

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH
**Annual General Meeting, Saturday 16th February 2019,
Wokingham All Saints**

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.]

Before the start of the meeting, the Chairman thanked the Wokingham All Saints ringers for organising the whole event and providing an excellent tea.

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 Sue Thomas (Sonning).

Apologies: ODG Master (Katie Lane), Derek Barrett, Andrew Price, Aidan Hopkins, Sue Davenport, Ken Davenport, Hugh Dempster, Tricia Amos, Liz Harris, John Coombes, Barbara Wells and David Goodwin.

Approval of minutes of previous AGM: Approval of the minutes of the 2018 AGM was proposed by Rob Needham, seconded by Alison Clayton, and approved by the meeting without dispute. There were no matters arising.

Acceptance of minutes of previous Business Meeting: The minutes of the November 2018 Business meeting were accepted by the meeting without dispute. There were no matters arising.

Branch Officers' reports:

Secretary (Sue Portsmouth) Sue said that the key events in her report were: Derek Titford has stood down as tower captain at Waltham St Lawrence, and Jacquie Hazell has taken up the position; the Branch had a presence at the Hurst Show in June with the Charmbororugh Ring, which generated a lot of interest but unfortunately did not lead to any new recruits for the Branch; Matthew Steele, a Twyford Young Ringer, took part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest as part of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers band and conducted the band in call changes; St Michael's Sandhurst is back to regular practice night, with support from Yateley; Sonning has had work carried out on the clappers of all 8 bells, with the help of a grant from the Branch; the ART Loddon hub, organised by Vinni Sullivan of Wargrave, has again been active throughout the year; and finally a number of towers have benefitted from recruitment in response to the *Ringing Remembers* programme (14 recruits), meaning that most of the Branch towers were able to ring on 11th November 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice. Approval of the report was proposed by Pam Elliston and seconded by Steve Wells and agreed by the members present.

Treasurer (Sue Davenport)	General Fund	£2222.72
	Bell Fund	£2255.67
	Total Funds	£4478.39

Number of paid up members = 159

In her report, Sue Davenport proposed that at least £1000 from the General Fund be transferred to the Bell Fund. This was discussed at greater length under item 8. Approval of the report was proposed by Geoff Harvey and seconded by Rob Needham and agreed by the members present.

Ringing Master (Nigel Mellor) Saturday Branch Practices were held in 9 of the last 12 months; Binfield Tuesday afternoon practices were held 8 times. The Wednesday Surprise Major practices at All Saints Wokingham were held each month, and included 3 successful quarter peals. Nine Young Ringers practices were held. Leading towers supporting the meetings were Arborfield, Easthampstead and All Saints Wokingham. Congratulations to Steve Wells and John Harrison, who attended 30 and 28 respectively of a possible 47 meetings. Approval of the report was proposed by Steve Wells and seconded by Rob Needham and agreed by the members present.

Training Officer (vacant) John H is covering this post and said that he had set up courses covering

ringing up and down in peal, ringing with a simulator, striking and rope splicing. John said he had a disappointingly low number of expressions of interest in the striking course – only 4 people expressed an interest, although 5 actually attended – and encouraged more members to consider attending in future.

Branch Reps (Sue Davenport & Jacquie Hazell) Jacquie encouraged members to think about attending the Guild AGM, which has become much more interesting in recent years including activities beforehand. The Guild website is still a work in progress, as the initial attempt to update it was not deemed suitable or adequate, so it has had to be started from scratch. Any links go to the old site, which is not being updated, and gives a rather unfortunate first impression to anyone not already involved with the ODG. Jacquie emphasised how useful the Guild Training Courses are, and also the potential benefit to SDB Young Ringers of taking part in Guild activities. Approval of the report was proposed by Vikki Bulbeck and seconded by Geoff Harvey and agreed by the members present.

Bookstall Officer (Sue Portsmouth) Sue P confirmed that the Bookstall holds quantities of the most popular and requested items, notably the 'One per learner' cards, Diagrams book and *Ringling Circles* which she has found to be very helpful in learning methods herself. Vikki Bulbeck mentioned an A4 sized spiral-bound copy of Diagrams, and Sue P undertook to obtain this. Approval of the report was proposed by Alison Clayton and seconded by Vikki Bulbeck and agreed by the members present. *[Copies of the A4 Diagrams book have been ordered from the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers; some of the order has already been taken up by members, and a sample will be available in the Bookstall (they are £25 each) if anyone else would like to see a copy before they commit to buying it.]*

Youth Officer (Rob Needham) Rob reported that 9 out of 12 scheduled practices had taken place during the year. There is still a strong preference for Sunday afternoon practices over any time on Saturday. For the practices that were held, there was an average of 4_ YRs and 4_ helpers, and Rob thanked Steve Wells and Nigel Mellor who between them ran almost all of the practices. There are currently 22 YRs on the Youth email list; including one from EBSB, and Rob sends details of SDB practices to surrounding Branches, as well as advising our own YRs of neighbouring practices; there is currently very little take-up either way. A list of towers for the next 12 months YR practices was circulated; the November practice listed for Wokingham All Saints will be relocated to Arborfield, subject to confirmation. Steve Wells commented that in spite of a fairly consistent average attendance, it was not the same YRs that attended each time, which means that the YRs do not get to know each other as well as might otherwise be the case. Rob said that it would be helpful if an experienced ringer from their home tower could come to the practice with their YR(s) to act as a helper. Nigel Mellor suggested that YRs could run their own practices; at least two are at a level where this would be possible. Jenny Page emphasised the need for adult support to the YRs as well. Approval of the report was proposed by Nigel Mellor and seconded by Pauline Needham and agreed by the members present.

Webmaster/Postmaster (John Harrison) John summarised the areas of information that he maintains on the branch website, and the main changes that he has implemented during the year. Spam has been a big issue again this year, but the advice remains to delete any suspect messages received and wait until the spammers move on to new targets. John said the tower lists are available to all towers; only 5 towers in the Branch currently have one, and one of those has not been used for some years. The QP volunteers list, originally suggested by Jacquie Hazell, has not been used so far but Darren Smith said that it may be useful for Arborfield. John confirmed that there are 34 names on the weddings volunteer list, and 11 on the QP list. In order to keep the website information up-to-date, Rob asked that John be copied in on confirmations of Branch and YR practices.

Election of new members: The secretary read out the names of the proposed new Branch members that had been notified to her and they were elected as members of the Guild; proposer Steve Wells, seconder Joyce Goodwin. The 17 new members elected were:

Susie Mew	Arborfield
Reuben Paine	Barkham
Jan Glen	Binfield
Sandie Harvey	Binfield
Daniel Smith	Binfield
Lorna Smith	Binfield
Jeremy Carpenter	Hurst
Duncan Kendall	Hurst

Keith Milner	Hurst
Stephanie Milner	Hurst
Nick Willson	Hurst
Ellie Andrews	Sonning
Karen Daffey	Sonning
Hazel Scott	Sonning
Ann Thompson	Waltham St Lawrence
Benjy Bass	Wokingham – All Saints
Jessica Bowden	Wokingham – St Paul

The joining pack for the new member who was present at the AGM was presented by the Secretary. 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 Rob Needham, seconder Jacquie Hazell
Secretary, Sue Portsmouth	proposer John Harrison, seconder Steve Wells
Treasurer, Sue Davenport	proposer Geoff Harvey, seconder Alison Clayton
Ringling Master, Nigel Mellor	proposer Steve Wells, seconder Steve Smith
Deputy Ringing Master, Steve Wells	proposer Nigel Mellor, seconder Tony Gordon
Branch Representatives: Jacquie Hazell and Sue Davenport	proposer Nigel Mellor, seconder Rob Needham proposer Steve Wells, seconder Jane Mellor
Newsletter Editor, Alison Clayton	proposer Steve Wells, seconder Pauline Needham
Bookstall Officer, Sue Portsmouth	proposer Vikki Bulbeck, seconder Steve Wells
Youth Officer, Rob Needham	proposer Jane Mellor, seconder Pam Elliston
Webmaster/Postmaster, John Harrison	proposer Steve Smith, seconder Rob Needham
Independent Examiner, Mike Davis	proposer Steve Wells, seconder Steve Smith

The following officer post was vacant and a new officer was sought:

Training Officer	No nominations were raised so this post is still VACANT
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7: Motion to approve data privacy policy, etc. (John Harrison) This motion was passed with no comments.

8: Discussion on other forms of financial support than restoration work (Chairman) JAH asked for ideas on what funds could be spent on. Expenses for attendance at courses, simulators, grants for sound control systems, and other forms of recruitment (e.g. Facebook) were suggested. JAH and Darren Smith spoke about direct or indirect experience of Facebook recruitment attempts; these attract a lot of interest, but subsequent take-up is poor or non-existent. However, 'likes' do mean that ringing-related pages appear on feeds to other users. Jan Glen said that the *Ringling Remembers* Facebook group had been very supportive of her. Vikki Bulbeck suggested that the Branch might target smaller shows using handbells and perhaps a dumb bell instead of a mini-ring. Local publicity could be achieved with Branch resources, and we do not want to lose the momentum generated by *Ringling Remembers*. Tony Gordon raised the point that when considering expenditure we should decide whether we wanted to support initiatives within the Branch or initiatives within the wider Guild. The possibility of support to the Guild Restoration Fund was also mentioned. The meeting discussed Sue D's proposal to transfer at least £1000 from the General Fund to the Bell Fund, however the feeling of the meeting was that there were no real advantages to doing this, particularly as the Bell Fund is restricted as to what it can support. A vote was taken, and the proposal was not carried. However, the discussion around the subject served to focus attention on the ways in which funds can be used effectively to the benefit of the Branch

9: Future of redundant SDB skittles trophy: The trophy was made by Peter Jordan in the 1980s and has been held in Sonning tower (Sonning were the last winners) for many years. JAH had asked for suggestions for its use, but none were received, and Peter Jordan then suggested that it be offered to

the Bradfield Training Course for its striking competition. This suggestion was approved by the meeting.

10. Branch practices and events schedule: Sue P advised that there were some changes to the previously published schedule; the Guild AGM date was incorrect [*already amended by JAH on the website*] and Wokingham St Pauls wishes to change its BP date away from May. Sue P is dealing with this and will advise the amended venue shortly. Tony Gordon questioned why no Branch outing is scheduled. If anyone is prepared to organise (or help to organise) an outing, please give names to Sue P. Pam Elliston questioned why a scheduled Branch Practice date always clashes with the Guild AGM, and the meeting agreed that an alternative BP date would be appropriate. Sue P will investigate and confirm. Jacquie Hazell stated that members should be encouraged to attend the Guild AGM, which now has various activities scheduled around it (for instance, last year a number of QPs were rung in the morning before the meeting).

11. Branch striking competition results: Jenny Page had agreed to present the certificates for the Branch 6-bell striking competition held in April 2018, but unfortunately these were not available at the meeting. Apologies from the Secretary for this oversight. [*The certificates are now being prepared, and will be passed to the towers involved as soon as possible*]

12. Any Other Business:

Joyce Goodwin advised the meeting of the Three Counties Ringing Day (previously a WI event), which is to be held on Tuesday 26th March 2019. There will be ringing at 4 towers, including Shinfield and Arborfield, and a pub lunch at the Leathern Bottle.

Steve Wells said that the Branch needs a social or events secretary; Jane Mellor and Joyce Goodwin would be prepared to assist as part of a team. [*The Secretary will send out an e mail request for volunteers*]. Jacquie Hazell said that it would be good to build on what we already have in common – the bells – with social events to follow. John said that the Branch used to be very active with events such as dinners, barn dances, quizzes, skittles and more.

Jacquie asked whether it was possible to pay subs by bank transfer rather than cheque or cash, particularly as so few people now have a cheque book. [*John has asked the Sue D about this*].

Jenny Page mentioned the latest Safeguarding C2 Training course which is being held in November 2019. SDB did not attend the previous course in 2018, which has already been acknowledged as being due to a missing email message. Many members have already received training through their churches, and Sue P advised that there is a C2 training course at Sonning on 23rd March, for which she and others have already booked.

John said that Rob Needham has a quantity of leaflets about local ringing if any tower requires them, and John has the CCCBR recruitment leaflets.

Thanks:

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 7.10p.m.

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