

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD – SONNING DEANERY BRANCH
**Annual General Meeting, Saturday 21st February 2026,
at St Nicholas, Hurst**

MINUTES

Present: 29 branch members from 13 towers were welcomed to the AGM by the Chairman, who also welcomed ODG Master, Katie Lane and ODG Steward, Peter Robson.

1. **Apologies:** Tricia Amos, Elliot Beasley, Dave Butler, Ken Davenport, Peter Davenport, Sue Davenport, Pam Elliston, Mike Deering, Geoff Harvey, Keith Milner, Rachel Moss, Peter Needham, Rob & Pauline Needham, Sue Portsmouth, Becki Shuttleworth, Kate Titford, Ted Westlake.
2. **Death of members:** The meeting observed silence in memory of Ann F Saddleton, formerly of Shottesbrooke, Frank Vitel, formerly of St Paul, Wokingham and Betty Tomlinson formerly of Wokingham All Saints and Arborfield.
3. **Approval of minutes of previous AGM:** The minutes of the February 2025 AGM were approved. Proposed by James Moynihan, seconded by Jane Mellor.
4. **Acceptance of minutes of the previous Business Meeting:** The minutes of the November 2025 Business meeting were accepted.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:** Steve Wells felt some clarification was required to the notes about safeguarding in the Business Meeting minutes, in that the ODG requires all ringers to complete the Basic Awareness course. Katie Lane commented that the Guild recommends that but is not in a position to police it.
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.
 - b. **Treasurer** (Sue Davenport) – Steve Wells pointed out a spelling mistake for one of the Easthampstead proposed new members. Anton Petrov not Petron. Simon Farrar commented that the introduction of online subs payment by the Guild was a great move forward and thanked the Guild for implementing it. A number of towers had brought their subs to the meeting (Arborfield, Barkham, Sonning & Twyford). The Treasurer's report was accepted, proposed by Jennifer Moynihan and seconded by David Maynard.
 - c. **Ringing Master** (Nigel Mellor) - the report was accepted.
 - d. **Training Officer** (Jane Mellor) – Steve Wells asked if the training course in March would be on 6 bells or 8. It was confirmed as 6 bells. The report was accepted.
 - e. **Branch Reps** (Sue Davenport & Vikki Bulbeck) – The Chairman complimented Vikki on a most comprehensive report. Steve Wells commented that item 6 was incorrect, Vikki Bulbeck responded that she was reporting what was said during the meeting. The report was accepted.
 - f. **Bookstall Officer** (Jennifer Moynihan) – it was agreed by the meeting that the Bookstall is no longer required. Jennifer to distribute any remaining books amongst the towers.
 - g. **Youth Officer** (Claire Shuttleworth) – the report was accepted.
 - h. **Webmaster** (John Harrison) – the report was accepted.

- 7. Election of new members:** The following new members were all elected, proposed by Steve Wells and seconded by James Moynihan, with all in favour.

Anton Petrov	Easthampstead
Luke Attfield	Easthampstead
Jodie Hill	Easthampstead
Lizzy Steele	Twyford
Lucy Thomas	Twyford
Lucy Gates	Twyford
Alison Wilkins	Warfield

Returning Member:
Ruth Fawcett

8. Election of Officers:

Katie Lane took the chair. John Harrison was re-elected as Chairman, proposed by James Moynihan, seconded by Nigel Mellor, with all in favour. Since there were no competing nominations, it was agreed that all those Officers standing for re-election could be elected en bloc. They were duly elected, proposed by Steve Smith, and seconded by David Maynard, with all in favour.

The Chairman thanked James Moynihan for his contribution as Deputy Ringing Master. Nigel Mellor proposed Becki Shuttleworth as Deputy Ringing Master, seconded by David Maynard, with all in favour.

Chairman	John Harrison
Secretary	Jan Glen
Treasurer	Sue Davenport
Ringing Master	Nigel Mellor
Deputy Ringing Master	Becki Shuttleworth
Branch Representative	Sue Davenport
Branch Representative	Vikki Bulbeck
Newsletter Editor	Jennifer Moynihan
Training Officer	Jane Mellor
Youth Officer	Claire Shuttleworth
Webmaster/Postmaster	John Harrison
Independent Examiner	Simon Smith - Proposed by Jennifer Moynihan and seconded by Tony Gordon

9. Impact of new Guild structure on Branch

Katie Lane highlighted that Membermojo now allows the Guild to communicate with Members, and members can tailor what communications they wish to receive. Katie gave an overview of the need for the restructure. The Guild hasn't changed over the years and takes too long to make things happen. The new structure means that Branch Secretaries, Treasurers and Reps will no longer attend General Committee meetings and Branches will be represented by the new Branch Spokesperson. The AGM is the main meeting for members where plans will be put to the members. The AGM requires a minimum of 50 members attending, with 75% voting in favour, in order to get the new structure through. Katie expressed concern that as the AGM is being held on the outskirts of Guild, members

might not attend. Katie encouraged all SDB members to attend. Voting online was raised as a solution, however online voting is not in the Guild rules and would require presenting and voting on at an AGM to be changed.

Simon Farrar suggested including another attraction at the same time as the AGM, for example the 12-bell competition includes a beer festival. Katie replied that the mobile tower had been made available at the last AGM.

Tony Gordon and John Coombes both suggested an EGM in a central location. Katie Lane added that having the AGM more central has been discussed and the Chairman noted that the only AGM that failed to have a quorum was held near Oxford.

The Chairman added additional clarification around the new role of the Branch Spokesperson and asked for a proposal for a spokesperson. A few people were suggested but were not prepared to take on the role. Katie commented that the first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 13th June. Katie has produced a 5-year plan which will be discussed and reviewed. Vikki Bulbeck agreed to attend the meeting and take on role. Agreed by acclamation.

- 10. Branch practices and events schedule.** The Secretary advised that the calendar for the next year was pretty much in place but with quite a few TBCs where Towers are waiting for Church office confirmations. No response had been received from St Pauls regarding the branch 8-bell competition, (date to be determined) nor the mid-week Advanced practices. Lesley confirmed White Waltham as TBC for the Saturday branch practice in November. John Coombes confirmed 20th May for the Focussed practice at Wargrave with review afterwards regarding other dates. Some towers feel that not all their band members like the Elementary or Focussed practices at their Tower practice and a couple of dates were declined. The Secretary asked if there were any volunteers for any of the gaps? Jennifer Moynihan offered Arborfield and Vikki Bulbeck Shottesbrooke. The Secretary to discuss with the BRM.

11. Payments to Branch Towers

The Chairman summarised the proposal which was previously discussed by Officers and Tower Captains at the Business Meeting. Some other branches charge additional subs to pay for the use of Towers.

Simon Farrar asked if Membermojo can collect additional subs. Jan Glen confirmed that it can and was already in use for three Branches this year.

Steve Wells commented that the money in the bell has usually gone into the Branch Bell Fund. Vikki Bulbeck commented that very few people carry cash these days.

Vote 1 – pay £15 for 6 and £20 for 8 or 10 bell towers - proposed by John Harrison and seconded by Steve Wells. One abstention.

Vote 2 - £5 additional subs for the Branch – from January 2027 for all members who pay a sub. Proposed by Vikki Bulbeck and seconded by James Moynihan. 22 in favour with 2 against. The proposal was passed.

The Chairman gave an update on the Tower Maintenance survey that the situation in Branch towers was reasonably healthy.

12. Binfield Ropes

The Chairman summarised the request for a grant towards the cost of upgrading Binfield ropes and commented that Branch Officers felt the request was reasonable in the circumstances as did the Tower Captains at the Business Meeting. Proposed by John

Harrison and seconded by Vikki Bulbeck. The proposal was passed.

13. Any Other Business.

Peter Robson – asked for volunteers to help at the Swallowfield show with the mobile tower on the August Bank Holiday. If anyone would like to volunteer, please email Peter – details on the Guild Website under Officers.

Grahm Slade confirmed the mobile tower will be at the Hurst show again this year – June 27-28th June, and also asked for volunteers to help please.

Ringling 2030 – The Chairman advised that we should be thinking about how we capitalise locally. If members are not aware of it, please look it up and consider, could this help my Tower or the Branch. <https://cccbr.org.uk/ringing-2030/>

Branch 6-bell striking competition – certificates are usually presented at the AGM but the Secretary advised that they were not available as she was trying to source a digital copy as the Branch has run out of printed versions. A round of applause was given to the winners:

1st Easthampstead

2nd Wokingham All Saints

3rd Arborfield

Steve Wells raised Safeguarding and reported that he had nearly completed the Leadership course as the Easthampstead Rector has requested it. The Diocese has requirement for every member to complete the Awareness course. Steve advised checking with your church what their requirements are.

Simon Farrar felt the requirement for the Leadership course was absurd and is going too far and you should ask your parish safeguarding officer. .

Steve Wells commented that the interpretation of the requirements is up to the local Safeguarding Officer.

Vikki Bulbeck stated, be guided but protect yourself and SDB is not the only branch that struggles with this.

Jane Mellor added that if teaching under 18s there should be two 2 with DBS, ideally one of each sex. There are no specific responsibilities for the Branch, and we must be guided by the parish.

The Chairman said the officers would follow up at some point.

The Chairman thanked Graham and the team at Hurst for hosting and thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 18.24

Actions from the Meeting

Jan Glen to discuss gaps in the mid-week schedule with Nigel Mellor.

Officers to follow up and clarify the Safeguarding situation.