

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell ringers
Oxford City Branch
Annual General Meeting
Saturday 11th February 2023

Minutes

1. Apologies for Absence

Jonathan Beale, Janice Beale, Steve Everett, Annika Everett, Mark Hunter, Jane Hedges, Ailsa Reid, Phil Sampson

2. Minutes from 2022 AGM

Accepted as a true account. Proposed: Hazel Rothera, seconded Clare Fairbairn

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising

4. Election of New Members

St Aldates – Mike Esbester, Peter Spain (proposed Dorothy Hall, seconded Hazel Rothera)

Garsington – Ann Sharpley, Martin Charman (proposed Mark Hunter, seconded Richard Jeffries)

Iffley – Laura Laube, Brian Helweg-Larsen (proposed Mike Kingham, seconded Hugh Deam)

Kidlington – Philip Meredith, Vivien Stevenson, Marcia Hillier (proposed Lesley Smith, seconded Ron Burgess)

Wolvercote – Gillian Edmonds, Christopher Beale (proposed Jon Beale, seconded Hugh Deam)

St Giles – Mark Jones (proposed John Pusey, seconded Craig Robertson)

All elected

5. Presentation of Certificates by Katie Lane to members elected over the past 3 years

6. Reports from Officers

Rachel Croft, Secretary: thank you to all the towers for being so helpful with

organising branch practices which have been well attended. Thanks to Marston who are hosting the six bell striking competition in May. Also, I will be standing down as secretary next year, so if anyone is interested in the role, please get in touch.

Craig Robertson, Ringing Master:

2023 has been a good year for the City Branch, with a number of very well-attended branch practices, including 17 at Iffley and most recently 25 at Cuddesdon, which started with an excellently struck touch of Grandsire Doubles, encompassing single strokes in rounds and lots of plain hunting practice up to various Surprise Minor methods, including London. It's been nice to get out to a number of towers we haven't visited recently, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the practice immediately after the meeting!

In May, we entered a band to the eight-bell striking competition in Goring-on-Thames for the first time in a number of years. Unexpected issues with the handling of the tenor led to some unsettled ringing, but we managed to ring a successful test piece — many thanks to everyone involved in the practices and on the day. This year the Guild AGM and striking competition will be held on 20th May at Broadwell in the Witney and Woodstock Branch, where the test piece will be a touch of Erin Triples - please get in touch if you're interested in being selected.

In local news, I'm glad to report on the return of the advanced practice at St Andrew's, Headington for people wanting to try out Stedman Triples or Surprise Major, a newfound Sunday quarter peal series at St Giles, and the return to ringing at St Aldate's. The handbell group has also been going from strength to strength with many quarters scored – if you're interested and free on a Tuesday afternoon, please get in touch! The Saturday morning ringing school has been well attended and supported by branch members, as well as plenty of learners at our own weekly practices.

Congratulations to Sara Jones who passed her ART M1 qualification this morning. Please get in touch if you have any other projects or events that would benefit from branch support.

At our last meeting, there was much discussion about Ringing Recovery - it's nice to see the return of peals and quarter peals, with many towers ringing for the Queen and for the proclamation of the new King. I'm sure there will be plenty more for the coronation in May, with guidance circulated to get all our bells Ringing for the King. I look forward to an even stronger year next year!

Peter Bayliss, Treasurer:

First of all I'd like to thank the previous Treasurer, Dorothy Hall, for her diligent work during her period as in office.

During the year 2022 the net bank balance increased by £181.46.

Subscriptions paid in the year totalled £1,143, 35% higher than in 2021, as more ringers registered after the pandemic, especially at St Aldates, Kidlington and Marston. Also the number of subscribing unattached ringers increased significantly.

As a result, £640 was paid to the Guild, and £247 was paid into the Bell Fund.

Expenditure was very small, consisting of £14.39 paid for website expenses, and bank fees charged by HSBC of £61.20.

Bank fees were introduced in 2022. Banks and Building Societies in Oxford are generally not opening accounts for small or charitable organisations.

The only bank in Oxford that may allow free banking is Metro Bank. If the branch agrees we will apply to Metro Bank with a view to transferring the Branch's accounts from HSBC on the 31 st March 2023, after all subscriptions and donations have been settled.

Finally, as Dorothy pointed out in her report last year, there is an allocation outstanding as a grant for the restoration at Cuddesdon if needed, but this hasn't yet been requested. Other ways of spending the money need to be thought about.

Accounts accepted and agreed to changing the bank account.

Suggestions of other banks to consider were raised. It was pointed out that Cuddesdon are having some work done on soundproofing imminently.

Branch reps:

Elizabeth Mullett: For the upcoming King's coronation in May, it is encouraged to ring every bell in the guild at some point over the weekend of the coronation, whether that is chiming or full circle. If anyone has concerns about the state of the bells there is help and support available. Towers can have a free tree for the coronation and the Guild will provide slips (small stick with roots that take very easily). Only offering native trees (hawthorn, rowan, hazel). Windsor Great Park groundsman have been contacted about planting a ODG Oak Tree and trying to get the King to plant it. The time to plant trees is November – so do the ringing, make the decision, let Catherine Lane know if you want a tree.

Last Saturday was annual day for training officers in the guild, general congregation of people interested in training, EM will send notes round. This will also be written up on the guild website as a Captain's corner (or similar).

Lindsay Powell: The Radley course is coming up on 15th April. People have asked why the Radley course and Steeple Aston are similar training but different costs – this is explained by differences in village hall costs and meal costs.

7. Election of Officers

Chairperson: Simon Edwards (proposed Craig Robertson, seconded Lindsay Robertson)

Secretary: Rachel Croft (Proposed Hazel Rothera, seconded Clare Fairbarin)

Treasurer: Peter Bayliss (proposed Craig Robertson, seconded Mike Kingham)

Vice Chair: Paul Lucas (proposed Hugh Deam, seconded Lesley Smith)

Ringling Master: Craig Robertson (proposed Rachel Croft, seconded Hazel Rothera)

Auditor: Katherine Stonham (proposed Craig Robertson, seconded Peter Bayliss)

Branch Reps: Elizabeth Mullett, Lindsay Powell (proposed Hugh Deam, seconded Paul Lucas)

8. Guild Festival - 8th July

Happens in Oxford every 5 years. Hasn't happened for about 7 years due to Covid and central Oxford towers being fully booked last year. Used to be 2 routes – towers in the city and towers around the outskirts of the city. Lots of effort was put in for the outskirts, but these didn't get many attendees, so now just the towers in the city centre are used and Mark Tarrant (OS) will organise the route. Each tower will have 1-1.5h with overlap. We will need to provide stewards for the towers from the city branch. The branch also need to organise the lunch. Catherine Lane has booked the catholic chaplaincy down from Christchurch (11-3pm) to give time to set up lunch and tidy up afterwards. Last time engaged the WI to do lunch for us. Alternatives are city branch members doing sandwiches/quiche/help yourselves buffet or providing tea/coffee/soft drinks/cake and people bring their own lunch. Aware 8th July clashes with the National Youth Ringing Competition, but only date available for the bells.

There is a festival service 11am at Christchurch – no towers are open at that time.

This is the ODG festival, so for members of the ODG, not throughout the country.

WI charged about £8/head previously, but this may have increased

Physical tower posters will be sent out for invitations to every tower in the Guild. We will need numbers for food.

General consensus is for RC to contact WI to find out costs, minimum numbers and if space could be shared, as optimum plan from discussion would be to allow served meal but also space for those who wish to bring their own sandwiches.

9. Any other business

Jamie Brown – asked re safeguarding updates: Catherine Lane – all recent guidance is on the website.

John Pusey asked about handbell ringing and planting trees if this goes ahead at Windsor Park, CL can try to organise this if possible.

Guild Ringing Day – Chilton branch are running this with help from neighbouring branches this year. It is run by the Dioscesan bellfund, which raises funds for maintenance and augmentation in the Dioscese. Information will be circulated. This year it is being held on 1st May.

Guild AGM - 20th May, Broadwell, lovely ring of 8. Historic church which used to have 5 unringable bells. There is a rustic barn setting for AGM. There will be a

miniring and handbells. The AGM is for everybody. There are at least 2,400 members in the Guild., which stretches from north of Milton Keynes to south of Newbury, west to Shrivenham and east to Slough. Quorum is 50 people, so please do come along.

Testimonials – for people who have given meritorious service to their tower, branch or guild over a number of years. If there are any nominations for the city branch please fill in the form online.

First Quarter Peal certificates – please contact Catherine Lane if you want any presented.

Hugh Deam – update from towers not here today.

North Hinksey – unable to practice and unable to in the near future. Ringing on Sundays twice a month and special practices.

Stanton St John – no practices but ringing Sunday mornings, can't ring currently as problem with the slider on the 2 (April earliest)

Has been organised combined practices on Saturday afternoons. Happy to have one at Marston ahead of the striking competition.

Raffle tickets available for purchase immediately after the AGM.

Prayer