

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH
Annual General Meeting, Saturday 17th February 2018, Wargrave

MINUTES

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

[All documents, survey, rules and schedule referenced in these minutes are on the branch website.]

Present: The branch members were welcomed to the AGM by the Chairman, who also welcomed our ODG steward Jenny Page.

The meeting observed silence in memory of David Fawcett, Binfield and Dave Creasy, Binfield.

Apologies: ODG Master (Hilarie Rogers), ODG Treasurer (Stuart Gibson), Darren Smith, Liz Harris, Aidan & Liz Hopkins, Judith Atkinson, Geoff Harvey, Martha Hazell, Nigel & Jane Mellor, and Simon Farrar.

Approval of minutes of previous AGM: Approval of the minutes of the 2017 AGM was proposed by Steve Wells, seconded by Sue Portsmouth, approved by the meeting without dispute, and signed off by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

Approval of minutes of previous Business Meeting: The minutes of the November 2017 Business meeting were accepted by the meeting without dispute. There were no matters arising.

Branch Officers' reports:

Secretary (Rob Needham) Rob said that the key events in his report were the success of the shared ringing training within the ART Loddon Hub in retaining learners, that Jane Mellor was accredited as a full member of ART, and that the Youth Officer and young ringer practices were a new venture in 2017. Approval of the report was proposed by Alison Clayton and seconded by John Coombes and agreed by the members present.

Treasurer (Sue Davenport)	General Fund	£2120.49
	Bell Fund	£3465.55
	Total Funds	£5586.04

Number of paid up members = 160

Approval of the report was proposed by Sue Portsmouth and seconded by Alison Clayton and agreed by the members present.

Following their presentation and discussion, acceptance of the following group of reports was proposed by John Coombes, seconded by Pauline Needham, and agreed by the members present.

Ringling Master (Steve Wells) Steve pointed out that quite a few members were actively supporting other towers and that this was greatly appreciated by the towers concerned. Binfield and Warfield being supported by Easthampstead was mentioned, and Sue Davenport said that they supported Binfield and Peter [*their son*] went there on Sunday mornings.

Under matters arising Rob Needham said that the 2017 joint 8-bell striking competition was not cancelled by Reading branch unilaterally; rather that Reading postponed it and suggested three dates in early 2018 that proved impossible for at least two teams from each branch to make. [*The date of Sat morning 2nd Feb 2019 has now been set for this competition – venue to be arranged by Reading branch. Please put it in your diaries and support the event or this competition will die.*]

Training Officer (vacant) John H said that he had set up two listening courses initially for All Saints members that were opened to branch members and a total of 11 members attended. John also said he had so far had a low response to his *Training Needs* survey and urged members to respond, even if they felt no need of a course at this time.

Branch Reps (Sue Davenport & Jacque Hazell) The branch reps are our formal link with the Guild. Sue D said that it was often a lot of travelling there and back for a relatively short meeting. John H pointed out that it wasn't always a lot of travelling because the 15 branches in rotation hosted the meetings.

Bookstall Officer (Sue Portsmouth) Sue P summarised her report and pointed out the bookstall was available at the front of the hall. John Coombes said that the silver ODG badges were popular and Rob [*ex bookstall officer*] said there were some in the Bookstall and that further stock can still be bought.

Youth Officer (acting, Rob Needham) Rob said that there had been a monthly young ringer (YR) practice arranged at a variety of towers since March 2017 when the scheme was started. He said that Sunday

afternoon was the only feasible time when YRs and helpers could be available for the practice. Of the practices that were held, there was an average of 5.5 YRs and about the same number of helpers. There are currently 11 YRs on the Youth email list; towers were urged to ask for their new YRs to be added to the list (parent's consent and email address required).

Webmaster/Postmaster (John Harrison) John summarised the areas of information that he maintains on the branch website. As postmaster, John pointed out that use of the members email list was roughly 3 to 4 messages a month; if you do not receive these, ask John to put you on the list or update him with your changed email address. [*New members who provided an email address will be added without needing further action.*]

Election of new members: The secretary read out the names of the proposed new Branch members that had been notified to him and they were elected as members of the Guild; proposer Steve Wells, seconder Lesley Graves. The 20 new members elected were:

Elliott Aldridge	Easthampstead
Harriet Barker	Easthampstead
Katie Thomas	Sonning
Vicky Player	Sonning
Norma Howes	Sonning
Charlie Bidgood	Barkham
Elisha Paine	Barkham
Adedayo Ajibola	Arborfield
Rowena Frary-Smith	Arborfield
Nancy Bedford	Arborfield
David Goodwin	Arborfield
Joseph Godfrey	Twyford
Bridget Dinsdale	Twyford
Richard Wheeler	Finchampstead
Anthony Gordon	Wargrave
Anne-Marie Adams	Wargrave
Sarah (Sally) Kunzig	Wargrave
Imogen Reason	Wargrave
Vicky Brothers	Warfield
Jack Rosenberg	Warfield

The joining packs for new members who were present at the AGM were presented by our Guild steward Jenny Page. The other packs were given to their tower representatives.

Election of Officers: The following officers said they would continue in post if re-elected, and no other nomination for any of those officer posts was raised, so the following officers were re-elected.

Chairman, John Harrison	proposer Ken Davenport, seconder Rob Needham
Treasurer, Sue Davenport	proposer Rob Needham, seconder John Coombes
Branch Representatives: Jacquie Hazell and Sue Davenport	proposer John Coombes, seconder Rob Needham
Newsletter Editor, Alison Clayton	proposer Sue Portsmouth, seconder Sue Davenport
Bookstall Officer, Sue Portsmouth	proposer Rob Needham, seconder Steve Wells
Webmaster/Postmaster, John Harrison	proposer Rob Needham, seconder Sue Portsmouth

The following officer posts were vacant and new officers were sought:

Secretary, Sue Portsmouth	was proposed by Rob Needham, seconded by Pam Elliston and duly elected
Ringling Master, Nigel Mellor	was proposed by Steve Wells, seconded by Jacquie Hazell and duly elected
Deputy Ringling Master, Steve Wells	was proposed by Jacquie Hazell, seconded by John Harrison and duly elected
Training Officer	No nominations were raised so this post is still VACANT

Youth Officer, Rob Needham

was proposed by John Harrison, seconded by Sue Portsmouth and duly elected

Independent Examiner:

Mike Davis was proposed by Rob Needham, seconded by John Coombes and duly selected provided his health permits.

Charmborough Ring at Hurst Show, 23/24 June 2018: John said that the Hurst Show is cost effective being over two days, with a good attendance, and subsidised by the Show organisers. Last time we had a good pitch near the entrance where everyone came past us. Some of the costs (for publicity leaflets and banner) are not needed again. The event will need a lot of support from ringers in half-day sessions over the weekend (and they all got free entry to the Show last time). Some muscle will be needed at the start and end of the weekend for assembling and taking down the ring. The branch needs to improve on some aspects of the 2016 event: we need to be more careful to record clear contact details of people interested in a follow-up, and better organise the use of the bells so that many young children do not hog the ring.

Sue felt that the donation of £100 in 2016 was unnecessary and Tony Gordon said that as the Charmborough Ring is a Trust the hire charge must be sufficient to cover all costs involved. John said he would look into the cost issues again and produce some guidance for consideration by the Officers.

Health of Towers survey: John summarised the responses from the survey: the number of inactive ringers is high at about 30% of branch membership; practices at 10 towers average 4 regular visitors; 11 towers have recruited in recent years; 30% of towers either don't ring for services or ring for far fewer services than they would if enough ringers were available; two towers have recently resumed service ringing; the majority of those who described their band did so using positive terms.

Again ringers from more 'thriving' towers were urged to visit and support the 'struggling' bands. David Price suggested that struggling towers be listed on the branch website, but concern was expressed that towers would find the label 'struggling' offensive. John mentioned the good online 'booking' system at Arborfield which shows how many of the band will be going to a practice and service ringing. Tony Gordon wondered whether Arborfield could make the system available to other towers or help them implement it.

Ringling Outings survey: Rob said the response to his Ringling Outings survey (12 out of about 160 members) was rather low; the only common reason given for not attending ringling outings was that they were too long and clashed with other activities on a Saturday. The traditional whole day outing has been changed for 2018 to a 'mini' outing on Saturday morning 28th April, finishing with lunch.

Branch practices (BP) and events schedule: Rob thanked those towers that have already booked their BP slots; over half of the Saturday BPs are now confirmed. Those towers that are not yet booked are marked as TBC in the Diary on the website. The BP scheduled for March 17th at Warfield has not yet been confirmed; Lesley offered to speak to them about it. [*Booking now confirmed.*]

Sue D said that St Pauls did not wish to host the BP on 19th May, the day of the royal wedding, and suggested that the BP that month be cancelled. Rob proposed that another tower in the schedule be asked to swap with St Paul's. [*Hurst on 18 Aug.?*]

Branch striking competition results: Jenny Page kindly agreed to present the certificates for the Branch 6-bell striking competition held in April 2017. Second were All Saints Wokingham, and the winners were Sonning.

Any Other Business:

Guild events: Jenny Page promoted forthcoming Guild events:

The "How to Talk about Ringing!" workshop is on Sat 21 April at Old Amersham. [*Details are at the back of the November 2017 Odd Bob.*]

The Guild AGM has been brought forward a week because of the royal wedding and is now on Saturday 12th May; please try to attend because the AGM needs a quorum of 50 ODG members in order to proceed.

The Guild will soon have more Officer vacancies: the Secretary position has been vacant for a year, the Master is stepping down in May, the PRO and the Safeguarding Officer posts will be vacant – members are urged to consider standing for one of these positions.

Helpers and organisers are needed for the Guild training courses held during the year.

YR practices: Jenny said that Reading branch's YR practice is always 3rd Sunday afternoon of month at Shiplake, and the ODG YR practice is the 4th Sunday. Any Sonning Deanery youngster who is at school and can at least plain hunt is most welcome to attend these practices.

Sonning grant application: Rob outlined the work to be done by Taylors on all 8 clappers at St Andrew's Sonning, and the replacement of the clappers on the 7 and tenor with composite clappers (wooden shaft, metal ball) – these should help the bells to be rung up 'right'. Total cost is around £5500 ex VAT and the branch has been approached for a contribution. Ken Davenport said that the branch Bell Fund held over £3000 that hadn't been used for several years and he proposed a grant of £1000, which John Coombes seconded, and this grant was agreed on by the meeting.

Open ringing on Armistice Day: There is a proposal that towers nationally ring open bells 'Ring for Peace: Armistice 100' at 7.05pm on 11th November 2018 – this would be following the half-muffled ringing in the morning. Sue D said that St Paul's ringers had decided that open ringing 'i.e. celebrating' was not appropriate on Armistice Day. Steve Wells said that he has been asked by Easthampstead church what their ringers are doing for the Armistice. Hugh Dempster said that Finchampstead church had asked them specifically to ring at that time and day, and that one of the 1000 beacons that are planned around the country will be lit at the church at 7pm.

John said that several organisations were planning things for the centenary of the Armistice and there were overlapping ideas and conflicting views about them. He suggested that each band and its church officers should discuss this sooner rather than later – each church needs to make its own decision. John said he would circulate information on the various war centenary initiatives to tower correspondents.

Thanks:

The Chairman thanked the Rector, Rev John Cook, for an interesting sermon that strongly related to bell ringing, and the Wargrave ringers for organising the whole event and providing such an excellent tea [*some Sonning ringers helped*]. Members were asked to put £2 each for the tea in a collection bowl as they left.

The meeting closed at 6.55p.m.

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