Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers
Oxford City Branch

Annual General Meeting
Saturday 1st March 2025
St Giles' Horspath

Minutes

1. Apologies for Absence
   Mary Bayliss, Janice Beale, Jonathan Beale, Rachel Croft, Adrian Gray, Katie Lane, John Pusey, Ailsa Read

2. Minutes from the 2024 AGM and 2024 Half Year Meeting were agreed and signed.

3. Matters arising
   The previous Half Year Meeting had proposed that Half Year Meetings be moved to October. The secretary proposed that the Branch abandon formal half year meetings, and that more use be made of the ability to elect new members at branch practices, so that they do not have to wait so long before presentation of certificates. This was agreed.
   The Striking Competition Rules (circulated with the agenda for the AGM) were noted.

4. Obituary notices

   Andy Dunn: as well as creating and managing the branch website, a regular quarter peal ringer at Wood Eaton in the past.

   Ron Burgess: taught for many years at Kidlington and supported neighbouring towers.

   Patrick Hobson: awarded the Military Cross in the Korean war, subsequently ordained an Anglican priest in Worcester and Waltham Abbey, took up ringing when he retired to Oxford.

   Bernard Masterman: blind from birth, he rang at St Giles and the Cathedral, although after a serious accident he rang only handbells. He made a substantial contribution to the rehanging at St Giles in 2011.

   Roy Grant: a regular ringer at Cowley, who worked with the RSPB.

   Douglas Wilks: elected to the Guild in 1938, possibly its longest standing member, ringing at North Hinksey and at other towers including Old Marston.

Margaret Weller: one of the band who reformed at Cowley, where she was tower secretary and fund raiser after she was prevented from ringing by Parkinson's disease.

5. Election of New Members

Cuddesdon: Susan Sellar (re-election, formerly Lane End)
proposed Stuart Flockton, seconded Brian Lowe

Horspath: Karen Amos, Pamela Wyles
proposed Brian Lowe, seconded James Scott-Brown

Headington: Edward Stell
proposed Paul Lucas, seconded Claire Fairbairn

Iffley: Susan Biddle
proposed Mike Kinghan, seconded Elizabeth Mullett

Oxford, St Giles: Joy Blanchard, Aden Tang
proposed Geraint Jones, seconded Steve Everett

6. Presentation of Certificates
Certificates were presented to, or distributed to the towers of:

St Aldates: Mike Esbester, Rose Esbester, Peter Spain

Headington: Alex Jackman, Amy Wood, Penny Clarke, Kim Thornley

St Giles: Svitlana Holova, Jonathan Finnerty, Marc Jones, Andrew Williams

Iffley: Steve Bardsley, Martin King, Andrew Honey, Jane Donald

Old Marston: Carolina Redolfi

Wolvercote: Steve Roberts

Garsington: Ann Sharpley, Martin Charman

Kidlington: Susan Kambalu

7. Reports from Officers

Ringing Master 2024 has been a busy year for the City Branch.

Branch practices continue to be well attended, especially by members of the band of the host tower. Please do advertise these to any ringers who would benefit from a chance to ring away from their home towers. The online calendar is updated with many of the future dates, so please check there if you would like to plan ahead.

The advanced practices at Headington are also continuing to help branch members progress into Surprise Major, with a number of ringers newly

confident in ringing a half course of Yorkshire, as well as some new attempts at Superlative, Bristol and London. Many thanks to those who continue to support these practices to enable ringers to attempt new methods with a strong band.

We hosted the Guild Ringing Day in May, with 17 towers from in and around the branch open for ringing to raise donations for the ODG bell fund. Many thanks to Rachel Croft for organising the towers and to everyone who helped as stewards.

We also hosted the Guild 10-bell striking competition this year, entering a band of our own for the first time in a number of years. We also entered bands for the Guild 6- and 8-bell competitions after holding our own branch 6-bell competition at Iffley in May. Thanks again to Rachel Croft for organising competition band practices to prepare us for the coming year.

122 quarters were rung for the Guild at branch towers this year, including 55 at Marston and 28 at St Giles. There were also 69 quarters rung on handbells for the Guild within the branch, most at John Pusey's house in Western Road, as well as public performances at the Ashmolean Museum and for the St Giles' Fair. I am confident that the branch will continue to build on our strengths and help our ringers at all stages to progress.

Secretary Thanks are due to Brian Lowe who has brought on the new band at Cuddesdon after their rehanging, and is handing over to Stuart Flockton who has transferred to the Branch from South Oxon.

There continues to be work on managing the transition to Membermojo as the record of Branch membership, and the mechanism for communication with members, and coping with the Guild's having taken direct control of its membeship. Apologies for pestering everyone to do things to their Membermojo accounts.

The Branch website has been unavailable since Andy Dunn's last domain subscription expired, and needed credentials apparently known only to him for us to assume control. We expected the domain to become available for purchase about now, but a better alternative has emerged. Most branches are likely to move their websites to the Guild server (at zero cost to the Branch), and we will do so. The contents of the website are secure, and will soon be available at `city.odg.org.uk`

The Guild six bell striking competition will be held in the Branch on 4th October. It is hoped to organise a branch practice on the following Saturday [*this was cancelled due to a tower double-booking*] and the next branch practice will probably be on the simulator at St Aldates on 5th April [*this was moved out of the branch to Radley*].

The secretary is grateful for assistance in arranging towers for branch practices, and (when they are prompt) for prompt replies to enquiries.

Treasurer In 2024, the City Branch accounts saw a net increase of £404.00.

The total balance now sits at £3,325.48, which consists of £3,825.48 held in the bank account, and a £500 grant liability dating back some years now.

Subscriptions for the year totalled £1,533.00, which is an increase of £290 from 2023. We also saw £32.00 income from last year's raffle.

For expenditure, we paid out £1,071.00 to the Guild on subscriptions. There was also £90.00 claimed back on training expenses, from members attending the Steeple Aston course. There were no costs incurred this year on the website, as the domain name hadn't been renewed. There were also no bank fees, following the move to Metro Bank.

It emerged that the Branch's annual donation to the Diocesan Bell Fund had not been made. In the 2010s the Branch had resolved to replace ad-hoc fund raising for the Bell Fund by a contribution from the Branch's portion of subscriptions. This consists of £1 per member plus a voluntary £1 per member from which some towers had opted out. It was agreed to make up the past year's donation, and this payment would appear in next year's accounts.

Branch Representatives Elizabeth Mullett reported on her rôle of liaison between Branch and Guild. In particular, there is a proposal to replace the General Committee by a smaller and more agile executive, supervised by a scrutiny board on which the branches will be represented. The Deputy Master, Chris Mundy, will present papers to the next General Committee.

City Branch will host the Guild's six bell striking competition in October, the eight bell competition (and Guild AGM) in 2027, and a Guild Festival again in 2031 which will coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Guild.

Guild higher-number practices are now timetabled mainly on the fourth Sunday of the month.

The Towers and Belfries committee is soliciting recruits for the committee and invitations for courses.

The Learning and Development committee is organising the Radley course at the end of March, the Steeple Aston course in October, an eight bell Michaelmas course in September, and there is a Training Officers' meeting in Bletchingdon on 5th April.

8. Election of Officers
   All of the present officers were willing to stand again, no other nominations were received; re-election of existing officers as a single slate was proposed by Claire Fairbairn, seconded by Mike Kinghan, and passed nem con.

Chairperson: Simon Edwards

Secretary: Geraint Jones

Vice Chair: Paul Lucas

Ringing Master: Craig Robertson

Treasurer: Peter Spain

Branch Reps: Lindsay Powell, Elizabeth Mullett

Independent Examiner: Katherine Eyles

9. Any other business
   Karen Pile, Guild General Secretary, reminded the meeting of the Guild's 15 year plan of events. She encourages individual members to check and correct their entries in the Membermojo membership database.

   A new editor had been found for Odd Bob, and a new librarian is sought for the Guild library. The problem with finding a new librarian is the volume of material which they need to be able to care for. It is proposed to reduce the volume by offering archival material to the Oxfordshire History Centre archive in Cowley.

   The Guild is currently not availing itself of the six places for voting members at the CCCBR; and has been invited to host a CCCBR meeting in the relatively near future.

10. Closing Prayer