

Sonning Deanery Branch, Business Meeting, Arborfield, 19th November 2016, 5p.m.

MINUTES

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

Present: Judith Atkinson, Mike Boys, Alison Clayton, Dave Creasey, Ken & Sue Davenport, Mary Friskney (ODG Steward), Lesley Graves, Aidan & Liz Hopkins, John Harrison, Jacquie Hazell, Rob & Pauline Needham, Darren Smith, Steve Wells. [So 10 bands were represented out of 16 (counting Sandhurst as effectively one band).]

Apologies: Tricia Amos, Hugh Dempster, Pam Elliston, John Coombes, Graham & Josh Slade, Bob Packer.

Financial update: the Treasurer, Sue Davenport, reported:

General Fund	£1711.79
Bell Fund	£3361.59
Total Funds	£5073.38
held in:	Current Account £ 201.96
	Deposit Account £4871.42

Sue also reported the costs of the Hurst Show:

Costs	£658.81	This includes the cost of St Mary's hall at Twyford for the 3 taster sessions. It also includes the costs of the pop-up banner, posters and printed leaflets, all of which can be used again.
less	£150	Donation by the Show organisers
Total	£508.81	

John Harrison asked if towers knew of forthcoming work that might call on the Bell Fund for support. Aidan Hopkins mentioned possible augmentation of Sunninghill from 3 to 6 bells and that there were people in that area interested in ringing. [The secretary knows that Wargrave is looking at the installation of a simulator.]

Review of Branch Practices: The BRM, Steve Wells, said average number at Saturday BPs was about 10 and that at Binfield Tuesday afternoon practices the number was a little higher. Fourteen different methods had been rung over the practices. Some Binfield practices during the summer had to be cancelled for lack of support. Steve said that ringers were turning up without prior notification and that they might find that the BP had been cancelled for lack of pre-BP responses; he urged everyone to respond to his emails and notify him in advance if they plan to attend.

Simon Farrar said that his learners could attend Binfield during school holidays. Simon apologised for the potential 'lockout' and the 'scratch' tea at the 8-bell striking competition and suggested that the secretary should remind a tower that it will be hosting the next striking competition. Rob Needham, Secretary, said that he does this as a matter of course, and for BPs. Sue felt that the drink and biscuits provided was all that is needed at a striking competition.

Steve wondered whether we should drop the 8-bell striking competition given the difficulty of towers in the branch to raise a team. It was pointed out that the rules already allow joint teams representing up to three towers each [Reading make full use of this rule.] John asked tower reps to canvas their members on their views of striking competitions, and he offered to produce a summary of points for towers to consider before the branch AGM.

John mentioned that he will be adding tower captains to the tower contacts email list to help with communication at tower level.

Training: The Training Officer, Jacquie Hazell, said she had organised monthly practices at Twyford on Fridays: Advanced Practices in Jan, March, April, May & August; Basic Practices in Feb, July and Sept. All were by prior invitation. Jacquie said she would be standing down as Training Officer at the AGM; she felt she was not helping the south half of the branch. The meeting felt that this was not Jacquie's fault [availability of these practices was advertised to all members.]

Young Ringer Activity: At an Officers Meeting Jacquie had suggested that there ought to be activities specifically for young ringers within the branch and the officers had been considering what form this might take. Josh Slade, in his twenties, has said he would take on this role if asked. The young ringers rep would consider the special needs and preferences of young ringers, the types of activity that would best interest them, and how best to organise and support young ringers.

John said that adjoining branches Reading (Anna Sherwood, teens) and EBSB (Peter Jasper, about 30) were organising young ringers practices – details on their websites.

Judith Atkinson thought that the learners at Arborfield would be nervous of ringing elsewhere, but Steve reassured her that learners gain in confidence and ability by ringing at different towers.

Both Steve and Sue felt that the issue of DBS accreditation needs looking at for adults accompanying young ringers to other towers.

A quick poll of youngsters in the branch gave: Arborfield 3, Easthampstead 4, Twyford 4, WStL 2, Wargrave 2.

Update on Guild matters by Branch Reps: Sue had little to report about the March Committee meeting, but did say she had raised the problem of printing Guild notices sent by email; many people these days use mobile phones and tablets without printers.

Jacquie said that the Guild AGM was brilliant: open towers near Farringdon, visit to Whites of Appleton available, AGM organised by Vale of White Horse at Farringdon church, lovely lunch there, ODG Officers' info/displays, Saxilby simulator inside the church.

Mary Friskney, our ODG Steward, said that the ODG Ringing Day will be on Monday May 1st and that the next AGM is on 20th May, at Tilehurst, Reading branch; she encouraged all branch members to attend.

Review of Hurst Show event: John summarised the event as good publicity but not many recruits to ringing. He explained his recent survey of helpers at the Show – in summary all the helpers who responded, 17 of the 24 (70%), said they would be willing to help at a future event, and the two top reasons were good ringing publicity and possible branch recruitment. John said that the Hurst Show organisers were prepared to subsidise our entry at next year's Show, as they had done in 2016. The dates for 2017 are 24th and 25th June.

The two key areas for attention are: a better balance between demonstration ringing, adults ringing, and young kids swinging on ropes; much more careful recording of the contact details of people expressing interest. John offered to prepare a plan for approval at AGM and to respond to the Hurst organisers.

Steve said that his tower got good publicity in the local press by ringing at the Heritage weekend. Sue thought that tower open days give much better recruitment 'value', i.e. more chance of recruits for less time and cost.

John mentioned his articles on ringing in the Wokingham Paper; others expressed interest in modifying them for their local papers, but John explained they were very specifically about the history of ringing in Wokingham.

Officers for 2017: Steve said that he would like to develop joint BRM working with Nigel Mellor (currently the Deputy RM).

Most officers are prepared to stand for election at the AGM; the two exceptions known about are Training Officer (currently Jacquie) and Bookstall Officer (temporarily Rob Needham). Mention was made of Alison Clayton's suggestion at an Officers Meeting that the Bookstall could stay at a tower after a BP there until the next month's BP when it is taken to the host tower. [*This would give to members more visibility of the publications available, but the management of sales and purchases for the bookstall would be a lot more difficult. A list of publications in the Bookstall is on the Branch website.*]

Towers are asked to canvas their members before the AGM about taking on these officer roles. [*Job descriptions of officers are under 'Documents' on the Branch website.*]

2017/18 'skeleton' calendar: Rob issued a paper version to those present, and asked that all towers that are not marked as 'Confirmed' on the list try to book their event soon. Lesley Graves said that White Waltham could not do the June BP and after some discussion offered to try to swap with Shottesbrooke's booking in August.

Branch ringing events: The 'skeleton' calendar of branch events shows a possible ringing outing in October. Rob explained that Pam Elliston has told him that she will not organise a future branch outing because of waning interest in it. Pauline Needham suggested that a mini-outing (to one or two towers within the branch) would be good for towers with learners who are a bit wary of ringing at other towers. [*Simon is considering something similar during the Christmas holidays for his young ringers at Twyford.*]

John asked towers to engage with their members to establish what interest they have in Branch Outings, and to identify organiser(s) and date(s); also to establish the degree of support for a mini-outing.

Branch non-ringing events: These are events such as quizzes, dinner, skittles, etc. Sue said that it had been difficult for the organisers (Sonning) to raise enough teams for the last quiz the branch held. In addition there was (and is) a charge for use of the St Paul's hall. Simon suggested that a quiz would get more support if its aim was to raise money for a specific event, and he suggested meeting the costs of our 'stall' at the Hurst Show. The meeting considered this a good idea, and tower reps were asked to canvas members to establish interest and an organiser for a quiz on this basis.

AOB: Sue reminded the meeting that the December BP at Wokingham St Paul is from 4pm to 6pm.

John thanked the Arborfield band for hosting the meeting and providing a tea in difficult circumstances because the church hall is currently undergoing extension. The meeting closed at 6.20 p.m.