

MINUTES

Present: 23 branch members from 12 towers were welcomed to the AGM by the Chairman, who also welcomed the ODG Ringing Master Catherine Lane.

1. **Apologies:** Sue Davenport, Sue Portsmouth, Rachel Moss, ODG Steward – Bobbie May,
2. **Death of members:** No deaths had been reported in the last year.
3. **Approval of minutes of previous AGM:** The minutes of the February 2020 AGM were approved by members, via Zoom poll voting, without dispute.
4. **Acceptance of minutes of previous Business Meeting:** The minutes of the November 2020 Business meeting were accepted by the meeting without dispute.
5. **Matters arising from the AGM minutes:**

The Treasurer had reported that the £169 showing as outings income was in fact the proceeds from contributions at branch practices via the 'bell'.

John Harrison reported that the planned training survey had not been sent out due to the situation with Covid-19.

Matter arising from the Business Meeting minutes:

Rob Needham had requested a branch subsidy towards the cost of replacement parts to get the ringing simulator working again in the Sonning Tower. The officers had approved a grant of £100 (approx half the cost) towards the repair of the Sonning simulator, and the Treasurer had asked for the AGM to support this. The Chairman put it to the vote and it was approved. The rules were unclear about how much authority the officers had to approve grants, especially where time might be critical, and said that this needed clarifying. He asked the meeting whether anyone had any issue with Officers approving such expenses, and there was no dissent.

6. Branch Officers' Reports:

All reports were available on the website and members had been sent notification and a link to access prior to the meeting. Therefore only specific highlights were mentioned by some officers during the meeting.

- a. **Secretary** (Jan Glen) Jan stated that there was nothing additional to add or highlight on the report. The report was approved.
- b. **Treasurer** (Sue Davenport) John H reminded members that the accounts had not yet been independently examined, so in approving the accounts this was subject to the examination. The report was approved.
- c. **Ringing Master** (Nigel Mellor) Nigel reported that an enquiry to members about a branch Ringing Room (RR) practice had received a very positive response from the Elementary practice group and sessions for this group would commence soon. Nigel suggested that as some Towers had made good use of RR, the branch should make a donation to the people who develop and maintain RR. Especially as they were soon to incorporate Wheatley (automatic ringing of unmanned bells when numbers are short) and additional facilities for handbells in to RR. Lesley Graves commented that RR did not benefit all members, especially those with limited internet connections.
The report was approved, with one vote against.
- d. **Training Officer** (Jane Mellor) Jane reported that a poll of members had produced a few very good answers, but the response from members had been very poor. Jane will continue to monitor the Colin Newman updates. John H mentioned the Guild training webinars and the recent one on Strike it Right.
The report was approved.
- e. **Branch Reps** (Sue Davenport & Jacquie Hazell) Jacquie stated that there was nothing else to

add to the published report. Rob Needham asked Catherine Lane for an update on the charity status of the Guild Youth Fund, and the possibility of the Guild setting up a members' database. Catherine reported that as the Youth Fund doesn't have its own bank account, HMRC had suggested that the Guild as a whole should become a registered charity, rather than the Youth Fund only. Discussion will be needed at a Guild AGM. The members' database is being looked in to and it would be good to be able to contact members directly. Not all branch secretaries forward messages from the Guild. John H said that SDB has a members' mailing list with virtually every member on it and confirmed that the SDB Secretary does forward Guild messages.

The report was approved.

f. **Bookstall Officer** (Sue Portsmouth) Sue sent apologies that she was unable to attend. The report was approved.

g. **Youth Officer** (Rob Needham) Rob commented that it was very pleasing in the month before lockdown how well the young ringers were improving. Mainly from the training they receive at their towers. The young ringers practice main benefit is from the social contact. Rob hopes this will continue when back to ringing. The report was approved.

h. **Webmaster/Postmaster** (John Harrison) John reported that he has been going through the members email address list and half a dozen on the list have asked to be removed and another half dozen, who are not current members, have asked to remain on the list to keep in touch. Some further addresses will be removed for those that are not members and have not responded. The report was approved.

7. **Election of new members:** There have not been any opportunities to recruit.

8. **Election of Officers:** John Harrison proposed that officers willing to stand for re-election be elected on block and those officers were duly elected. Having undertaken the Newsletter Editor role for several years, Alison Clayton was stepping down. Rob Needham stated that he was prepared to take on the role. Proposed by Alison and seconded by Simon Farrar, Rob was duly elected. Rob Needham stood down as Youth Officer and proposed Holley Wakeling to take over the role. Seconded by Alison Clayton, Holley was duly elected. John H commented that Holley would need some support from Officers which she will get. As Holley is not 18 until November, Jane Mellor said that Holley will need to be supported by someone with appropriate clearance. Simon Farrar said that he was happy to do the admin for the Youth Officer role, so Holley didn't need to do it on top of her sixth form work, and that he was happy to support her. Mike Davis was elected as the Independent Examiner.

Elected Officers:

Chairman	John Harrison
Secretary	Jan Glen
Treasurer	Sue Davenport
Ringling Master	Nigel Mellor
Deputy Ringling Master	Steve Wells
Branch Representatives	Jacque Hazell and Sue Davenport
Newsletter Editor	Rob Needham
Bookstall Officer	Sue Portsmouth
Training Officer	Jane Mellor
Youth Officer	Holley Wakeling
Webmaster/Postmaster	John Harrison
Independent Examiner	Mike Davis

9. **Branch practices and events schedule** Jan Glen reported that a draft schedule was available on the website and would be reviewed and updated once we know when we can return to ringing. Steve Wells pointed out that the date for the 2022 AGM needed to be amended to 20th February. Nigel Mellor said the online elementary practices would be starting on the 1st Tuesday of the month in Ringing Room. Nigel will provide details of how to join and will take this offline with John. John commented that it could be added to the current document on the website detailing regular Ringing Room practices

10. **Any Other Business**

Data Protection – John Harrison reported that Steve Wells is happy to take on the role for the branch and would like input from officers to help review the current documentation and guidelines. Steve said whilst someone independent from the data can manage the policy, input is needed from officers who manage the data. Jan Glen volunteered to help and Jane Mellor said she was also happy to be involved. Steve to set up Zoom call.

Survival and Recovery – Jane Mellor gave an overview of the Survival and Recovery toolkit. Jane said that all Tower Captains should encourage members to look at the toolkit. Katie Lane stated that Jane had given an excellent overview and recommends that everyone should access the toolkit. Katie reported that the Guild Stewards have been asked to find at least one Recovery Champion from their branches. Katie has signed up but they also need people with knowledge of local Towers and it would be great if Jane can sign up. SDB could help lead with this in the Guild. Katie feels that after lockdown we may lose some churches or some services, which may change ringing.

Steve Wells expressed concern as to how many young ringers will return, due to exams etc. However, there are some weddings booked which will provide an incentive. Katie hopes that when ringing commences, it may help recruitment when people realise they can hear the bells again. Simon Farrar reported that there were no imminent plans for church closures in the diocese. John H commented that things will change and so it's worth planning ahead and reminded everyone that the link to the Survival and Recovery toolkit is already on the website, and that if anyone needed help from the branch, it would be provided. Also for everyone to share any ideas they may have. Nicola Lee said that the bells at Barkham had not been rung for some time and they will need help to ensure they are safe to ring again. Katie Lane said to contact Tony Crabtree who will arrange for assistance. John H added that several people in the branch, including himself, can provide help. Nicola will let John know, as they may have a wedding in May.

Darren Smith asked that as Barkham was so small, was there a family that could ring.

Subs – The Chairman provided an update on the situation and the challenges in collecting subs. It had been agreed not to apply the £3 branch component and only the £5 guild part needs to be paid. The Guild has a number of expenses such as the website etc regardless of ringing. After an active discussion of various pros and cons the Chairman undertook that the officers would resolve the way ahead, including appropriate consultation with tower correspondents.

Catherine Lane said that it had been good to see everyone.

John Harrison formally closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 17.55. Some members then joined in a short quiz followed by a Ringing Room practice.