

Sonning Deanery Branch – 19 November 2022

Items for discussion

The November Business Meeting enables the officers to discuss ideas with representatives of tower bands in a small forum ahead of the AGM. This note provides some background to some of the topics to be discussed:

Grant policy for courses

The officers have delegated authority to approve financial support to members on ringing courses, either a grant towards individual cost or a subsidy of the event costs. In order to reduce the discussion needed to decide whether, and by how much, to support individual cases the officers have suggested the following guidelines:

- Not more than 50% of cost to any individual
- Not more than 50% of the cost of any course
- Exclude the cost of meals/refreshments

The officers discussed setting an overall limit per event, but it wasn't clear how to determine a sensible limit that would cover events of different scale and/or different numbers of members attending.

Grants for investment

For several years the Branch (and the Guild) has been willing to make grants towards investment facilities (eg simulators or sound control) that can enhance and/or facilitate more training.

Branch ringing opportunities

In recent years the Branch has extended or changed the ringing opportunities available in addition to the monthly general Saturday practices:

- Daytime practice – Additional ringing for those available during weekdays.
- Advanced practice – Originally Surprise Major but widened to include other 'advanced' methods, and now alternating between Wednesdays and Tuesdays to enable wider attendance.
- Elementary practice – Very well attended since its introduction. Now increased from monthly to twice monthly and alternating between Wednesdays and Tuesdays to enable wider attendance.

Between 'elementary' and 'advanced' there is a gap that could potentially be covered, but it is less clear what sort of event would be supported by members.

Support for recruitment and training

Recruitment and training tend to be tower-focused so the question for the officers are about what support the Branch could provide.

Retention and development

Retention relies on the quality of experience a new recruit has but is often eclipsed by recruitment. Recruits are often lost after initial training because the follow up development gets less emphasis than initial training. The Branch recently hosted an ART M2F course, and is providing mentoring to the participants, which should help them provide a better in-band experience for recruits. The Branch can also support the experience when recruits are able to benefit from elementary practices. What other ways can the Branch provide support?