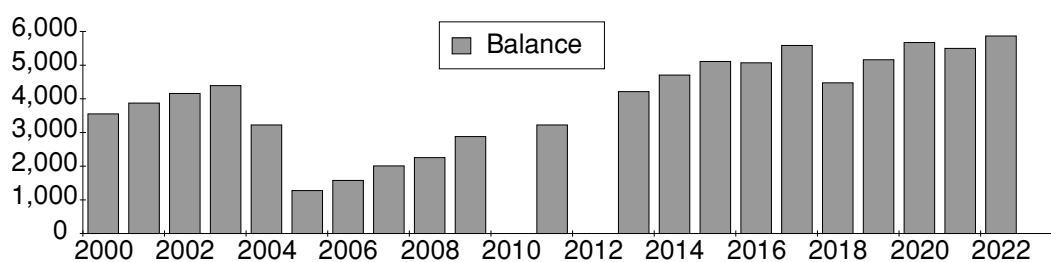


## Information paper for the AGM

The Branch's role is to support ringing in this area by providing services and support to its members. To support its work it receives a fixed portion of each member's Guild subscription<sup>1</sup>. The amount is set centrally by the Guild, not by individual branches, though in 2021 (during Covid) our Branch waived it's portion and only collected the £5 Guild part of the subscription. The officers periodically review the Branch finances and this note resulted from a recent discussion about subsidising training, which led to a more general question of 'what members get for their money'.

### 1 Background

Expenditure varies from year to year, sometimes a lot if there are exceptional items, so I looked at the accounts since 2000<sup>2</sup>. During that period the balance has generally grown as shown in the graph, except in a few years when the Branch made significant grants for work in towers (2004, 2005, 2011, 2018, 2021), invested in PR<sup>3</sup> (2016, 2018) or waived the subscription (2021). The graph shows total Branch funds. Prior to 2006 there was a single fund but since then the accounts have been split into a 'General Fund' and a 'Bell Fund'.



The table shows average expenditure per year per member for three periods.

- 2000 – 2022: the longest period (23 years with 21 sets of data)
- 2013 – 2022: the most recent ten years
- 2015 – 2019: the most recent five year period pre-Covid

Note that some totals exceed £3 (the subscription) because the Branch has other income eg interest and fund raising.

Category	~20 year average (2000-22)	10 year average (2013-22)	5 year average (2015-19)
Newsletter	52p	35p	37p
Admin	15p	13p	12p
PR <sup>4</sup>	26p	53p	£1.05
Other	34p	7p	8p
<b>Total (excluding grants)</b>	<b>£1.27</b>	<b>£1.08</b>	<b>£1.62</b>
Grants	£1.88	82p	£1.52
<b>Total spend</b>	<b>£3.15</b>	<b>£1.90</b>	<b>£3.14</b>

### 2 Investment grants

Most grants in the past were for work on bells in Branch towers. Usually this is planned well ahead but there have been a few urgent repairs that the Branch supported. In recent years the scope has included support for investment in training facilities such as simulators. The principle of investing in ringers as well as bells has been supported at several Branch meetings and with ringers currently in shorter supply than bells this may become more common.

### 3 Training subsidy

Most ringing training is free or very cheap, but there are costs associated with courses, and it can be significant if they involve accommodation and venue hire as well as admin costs and tower donations. The Branch has a long tradition of encouraging its members to attend ringing courses, notably the weekend residential course that the Guild ran at Easthampstead until about 20 years ago.

<sup>1</sup> Currently £3 out of the total £8 Guild membership subscription.

<sup>2</sup> Apart from 2010 & 2012, which were not to hand.

<sup>3</sup> Taking the Charmborough Ring to the Hurst Show.

<sup>4</sup> The net cost, less grants, of taking the Charmborough Ring, to Hurst Show in 2016 & 2018.

The Guild still runs several courses a year but they are day courses whose cost to the participant is relatively small<sup>5</sup> and members attending them rarely ask for support.

There are several national residential courses<sup>6</sup>, which cost a few hundred pounds, but Branch members have not<sup>7</sup> requested support to attend them.

Most ringing courses aim to benefit the student's ringing directly but ART teaching courses aim to help the participants to benefit others' ringing by teaching them better. Since we need more good teachers there is a strong case for the Branch to encourage its members to attend them, and support them when they do. To that end we organised an ART course in the Branch, and subsidised its costs.

In summary, the course landscape is more complex than it was 20 years ago.

#### **4 Guidelines for course subsidy**

The officers anticipate opportunities to support more courses in the future than we have done in recent years, and the officers have developed a set of outline guidelines that we believe members would broadly support. They are not intended as hard rules but they would provide a baseline and simplify the discussion when considering individual circumstances before making decisions. They are

- Up to 50% of cost to any individual
- Up to 50% of any course cost
- Exclude the cost of meals and refreshments

We were undecided whether there should be:

- An overall limit per event
- Preferential treatment should be based on age on on ability to pay

#### **5 Discussion**

There will be an opportunity at the AGM for member to offer views on how Branch funds should be spent to achieve the most benefit to ringing and ringers in the Branch.

*JAH February 2023*

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<sup>5</sup> The Radley course this year is £20 – comparable to the travel cost for many members.

<sup>6</sup> Including Hereford, Bradfield, NorthWest, ...

<sup>7</sup> As far as I know