

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Newbury Branch

Minutes

of

Annual General Meeting

held at

The Church of St Mary the Virgin Chieveley

on Saturday 2 March 2024 at 4.00 pm

Present

Stuart Gibson (Guild Treasurer), Peter Robson (Guild Steward), Martin Rice (Chairman), Tony Smith (Treasurer), Sue Smith (Midweek Ringing Master), Mike Hopkins Till (Advanced Practice Ringing Master), Chris Maslen (200 Club Organiser), Lucy Hopkins Till (Training Officer), Nick Annetts, Mark Backhouse, Rachel Backhouse, Angela Brown, Rod Brown, Eric Edwards, Rosemary Evans, Cath Fittell, Gail Harris, Mike Head, Amanda Marchant, Chris Maslen, Phil Meredith, Dave Mullender, Adrian Moon, Roy Pratley, Kevin Rogers, Lin Rogers, Dave Thorpe, Howard Turnidge, Maureen Velvick.

1. Welcome

Martin welcomed Stuart Gibson (Guild Treasurer), Peter Robson (Guild Steward) and all those present to the meeting.

2. Act of Remembrance

Silence was observed for those who had died previously and for Don Boot who died in 2023:

3. Apologies for Absence

Marcus Allum, Bruce Laurie, Rosemary Maslen and Mark Robins

#### 4. Other Urgent Business

Martin Rice reported that he wished to make a proposal at this stage of the meeting, as it would affect items later in the Agenda. Following a discussion with Mark Robins, Martin suggested a change for the third Friday Advanced Practice. He proposed that the Towers would be restricted to Newbury Branch eight and ten bell Towers and that the Tower Captain, where the Advanced Practice took place, should run the practice. There was a lengthy discussion, including whether this would apply to the first Friday practices, what would happen if the Tower Captain was not able to run an advanced practice and who would organise the list of proposed towers. No decision was made at this point in the meeting. Later in the meeting, there was further discussion. Martin put his proposal to the Meeting. There were two votes in favour and seven against.

Election of Advanced Practice Ringing Master was added to the Agenda. (See item 8. (d 2) below.)

#### 5. Minutes of the 2023 AGM

In Item No 2 Cyril Lewendon should read Cyril Lewington  
Otherwise taken as read.

Adoption proposed by Kevin Rogers  
Seconded by Roy Pratley  
Signed by the Chairman

#### 6. Matters Arising

None.

#### 7. Officers' Reports

##### a) Chairman

Martin said he felt the Branch was in good shape and that he was encouraged by the number of members attending the AGM today. There have been a number of new members elected in recent months.

##### b) Midweek Ringing Master

See attached Report.

##### c) Advanced Practice Ringing Master

Mike Hopkins Till said that he had prepared a list of towers to be visited, which he issued at the beginning of the year. There had been mixed attendance with only six ringers on some occasions. He had been unable to attend practices at the end of the year as he had been unwell.

#### d) Branch Practice Ringing Master

Martin Rice reported that the first Friday of the month practices had taken place at Branch towers from Lambourn in the west to Yattendon in the east of the Branch. It was suggested that these practices were too advanced. Martin advised that surprise minor had been rung when there were enough surprise minor ringers. Maureen Velvick confirmed that she attended most of these practices with some of her beginners and that they were always given plenty of opportunity to ring within their capabilities.

#### e) Secretary

Martin reported on behalf of Mark Robins that his role was largely receiving information from the Guild and sending it to Branch Members and Tower Correspondents. Tony Smith noted that Mark also provided the Guild Report Editor with information for various sections of the Guild Report.

#### f) Treasurer

The Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and a copy is attached to the minutes. Tony described the various transactions for the Branch and the 200 Club. He noted that a savings account had been opened with Lloyds Bank and that £3,000.00 had been transferred from the current account to the savings account. He also, noted that two 2023 subscriptions were not paid until January 2024, but those two members are included in the list of 2023 members on page three of the Accounts.

He thanked those Tower Correspondents who had promptly paid ODG subscriptions and provided a list of Members for their Tower. Tony advised the meeting that he would not be seeking re-election as Treasurer.

Stuart Gibson noted that we could receive a better interest rate from a CCLA Account and that most branches did this.

#### g) 200 Club Organiser

Chris Maslen noted that the financial information had been included in the Branch Accounts. The prize money for 2024 has been increased by £25.00 to £400.00. The additional prize will be drawn today.

Chris proposed that £444.83. should be donated to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund. This was seconded by Mike Hopkins Till and approved by the Meeting. Stuart Gibson thanked the Branch on behalf of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund

#### h) Training Officer

Lucy Hopkins Till reported that there had been four courses this year, including a brief session on tutoring. She is proposing to hold one training course each month as she had identified a need for more courses. Various publications are available from Lucy

i) Newsletter Editor

Martin reported that Mark was often concerned that there would be insufficient information for the Newsletter, but it usually arrived at the last minute. It was agreed that Mark did an excellent job in producing the Newsletter.

j) Guild Representatives Martin Rice & Lucy Hopkins Till

Lucy & Martin confirmed that they had attended Guild Meetings. It was noted that one branch donates £20.00 to towers hosting branch practices. Martin noted that the Midweek Group collected £2.00 per ringer which is donated to the tower. Tony Smith noted that there is probably sufficient Branch income to fund donations to first Friday practices. The matter is to be reviewed.

## 8. Election of Officers

Most Officers remained in post as there were no other nominations. All were approved by the meeting.

a) Chairman	Martin Rice, proposer Tony Smith, seconder Rosemary Evans
b) Vice Chairman	Vacant
c) Midweek Ringing Master	Sue Smith
d1) Branch Practice Ringing Master	Martin Rice
d2) Advance Practice Ringing Master	Mike Hopkins Till
e) Secretary	Mark Robins
f1) Treasurer	Maureen Velvick proposer Tony Smith seconder Chris Maslen
f2) Auditor	James Pryer proposer Maureen Velvick seconder Amanda Marchant
g) 200 Club Organiser	Chris Maslen
h) Training Officer	Lucy Hopkins till
i) Newsletter Editor	Mark Robins
j) Guild Representatives	Lucy Hopkins Till & Martin Rice
k) Webmaster	Nick Annetts proposed from the Chair

## 9. Election of New Members

The following were proposed by the chair and duly elected.

Nigel Manley of Bucklebury  
Mawgan Bird of Newbury  
Philip Meredith of Peasemore  
Dave Mullender of Peasemore  
Peter Wright of Peasemore

## 10. To approve Auditor's Honorarium of £25.00

Proposed by Tony Smith, seconded by Mike Hopkins Till and approved by the meeting.

## 11. 2025 AGM

It was agreed that the 2025 AGM would be held at East Garston on Saturday 1 March.

## 12. A vote of thanks was made to:

John Toogood for taking the Service  
Lucy Hopkins Till for playing the organ and reading the psalm  
Rod Brown, Howard Turnnidge and the Peasemore Ringers for making the arrangements and providing tea.

## 13. Any other Business

Stuart Gibson addressed the meeting on three topics :-

- a) The Guild has produced a 15 Year Plan. Details are on the Guild website.
- b) The ten bell striking competition is due to be held in Reading on 23 November 2024, but cannot be held there on that day. Would Newbury or Thatcham consider hosting the competition and meeting? Martin Rice to respond.
- c) It is proposed to introduce a new method for recording members details from 1 January 2025. Details required will be name, email address & year of birth. Subscriptions will be collected by Branch Treasurers as the current system.
- d) A 200 Club Draw took place. The winners were :-

Cath Fittell        £75.00  
Mark Backhouse £25.00  
Ed Dempster       £25.00

The meeting closed at 5.35 pm

Distribution

