

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH  
**Annual General Meeting, Saturday 15th February 2025,  
at All Saints, Wokingham**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** 26 branch members from 12 towers were welcomed to the AGM by the Chairman, who also welcomed ODG Steward, Steve Rossiter.

1. **Apologies:** Pam Elliston, Peter Needham, Sue Portsmouth, Andrew Price, Mike Sherren, Kate Titford, Katie Lane (Guild Master), Karen Pile (Guild Secretary), Stuart Gibson (Guild Treasurer).
2. **Death of members:** The meeting observed silence in memory of Paul Fox, previously of Easthampstead. Post Meeting Note – David Goodwin, Arborfield was missed off in error.
3. **Approval of minutes of previous AGM:** The minutes of the February 2024 AGM were approved. Proposed by Rob Needham, seconded by Jennifer Moynihan.
4. **Acceptance of minutes of previous Business Meeting:** The minutes of the November 2024 Business meeting were accepted.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:** Rob Needham asked if there was an update from the action Chris Mundy took at the meeting to investigate the requirements for young ringers' permission to ring forms. The Secretary read out the response received from Chris. See Appendix below. Steve Wells asked if there was an update regarding work required at Arborfield. Arborfield are still waiting for the survey to be done.
6. **Branch Officers' Reports:**

All reports had been on the website for members to read prior to the meeting. As such they were taken as read, with the meeting confined to any additional points plus questions and discussions about them.

  - a. **Secretary** (Jan Glen) – Report accepted, proposed by Geoff Harvey, seconded by Ken Davenport.
  - b. **Treasurer** (Sue Davenport) – The Treasurer reported that; the Bell fund has increased with interest received. Three towers were still to pay their subs. TCs were reminded that only Guild members should be included on the subs submission and that there is no longer a category of Honorary member.

The Chairman reported that Officers have approved conditionally a request from Sandhurst towards their restoration project. The Chairman reported that Sandhurst has already received a conditional offer from Guild Bell Fund and the Officers agreed we would also make conditional offer of £500, as suggested by Sandhurst, based on the project and Guild offer. The AGM could decide to increase or decrease the offer. Ken Davenport advised that the work was part of a bigger project, and the funds will be decided when the final invoice is received. The Chairman stated that a requested update from Sandhurst has not been received to date and therefore was not looking to ask the AGM to agree a figure yet.

Steve Wells suggested that as both Sandhurst and Arborfield need work and we have funds in the account, they should be used for these projects and additional bell funds raised later if needed. The Chairman asked if we should be prepared to spend more, and there was general agreement for this.

The Treasurer's report was accepted, proposed by John Coombes, and seconded by Vikki Bulbeck.
  - c. **Ringling Master** (Nigel Mellor). Jennifer Moynihan commented that she has heard very positive feedback about the focussed practice. Sue Davenport said Peter Davenport had

much enjoyed it. Nigel explained about the new structure and encouraged people to attend. Rob Needham commented that the Branch are now run running 5 sessions a month and Nigel and the team are to be congratulated. A round of applause followed. The report was accepted, proposed by James Moynihan and seconded by Steve Wells.

- d. **Training Officer** (Jane Mellor). Jennifer Moynihan said thanks for all the work put in by Jane.

The report was accepted, proposed by James Moynihan and seconded by Mary Ede.

- e. **Branch Reps** (Sue Davenport & Vikki Bulbeck). No additional comments

- f. **Bookstall Officer** (Jennifer Moynihan). Jennifer added that she is happy to take requests and feels the box is now superfluous.

- g. **Youth Officer** (Claire Shuttleworth). Steve Wells reported that he has discussed his four youngsters with Claire, commenting that it's difficult to marshal them for events. More notice would help.

Jane Mellor asked if the youth events are advertised on the website? Claire has sent out a provisional schedule and John Harrison reported that youth practices on the website just show the date and to contact Claire for further details. This helps control who turns up.

- h. **Webmaster** (John Harrison) The Postmaster role is now redundant due to Membermojo (MM). Sue Davenport asked if wedding ringing group will still operate. John responded that it is an opt-in on MM. A discussion about MM followed with questions asked by members and answered by Jan Glen. Steve Wells commended MM, adding that it is very good and secure. Steve Rossiter concurred and added that ART now use MM.

Rob Needham advised that there was an incorrect date at the top of the report.

**Action – John to correct.** (Post AGM note – now corrected)

7. **Election of new members:** The following new members were all elected, proposed by Lesley Graves and seconded by John Coombes, with all in favour.

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Lucy Norgate    | Finchampstead  |
| Frank Whittaker | Hurst  |
| Joe Kenneh      | Hurst  |
| Neville Hird    | Hurst  |
| Sarah Barlow    | Warfield   |
| Joshua Crabtree | White Waltham  |
| Elliot Beasley  | Easthampstead – elected subject payment of subs                              |
| Scarlet Chafen  | Easthampstead – elected subject payment of subs                              |
| Simon Fox       | Easthampstead – elected subject payment of subs (to be checked if a member). |

Returning Member:  
Pearl Gibson

8. **Election of Officers:**

Steve Rossiter took the chair. As there were no changes, it was agreed that all Officers could be elected on mass. Proposed by Steve Smith, seconded by Rob Needham with all in favour. Steve declared all officers duly elected.

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Chairman  | John Harrison |
| Secretary | Jan Glen      |
| Treasurer | Sue Davenport |

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Ringling Master        | Nigel Mellor        |
| Deputy Ringling Master | James Moynihan      |
| Branch Representative  | Sue Davenport       |
| Branch Representative  | Vikki Bulbeck       |
| Newsletter Editor      | Jennifer Moynihan   |
| Bookstall Officer      | Jennifer Moynihan   |
| Training Officer       | Jane Mellor         |
| Youth Officer          | Claire Shuttleworth |
| Webmaster/Postmaster   | John Harrison       |
| Independent Examiner   | Simon Smith         |

- 9. Branch practices and events schedule.** The Secretary advised that the calendar for the next year was pretty much in place with just a couple of Saturday practice towers to be confirmed. The new schedule for mid-week dates was explained and towers reminded to confirm if they can accommodate the proposed dates.

The Chairman summarised the situation regarding the November Business meeting date clashing with other activities for some Officers and asked if people are happy for Officers to fix a date, provided sufficient notice is given? Ken Davenport suggested keeping it to a 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday but moving it to October. The Chairman asked how many people automatically block out the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month and the result was not many. It was agreed that it would be left up to the Officers to decide, but a 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday should be selected where possible. Lesley Graves commented that she was unable to make any Saturday morning meetings.

**10. Any Other Business.**

Changes to Branch rules – proposed by John Harrison and seconded by Rob Needham. Changes accepted with all in favour.

Data protection policy – relates to changes by the Guild and bring our policy into line with what we now use. Ken Davenport felt that we don't need to replicate what the Guild has as the Guild policy covers what the Branch needs to do. Steve Smith requested that the Officers should review the Guild policy and bring any decision to the next AGM.

Post Meeting Note: The link on the SDB website has been updated to point to the Guild Policy on the ODG website.

8-bell striking competition rules – relates to changes required as we no longer have a joint competition with Reading. The changes were accepted with all in favour.

Documents detailing the proposed changes above were available on the SDB website prior to the meeting, plus printed copies available during the meeting.

Post Meeting note: the documents have been updated as agreed and updated to the branch website.

Safeguarding – The Chairman summarised why we appear to have a safeguarding officer, and that it is not needed as it is covered by the Guild Safeguarding Officer. Steve Wells asked who to go to if there is a safeguarding issue? The Chairman advised that if it is a branch problem, then the Guild and if a tower issue, the church office.

Weekend Branch Practices – an issued was raised about whether a Saturday branch practice should ever be cancelled or not and that this related to the Secretary having once cancelled

a practice as many regular ringers were away and not enough people replied that they would attend. Officers were split as to whether they should be cancelled or not as a general principle. A general discussion was had followed by a vote on three options:

1. We never cancel a practice and don't ask – 2 votes
2. We don't normally ask but if think short we ask – 1 vote
3. We adopt the same policy as with mid-week practices of asking who is attending each Saturday practice – majority of votes.

Ken Davenport suggested we review how it's working in a year's time.

Jane Mellor had previously suggested we had a Branch ringing day followed by a BBQ and had received positive responses and asked if people happy to encourage their ringers to attend and any views on which month? Vikki Bulbeck suggested July. Sue Davenport said St Paul was a possibility. Format of the day to be agreed.

The Newsletter Editor, Jennifer Moynihan asked for comments on the content. Do people like what's in it. Can we print fewer copies? Everyone was generally happy with the content. Sue Davenport added that it only cost £30.

Steve Rossiter provided a Guild update: MM is working well and lots of training being done and still available. There is no longer an Odd Bob Editor, please let the master Katie know if you are interested in taking on the role. Doug Beaumont, Librarian is giving up. Katie is talking to somewhere in Oxford about accommodating the large library. Again, let Katie know if you are interested in taking on the role. Likewise, if you are interested in representing the Guild on the CCCBR.

Members confirmed they were receiving notifications about the Guild 10/12 bell practices. Steve commented that he felt the Branch is run very efficiently. Any questions about the Guild, let Steve know.

Certificates were presented to the winning, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placed teams in the Branch 6-bell striking competition, Shottesbrooke, Wokingham All Saints and Easthampstead respectively.

The Secretary thanked Rob Needham for producing the certificates.

A vote was taken with all in favour of Jan Glen being added as a their signature for Branch cheques.

Sue Davenport thanked the Arborfield and All Saints teams for organising the ringing, service and tea.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 18.37

### **Actions from the Meeting**

Fix the date for the Business meeting – John Harrison

### **Appendix**

Chris Mundy to look into the requirements for young ringers' permission to ring forms.

*Response from action, received 24/02/2024*

*I did raise the point about permission to ring forms with both the Guild Master and the Guild Safeguarding officer.*

*At the moment we do not believe there is any specific guidance on this, but the Guild feel that there is a need for a separate form for each group/tower the child attends. This is because the forms contain details of medical information, contact information etc and in an emergency would be needed straight away. If only one form was held in a central location this may well then not be available if needed.*

*So I think what SDB are doing is the recommended approach as I understand you do have separate forms for each group your children attend. I know you were looking to try to streamline it but I think what you currently do is the suggested approach.*

*If we become aware of any changed guidance, we will let you know.*

*I look forward to speaking again in due course when we get closer to the 6 Bell striking competition! Thank you for your work in making the arrangements for this.*

*Regards*

*Chris*

*Chris Mundy*

*Deputy Master, ODG*