

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH  
**Annual General Meeting, Saturday 15th February 2020,  
St James Finchampstead**

**MINUTES**

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

1. **Apologies:** ODG Master (Katie Lane), Jacquie Hazell, Martha Hazell, Aidan and Liz Hopkins, John Coombes, Geoff Harvey and Derek Palmer.
2. **Death of members:** Following a short resume of their ringing careers by John Harrison, the meeting observed silence in memory of Laurie Hall (Arborfield), David Willis (formerly Sonning) and Stan Scott (Easthampstead).
3. **Approval of minutes of previous AGM:** Approval of the minutes of the 2019 AGM was proposed by Rob Needham, seconded by Lesley Graves, and approved by the meeting without dispute.
4. **Acceptance of minutes of previous Business Meeting:** The minutes of the November 2019 Business meeting were accepted by the meeting without dispute. There were no matters arising.
5. **Matters arising from the AGM minutes:**

**Social events:** The organisation of Branch-wide social events had been discussed at the 2019 AGM, but in order for this to be taken forward a co-ordinator is needed, and nobody has come forward. Joyce Goodwin asked what is wanted in terms of events, and John replied that it is more a question of what there is a demand for and what can be arranged. Jane Mellor suggested that events could be organised through individual towers and be offered more widely. Joyce will investigate a possible hand bell tune ringing presentation.

**Recruitment:** Social media such as Arborfield's use of Facebook has had some success. Rob stated that it appeared that nationally organised initiatives such as the Millennium recruitment drive and *Ringling Remembers* have been the most successful.

**Publicising ringing:** Last year's AGM suggested that smaller events at lower cost might be more appropriate, though it is proving difficult to identify suitable events. The Branch may consider hiring the Charmborough ring again in the future for the Hurst Show, though it gets booked well in advance, and would not in any case have been available for this year.

Jamal Khan suggested U3A talks, and John confirmed that this can be a good target and has already been done for some U3A groups in the area. John Harrison mentioned that he will have an article in the Wokingham paper on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day (8<sup>th</sup> May 2020). Towers arranging special ringing for that day should advise John in advance so that it can be publicised. There is also a facility of BellBoard to link ringing to the event.]

**Investment:** 'The principle of using Branch funds to support investment in facilities or activities for training and development has already been approved, but so far no towers have applied for assistance. Nigel Mellor cited attendance at ART training courses, in particular 'Teaching the Teacher' as a possible valuable use of funds.

6. **Branch Officers' reports: all reports and submitted accounts are available on line**
  - a. **Secretary** (Sue Portsmouth) Sue said that the key events in her report were largely covered elsewhere. The 6-bell striking competition at White Waltham was well supported and much enjoyed by those who took part; congratulations to Wokingham All Saints who were the winners. Matthew Steele and Joseph Godfrey from Twyford and Imogen Reason from Wargrave took part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest in Liverpool as part of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers band and performed very well. In November the Branch hosted the ODG Ten-bell competition at Warfield, followed by the General

Committee Meeting at Sonning; thank you to the organisers of both events, which went very well. The ART Loddon hub, organised by Vinni Sullivan of Wargrave, has again been active throughout the year, and a number of ringers have been successful at various levels of the Learning the Ropes scheme. Approval of the report was proposed by Alison Clayton and seconded by Jane Mellor and agreed by the members present.

b. **Treasurer** (Sue Davenport)

Key figures from the accounts were:

General Fund	£2700.93
Bell Fund	£2459.71
Total Funds	£5160.64
Number of paid up members	= 165

The accounts showed outing income of £169.40 with no corresponding expenditure. It wasn't clear what this was and Sue Davenport undertook to find out. Approval of the report was proposed by Steve Wells and seconded by Jan Glen and agreed by the members present.

c. **Ringing Master** (Nigel Mellor) Regular monthly Branch Practices have been held and have been generally well supported. Monthly Surprise Major practices have included Project Pickled Egg methods as well as the standard methods. The popular Binfield Tuesday afternoon practice has been moved to the third Tuesday of the month. Nigel highlighted the new intermediate practice which began in November and is held monthly on the first Tuesday evening of the month at All Saints Wokingham. This has been very well supported. The Branch Six-bell competition was won by All Saints Wokingham, who went on to represent the Branch at the Guild competition. The Branch entered a band in the 10-bell competition for the first time since 2011, and was placed third (*Secretary's note - there were some very favourable comments about the SDB band's performance at the General Committee Meeting afterwards*) Approval of the report was proposed by Neil Curnow and seconded by Rob Needham and agreed by the members present.

d. **Training Officer** (vacant) John H is continuing to cover this post and said that the courses set up had been well received, although the bob calling course arranged by Steve Wells had to be cancelled because late dropouts made it not viable. John proposes to set up another survey of training requirements soon, as the previous one is now two years' old. Approval of the report was proposed by Nigel Mellor and seconded by Mary Ede and agreed by the members present.

e. **Branch Reps** (Sue Davenport & Jacquie Hazell) Sue D referenced the small-group discussions that had taken place at the General Committee Meeting in November to try to establish how the Guild is perceived by members. It was noted that e mail is a less effective method of communication than verbal contact, as e mails are easily missed or just ignored. The AGM felt that most ringers consider themselves first and foremost a member of their tower, then (possibly) of the Branch, and only then, of the Guild. Approval of the report was proposed by Daniel Chafen and seconded by John Harrison and agreed by the members present.

f. **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. Some members were not aware of the existence of the bookstall, nor of the fact that it is taken to most Branch Practices. Approval of the report was proposed by Alison Clayton and seconded by John Harrison and agreed by the members present.

g. **Youth Officer** (Rob Needham) Rob reported that 9 out of 12 scheduled practices had taken place during the year. For the practices that were held, there was an average of almost 5 YRs and 6 helpers, and Rob thanked Steve Wells and Nigel Mellor who between them ran almost all of the practices; Rob also tries to give one or two of the more experienced YRs a chance to run part of the practice. 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. Rob reported that more experienced helpers are also needed, as the YRs are moving on to different methods. Approval of the report was proposed by

Pauline Needham and seconded by Alison Clayton and agreed by the members present.

- h. **Webmaster/Postmaster** (John Harrison) 'Spam was a big issue last year but has not been this year. In any case, it is always trapped by the server. John said the tower lists are available to all towers; only 4 towers in the Branch currently have one, with a fifth one recently discontinued. The QP and wedding volunteers lists have both been used in the last year. Approval of the report was proposed by Sue Portsmouth and seconded by Steve Wells and agreed by the members present.

7. **Election of new members:** The secretary read out the names of the proposed new Branch members that had been notified to her; it was then established that forms for two Warfield ringers had not been forwarded, and they were therefore missing from the list. They were added to the list at the AGM, and duly elected as members of the Guild; proposer Rob Needham, seconder Jane Mellor. The 20 new members elected were:

Jennifer Moynihan	Arborfield
Joseph Murrell	Arborfield
Thomas Barnett	Barkham
Sydney Smith	Easthampstead
Noah Whitfield	Easthampstead
Julian Dempster	Finchampstead
Joseph Dempster	Finchampstead
Alan Williams	Sandhurst (St Michael and All Angels)
Antigone Hart	Twyford
Helen Ricketts	Twyford
David Brindley	Waltham St Lawrence
David Constable	Warfield
Jamal Khan	Warfield*
Richard Woodgate	Warfield*
Elizabeth Sutcliffe	Wargrave
Edward Grant	White Waltham
Alison Jeffery	Wokingham (All Saints)
Robin Johnson	Wokingham (All Saints)
David Maynard	Wokingham (All Saints)
Helen Maynard	Wokingham (All Saints)

The joining packs for the new members who were present at the AGM were presented by the Secretary. The other packs were given to their tower representatives.

*[\* Secretary's note: Guild membership certificates for Jamal Khan and Richard Woodgate were requested immediately following the meeting and have now been received and passed to the tower.]*

8. **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 Nigel Mellor, seconder Rob Needham
Treasurer, Sue Davenport	proposer Daniel Chafen, seconder Jane Mellor
Ringling Master, Nigel Mellor	proposer Tricia Amos, seconder Steve Wells
Deputy Ringling Master, Steve Wells	proposer Nigel Mellor, seconder Neil Curnow
Branch Representatives: Jacquie Hazell and Sue Davenport	proposer Jane Mellor, seconder Daniel Chafen
Newsletter Editor, Alison Clayton	proposer Steve Wells, seconder Sue Portsmouth
Bookstall Officer, Sue Portsmouth	proposer Nigel Mellor, seconder Rob Needham
Youth Officer, Rob Needham	proposer Pauline Needham, seconder Nigel Mellor
Webmaster/Postmaster, John Harrison	proposer Rob Needham, seconder Tricia Amos
Independent Examiner, Mike Davis	proposer Sue Davenport, seconder Rob Needham

The following officer post was vacant and a new officer was sought. Jane Mellor indicated that she was prepared to stand and was duly elected.:

Training Officer, Jane Mellor                      proposer Neil Curnow, seconder David Maynard

Sue Portsmouth had advised that she wished to step down from the post of Secretary. Jan Glen indicated that she was prepared to stand and was duly elected.

Secretary, Jan Glen                                      proposer Nigel Mellor, seconder Barbara Wells

9. **Branch practices and events schedule** Sue P issued a new schedule and has since been advised of some changes which will be incorporated into the document on the Branch website.
10. **Branch striking competition results:** The certificates are now being prepared and will be passed to the towers involved as soon as possible.
11. **Any Other Business:**

Mini outings were discussed; these are generally well received and provide an opportunity to visit different towers when ringers may not be able to commit to a full day outing. David Maynard suggested combining a visit to two towers with a barbecue or skittles match to provide additional social activity. Rob Needham undertook to look into organising an event.

**Thanks:**

The Chairman thanked the Finchampstead ringers for organising the whole event and providing an excellent tea, and thanked those present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 7.00p.m.

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