arborfield)*] are returning members and as such do not need re-electing.

Election of Officers

Chairman – John Harrison, proposer Rob Needham, seconder Ken Davenport.

Secretary – Rob & Pauline Needham, proposer Graham Slade, seconder Dave Fawcett.

Treasurer – Sue Davenport, proposer Lesley Graves, seconder John Coombes.

Ringling Master – Steve Wells, proposer John Harrison, seconder Graham Slade.

Deputy Ringling Master – Graham Slade, proposer John Harrison, seconder Steve Wells.

Branch Representatives – Sue Davenport & Jacquie Hazell, proposer John Coombes, seconder Ba Wells.

Newsletter Editor – Alison Clayton, proposer Dave Fawcett, seconder Pauline Needham.

Bookstall Officer – Pam & Andrew Elliston, proposer Pauline Needham, seconder Alison Clayton.

Training Officer – Jacquie Hazell, proposer John Harrison, seconder Rob Needham.

Webmaster – John Harrison, proposer Jacquie Hazell, seconder Ken Davenport.

Postmaster – John Harrison, proposer Jacquie Hazell, seconder Ken Davenport.

Independent Examiner – Steve Wells, proposer Lesley Graves, seconder Dave Fawcett.

All officers were duly elected.

Branch Practices and events. Rob Needham said that the schedule had recently been emailed to all tower correspondents and urged towers that had not yet done so to confirm their dates with him asap. [*Bob Packer confirmed Shottesbrooke's BP date & time after the meeting.*]

Rob mentioned the St Georges Day ringing item on the schedule that is being promoted by **Ring for England**. He pointed out that such an event made a good reason for promoting bell ringing in local papers and parish magazines. Rob offered to email towers about it after the AGM.

John Coombes suggested that a tower be reminded that it is hosting a BP shortly before the event. Rob Needham said that he reminds everyone on the members email list of a BP a couple of weeks beforehand, but John Harrison said he could remember a BP where nobody from the host tower came to unlock.

Joint Branch 8-bell Striking Competition. Rob said that the revised rules had been discussed and agreed by the SDB officers, and that he had notified all members that the final draft rules are on our Branch website. Reading Branch has approved them without change at their AGM. Ken Davenport asked if the substance of the competition had been changed by the rules; the meeting was told that apart from allowing for two branches to organise the competition in alternate years, the changes were for clarification and avoidance of ambiguity only. The types of ringing and types of band permitted in the competition have not changed.

Acceptance of the rules was proposed by John Harrison, seconded by Rob Needham and carried.

Branch Striking Competition results – the 6-bell Striking Competition certificates were presented by the Guild General Secretary, James Champion: 1st All Saints Wokingham, 2nd Easthampstead, 3rd Sonning.

Future of the Branch. Rob Needham opened this agenda item by mentioning some of the ideas that had been raised at the Business meeting last November and then asked the members what they felt the Branch should be doing for them.

Sue Davenport said that we need to find out what the members who don't attend meetings want the Branch to do. John Harrison said that the online survey he organised about two years ago gave a reasonably good response from Branch members about what they wanted from the Branch.

John Coombes suggested that schools should be circulated about bell ringing to invite pupils to training sessions organised by the Branch. John Harrison warned that to attract and train secondary school pupils (the age range we want) takes a great deal of organisation and time.

Joyce Crockford suggested Scouts and Guides as a source of recruits, but Pauline Needham said that there is no longer a Bellringers badge for Guides so they are not as interested.

Rob Needham mentioned the “Revitalise the Branch” brain-storming session that was held in 2005; some of the ideas had been adopted but there were many that were worth revisiting. John Harrison felt that a small group of members should convene to consider these and other ideas in more depth.

Fund raising/social events. Graham Slade said that he still intends to organise a Branch outing in the spring. Joyce Crockford thought that skittles was a popular social event. In some years recently we have held a skittles evening after the 6-bell Striking Competition (which this year is at Arborfield). [*Any information about a pub with skittle alley in the area would be welcome.*]

A quiz evening was discussed; St. Paul’s church hall is an excellent venue but is now charged for. Steve Wells felt that members would be prepared to pay £10 (say) for a quiz & supper, and that a pound each from that might cover the hall cost. [*The price of St. Paul’s hall would be £96 for the evening, i.e. about £2 each. Details of the price of other halls with kitchens in the Branch would be welcome.*]

Any Other Business

Branch records & Guild library. Rob Needham explained that one of the jobs of the branch Secretary is to hold the archive of historical records of the Branch that go back to its inception in 1880. Rob felt that most of the old records should be placed in the Guild library where they would be better looked after, better catalogued, and the opportunity of better correlation with other Guild records. Rob said that more recent records, for example membership lists, are useful to the Secretary and should be retained in the Branch. He said that he would produce an index of all documents in the archive and suggested that this index could be added to the branch website.

Ken Davenport said that there is a Guild rule that branches submit a copy of their minutes to the Guild. [*This is being done by the Secretary.*] He also remembered that some years back some of the old branch records had been photocopied for the Guild, and that any spare copies of documents might be of interest to the Berkshire Public Records Office.

The meeting authorised Rob Needham to have a meeting with Doug Beaumont (Guild librarian), agree the split of documents between Guild and Branch, and decide what to do with duplicates.

ITTS course. John Harrison said that the recent ITTS Module 1 “Teaching Bell Handling” course at Abingdon was oversubscribed and that he had two or three pairs of names on a waiting list for another course. This could be mounted in our area if more members asked him to put their names on the list. [*Ideally there should be 12 to 16 attendees. Cost of 1-day course currently £20.*]

Novice Practices. Rob Needham said that at the recent Guild Training day that he attended, EBSB had reported great success with their Novice Practices. Each novice is paired with a ‘buddy’ or mentor, usually (but not necessarily) an experienced ringer from their own tower, who stands with the novice each time they ring and discusses the success (or otherwise!) of the ringing. Towers are asked to book novice/buddy pairs on the Novice Practice in advance because in EBSB’s experience they are over-subscribed.

Rob suggested that, following liaison with the Training Officer, the Branch could try a few Novice Practices during 2014 in place of some of the standard Branch practices currently scheduled [*the tower, date and time of the BP would not change*].

Binfield practices. Dave Creasey, the Binfield captain, thanked Steve Wells and Barbara Wells for their support of Binfield practices.

Honorary Ringing Member (HRM). Sue Davenport said that the Guild no longer offered the status of HRM, and James Champion read out what used to be the qualification requirements to be elected an HRM. The nearest equivalent to HRM is now Distinguished Ringing Member, but this award does not confer free membership of the Guild thereafter.

Thanks. The Chairman thanked the vicar and organist for the service, and also Dave Creasey and the Binfield band for organising the whole event and providing such a delicious tea.

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m., after which further ringing was offered.

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