



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Guidelines for Branch Officers January 2024

website www.odg.org.uk

These guidelines are provided by the Master and General Secretary. They do not take account of additional or different procedures which apply to individual Branches.

The comments and procedures below should be taken as guidelines only, for the assistance of Branch Officers, particularly when they are new to the work.

They supplement the Guild and Branch Rules (available on the Guild website www.odg.org.uk)

Further information is available on the Guild website www.odg.org.uk under the info and publications tabs.

Most Branches share these tasks amongst other Branch Officers to balance the individual workload and to ensure expertise resides with all the Branch Officers team for job succession purposes.

NB This document will be updated to incorporate MemberMojo procedures within the next 12 months.

BRANCH PRACTICES AND MEETINGS

The frequency and dates of these will depend upon the tradition of your Branch and the wishes of the members.

Decide on a schedule of towers for all practices and meetings for a year in advance. Keep a record to ensure that all towers are visited reasonably regularly. Maintain a record of which towers have halls, which can accommodate meetings and where people exist who will organise tea.

Notice of the Branch AGM and other business meetings must be sent to all correspondents of towers with members at least 14 days in advance, and to the Officers of the Guild (i.e., Master, Deputy Master, General Secretary, General Treasurer, Librarian and your Branch Steward). Branch meetings must be minuted, and **a copy of the minutes should be sent to the Guild Librarian**. It is recommended that old Minute Books should be deposited in the Guild Library for safe keeping.

Details of Branch Practices and Branch Meetings should be sent to the Odd Bob editor (oddbob@odg.org.uk) and the Webmaster (webmaster@odg.org.uk) for inclusion in the Diary of Events.

If necessary, items of business such as the election of new members can be taken on the occasion of Branch Practices provided notice is given at least 14 days in advance. (You could consider the possibility of giving such a notice for each Practice to allow for emergency items. A minute of 'No business' would suffice for those occasions when there is nothing to raise.) The Guild banner may be used at Branch services and is available from the Guild Master.

Expenses for postage and printing should be claimed from the Branch Treasurer, providing receipts wherever possible.

NEW MEMBERS

When new members are elected at one of your meetings, the name(s) and date(s) of election should be sent to the Membership Secretary as soon as possible. The Membership Secretary will issue a certificate for you to forward to the new member together with a copy of the Guild Rules and the New Members Information Leaflet.

The Branch should keep an up-to-date list of members, including the date of election, membership number (obtained from the certificate), tower and when subscriptions have been paid. The Branch Treasurer should be copied into the new member's information.

In the event of a member moving to another Branch, details should be sent to the Secretary of that Branch.

All changes in membership, including deaths, should be notified to the Membership Secretary.

The General Secretary should be informed before each Guild AGM of the names of members who have died during the year.

FINANCE

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are due to be paid by members at the start of each year. Ensure that you, and they, know the subscription amount, which is generally decided at the Autumn General Committee Meeting.

Chase up towers and members who are slow in sending subscriptions.

The Branch Treasurer should send the appropriate portion of the subscriptions to the General Treasurer as soon as possible but certainly by 1st March each year.

The Branch Treasurer should maintain accounts and submit them for auditing. A copy of the accounts should be sent to the Guild General Treasurer by 30th April.

BADGES & RULE BOOKS

The General Secretary holds a stock of these. Rule books are available free of charge, badges should be purchased and resold to your members as required.

FIRST QUARTER PEAL, LONG SERVICE TESTIMONIALS and DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CERTIFICATES

These are available on request from the General Secretary; the application form for Distinguished Service is on the website.

CHANGE of BRANCH OFFICERS

Notify the General Guild Secretary, Newsletter Editor and the Report Editor of any changes of Officers, particularly the Branch Secretary. Changes of Branch Treasurer should also be noted to the General Treasurer. The server manager should be notified of changes to email addresses serveradmin@odg.org.uk

BRANCH STRIKING COMPETITIONS

For your Branch Striking Competition(s), arrange the location well in advance. Also at least 3 months in advance find one, or preferably two, judge(s). A list of ringers who would be able to act as judges can be obtained from the Guild Master or Deputy Master. Good judges are difficult to secure, so book them early.

The judge(s) should be from outside the Branch whenever possible. Copies of the rules for striking competitions should be sent to the judge(s) and to the competing teams.

Ensure that there is suitable accommodation for the judges. They should be able to hear the bells clearly without being disturbed by the noise or sight of other people.

In advance organise two stewards - one to marshal the teams according to the draw order and the other to be in the ringing room advising the conductor when allocated times for practice and for the rounds are reached, etc.

NOTICES FOR GUILD ACTIVITIES

Notices will be sent to you by the General Secretary regarding Guild activities such as the AGM, Ringing Day, Festival, Striking Competitions and General Committee Meetings.

These notices should be distributed promptly as follows:

- Notices of meetings of the General Committee and the Bell Fund to yourself and to the Branch representative(s).
- Striking Competition notices to those concerned as described below.
- Other notices: at least one to each tower with members and spare copies to Branch Officers.

GUILD COMPETITIONS

The General Secretary will send you notices regarding the various Guild Competitions.

For the Six Bell Competition, your Branch will be represented by one tower band, either the winner of your Branch Competition or another selected by an appropriate procedure. The notice for the Guild competition should be forwarded promptly to the conductor/tower captain of the band concerned so that they can submit their entry form to the Deputy Master (or other organiser) by the due date.

Entry to the Guild Eight Bell Competition is for tower or Branch bands with no restriction on numbers. Again, notices should be forwarded promptly to likely entrants so that entry forms can be submitted on time.

In the Ten Bell Competition your Branch will be represented by a single band selected in a manner approved by your Branch members. The notice for this competition should be sent to the person(s) responsible for organising the band.

SECRETARIES' MEETING

As a Branch Secretary, we hope that you will be able to attend the annual Branch Secretaries' Meeting at which various Guild and Branch issues are discussed informally. This meeting is held on the first Friday of October and will be held on Zoom or face-to-face. The General Secretary will send a reminder of the meeting, possibly with a list of topics to be discussed, but please feel free to ask for any other items to be included. If you can give prior warning this would be appreciated, but items can be raised at the meeting if there is no time to give notice.

GUILD MEETINGS

As a Branch Secretary, you are an ex-officio member of the Guild General Committee and a Governor of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund and should attend the meetings of these bodies. These meetings are held on the second Saturday of March and the fourth Saturday of November. It is expected that you will also attend the Guild AGM in May.

GUILD STEWARDS

The Guild Stewards act in an advisory role and as a link between the Branch and the Guild Officers, especially through the Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee. They will also help in arranging Guild events in your area if required. Each Steward is asked to liaise with three Branches, and they will try to attend as many of your Branch events as possible. Please keep your Steward informed of activities, welcome them to your meetings and practices and ask for their help whenever you need it.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Report Editor will ask you for a range of information which is to be included in the Guild's Annual Report. This includes a Branch Report for the year, a list of paid up members (liaise with the Branch Treasurer for this), amendments to the details of tower ringing times and names of correspondents (these should be sent as soon as they are known to ensure that the published Correspondents' list is up to date), names of members who have died during the year (this list should also be sent to the General Secretary for use at the Guild AGM), names of long serving members (50 years +) etc. You will receive a set of deadlines for these, and it is vital to keep to the dates given to ensure that the information is included in the Report.

The Editor will also ask you how many copies of the Report you will need. Copies are distributed one to each tower with members. As Branch Secretary you are entitled to one for yourself and you should find out how many members would like their own copy.

Copies of the Guild Report will be sent to you by the Report Editor when they are available. They are usually available for collection at the Spring General Committee Meeting.

ODD BOB

The Newsletter Editor will ask you for a short report of activities within your Branch and a list of your forthcoming events for each of the two editions of ODD BOB each year. Again, it is essential to keep to the given deadlines.

Issues of ODD BOB will be provided by the Newsletter Editor. At least one copy should be distributed to all towers with members. You should inform the Newsletter Editor of the numbers required and update the total as necessary.

GUILD WEBSITE

The main diary of branch practices and events across the Guild is held on the Guild website <http://odg.org.uk> please send your events to the webmaster@odg.org.uk

LIAISON with GUILD SERVICES

Education

The Learning and Development Workgroup organises several courses for the Guild. Notices will be emailed to you for distribution to towers. Please encourage members to attend these courses. Many Branches subsidise students from their Branch Funds on these courses. Also, Learning and Development Workgroup members will organise courses for a Branch, or even a tower if there is sufficient demand. If there is a need in your Branch, contact the Chairman of the L&D Workgroup for help and advice.

Towers and Belfries

If any tower captain is concerned about the condition of his/her bells, then ensure that the Towers and Belfries Sub-committee is asked to inspect the tower and bells. Members of the Sub-committee act in a liaison role with the Branches. Details of this can be found in ODD BOB and on the website.

Library

Advise your members on how to obtain books from the Guild Library. A catalogue of the books is available on the Guild website and contact details for the librarian are available both on the website and in the Annual Report.

DATES OF GUILD EVENTS reference the attached 15 Year Plan
Here is the annual schedule for the main Guild activities. Wherever possible, you should try to avoid any Branch activity which would clash with them.

2 nd Saturday in March	General Committee Meeting Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund (ODBF)
AGM	
May Day 1 st Bank Holiday	Ringling Day in aid of the ODBF
3 rd Saturday in May	Guild Annual General Meeting Guild 8-Bell Competition
2 nd Saturday in July	Guild Festival in Oxford

(every 5 years)

1 st Friday in October	Branch Secretaries' Meeting
1 st Saturday in October	Guild 6-Bell Competition Raising & Lowering Competition
4 th Saturday in November	General Committee Meeting Guild 10- Bell Competition

Other events are held from time to time and the following are held on a regular basis:

Sponsored Quarter Peal (QP) week (every leap year). An inter-branch competition held in February (during the week including 29th) in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund and arranged by the Bell Fund Officers. A Trophy is presented at the AGM in May when the results are revealed. Winner being the Branch raising the most money for the ODBF.

Saturday in March/April One-day Ringing Course.

Saturday in July New Guild Members' Welcome Morning

Saturday in September Michaelmas Ringing Course

Saturday in October One-day Ringing Course

Saturday in November 10 Bell Ringing Course

Higher numbers (10 or 12 bells) practices are held quarterly

BRANCH PARTICIPATION IN GUILD EVENTS

The Guild depends on the help of Branches, Secretaries in particular, for the organisation of the events above. In order to spread the load, this is arranged in a 15-year plan so that over a period of 15 years each Branch is asked to help in arranging each of the main five events once. This should mean one event approximately every three years. Secretaries will be provided with a copy of the plan by the General Secretary.

Guidelines of what is required for the various events are given below, but in each case the General Secretary and your Branch Steward will be able offer advice and assistance.

Indicative timings are included but you may find that reference to previous notices will be helpful.

RINGING DAY

The Ringing Day is held on behalf of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund (Charity Reg. No. 268390) and is open to ringers from all ringing associations in the UK and beyond. It is advertised in the Ringing World.

The Chairman of the Bell Fund will liaise with the Secretary of the hosting Branch to provide guidance and support as required.

Towers and Routes

Arrange **1 or 2** routes for the period 9.00 am - 7.00 pm approx.

i.e. 24 - 30 towers for 1 hour each if possible. (An overlap of 15 minutes may help to keep things moving).

If possible, arrange the routes so that toilet facilities are available at suitable stages, e.g. mid-morning, lunch time and mid-afternoon. Coffee, tea and cold drinks are often appreciated by the ringers. If this can be arranged at convenient towers the profits will help the fund-raising for the day. If this is not possible, then any indication of towers where refreshments may be obtained locally would be helpful.

Suggest suitable lunch venues where possible.

Information should be sent to the General Secretary in good time for the necessary publicity to be arranged - before the end of February.

Stewards and Helpers

Arrange for at least 2 stewards to be at each tower. This is vital for the smooth running of the day and the avoidance of unpleasant incidents.

The Ringing Day is much more successful if ODG members are available to ring with visitors at every tower. In recent years visiting ringers from other associations have been disappointed because there have not been enough visitors to ring all the bells. Ask the members of the tower to attend and where necessary request support from the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund Trustees and the Guild Officers who will assist in finding support.

Tickets

The charge per tower and the cost of a Day ticket will be determined by the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund trustees and the information and tickets sent to the Branch Secretary in good time for circulation to the stewards.

All monies collected should be sent to the General Treasurer as soon as possible after the event.

SPONSORED QUARTER PEAL Week (every leap year) last week in February

This is an inter-branch competition held in February (usually the week containing 29th) in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund and arranged by the Bell Fund Officers.

Branch Officers or individual towers or ringers may organise quarter peals or other ringing that for which sponsorship may be attracted or donations made to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund.

Note: The Bell Fund Treasurer will be pleased to receive sponsorship or donations to the Bell Fund for any Quarters rung in, or around, that period of time.

Further details can be obtained from Stuart Gibson
treasurer@bellfund.odg.org.uk

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS in March and November

The Guild secretary will contact the hosting branch (see 15 year plan) to discuss arrangements.

Accommodation

The arrangements for these require a hall or a church with kitchen facilities which will seat at least 50 people, together with some space for bookstalls etc. A hearing loop or portable audio system is required.

Light refreshments

This is usually taken at the end of the meeting and is organised by the Branch hosting the meeting. It is not necessary to provide a full ringing tea, but arrangements will be discussed with the General Secretary ahead of the meeting. A cup of tea/coffee, water/squash with a slice of cake, biscuits and cookies will suffice in most cases. A donation to cover branch expenses is usually requested. The General Secretary will ask that General Committee members email the Branch to confirm that they are taking tea to aid catering plans.

Ringling

It is usual to have bells available for 40 - 45 minutes before the meeting and/or after the meeting.

Timings

The timings are approximately as follows:

March: the Spring General Committee Meeting is preceded by the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund (ODBF) AGM.

1430: AGM of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund (ODBF).

1500: General Committee Meeting

1630: Refreshments and ringing if requested

November: the General Committee Meeting is preceded by the Guild 10-Bell Striking Competition. The Guild Deputy Master is responsible for the competition arrangements and will work in close liaison with the Branch Officers and the General Secretary. The result of the competition will be announced before the start of the committee meeting.

1430: General Committee Meeting

1530: Refreshments and ringing if requested

The General Secretary will need to know the following information at least six weeks before the meeting in order that the notices can be prepared:

- The venue for the meeting (preferably with a map)
- Arrangements for ringing.
- Name and address of the person to whom names for tea/light refreshments should be sent.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING in May

The Guild secretary will contact the hosting branch (see 15 year plan) to discuss arrangements.

The Eight Bell Striking Competition takes place on the morning of the AGM. (see notes on Eight Bell competition)

Accommodation

Attendance at the meeting is usually between 50 (quorum) and 90 but it would be safer to use a hall which will seat at least 100. Not all those attending the meeting have tea. A hearing loop or portable audio system is required.

Details of all the arrangements (including map(s) where appropriate) should be with the General Secretary by the middle of March to allow time for production and distribution of the notices.

Ringling

There are usually three or four towers available for ringing during the morning, preceding the AGM, which must be at towers that are not involved with the Eight Bell Competition.

Other activities can be arranged to encourage attendance at the AGM. **It is the only meeting that requires a quorum of 50.**

Please emphasise to your Branch that if the attendance is below the required quorum no business can be completed.

A mini ring is a popular attraction, handbell activities and an invitation to The Ringing World or other supplier have in the past encouraged Guild members to attend.

All activities are at the discretion of the Branch.

1430: AGM Meeting

Service

The AGM service takes place after the meeting. Arrangements for the service are left to the discretion of the local Branch but help and advice are always available from the General Secretary or the Branch Steward. The form of the service is usually a version of Evensong although this is not a requirement and local incumbents may have other ideas.

EIGHT BELL STRIKING COMPETITION in May – ODG AGM follows.

Towers

The Eight Bell Competition takes place on the morning of the Annual General Meeting which is the third Saturday in May.

In liaison with the Guild Deputy Master, arrange for 3 convenient towers: 2 for the heats (if required) and one for the final. The 2 peals of bells used for the heats should be of similar weight and go if possible. Ideally the tower for the final should be where the AGM is to be held but may not be one of the towers used for the heats although the bells can be different in weight from those in the heats. The bells chosen should not present undue difficulties for the bands competing.

Since bands often travel some distance for the competition, it is appreciated if there are toilet facilities available at or near these towers.

Try to arrange for a suitable 'Judges' Den' e.g., a room in a nearby house. It is important that the judges can hear the bells clearly but are not likely to be disturbed. Ideally judges would be inside and somewhere warm in the event of cold or wet weather.

The results of the Competition will be announced before the start of the Annual General Meeting.

Stewards

Arrange for 6 stewards to be available, 2 at each tower. One steward should act as marshal outside the tower and the other should supervise the timekeeping and ringing inside the tower. All stewards should be familiar with the rules of the competition. The Judges are arranged by the Deputy Master.

Tea

The tea arrangements for the Eight Bell Competition will be the same as the tea arrangements for the AGM therefore the Branch hosting the event will work in close liaison with the Guild Master and General Secretary as well as the Deputy Master who oversees the Competition arrangements. Ideally, drinks (tea/coffee and squash/water could be served at the towers(s) if heats are taking place.

Timings

These will depend on the number of entries and should be scheduled so the results can be given before the AGM which will start by 1430.

Car Parking

It is helpful to have any relevant information on the availability of parking facilities - particularly with a sketch map or postcode and any particular instructions on access to the tower.

SIX BELL STRIKING COMPETITION and RAISING and LOWERING COMPETITION – in October

These Competitions take place on the same day at towers within reasonable distance of each other so that bands can enter both Competitions.

The Deputy Master is responsible for scheduling the ringing and will liaise closely with the Branch hosting the Competitions.

Tea is usually held in the church or a hall close to the tower for the final and is attended by around 80 people. If the hall can be used during the Competition, it is a great help as the weather is often inclement. It is not always possible to use the church during the Competition if it is a ground floor or gallery ring because the bands may be distracted.

The usual timings are as follows:

Heats for both Competitions (if required) 14.00 - 16.00 followed by the result of the heats/competition.

Tea from 16.00 or 16.30 and draw for final.

Final 17.30 -19.30.

All timings are flexible and dependent on the number of towers in the competition.

Details of the arrangements should be sent to the General Secretary and the Deputy Master by the end of June.

TEN BELL STRIKING COMPETITION in November

This event and its requirements are similar to both above competitions except that it is very unlikely heats will be needed – so it is just one tower for the actual competition.

The event takes place in the morning before the Autumn General Committee Meeting, therefore refreshments at the Competition tower can be light. (Tea/Coffee and Squash plus biscuits.) This should be served either in the church or a hall close to the tower. Numbers expected would be around 70.

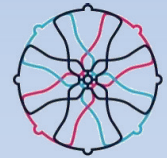
It is particularly important to have somewhere warm for the judges to sit and where they can still hear the bells clearly given the time of year.

Usual timings are ringing between 1000 and 1300 with results around 1300.

Details of the arrangements should be sent to the General Secretary and the Deputy Master by the end of August.

CHARGES FOR GUILD EVENTS

Teas/refreshments at Guild events are expected to be self-financing and should be charged for accordingly. Hire of halls can be covered by the Guild, but this should be discussed and agreed with the General Treasurer beforehand. If there appear to be problems over the finance of events which would leave your Branch “out of pocket” these also should be discussed and agreed beforehand with the General Treasurer.



Code for Ringing

Every ringer, ringing leader and ringing society plays their part in creating a safe, welcoming environment and in representing ringing to both church and public.

This **recommended** checklist for ringing societies summarises the values of the ringing community and its expectations of all who ring, in their interactions with other ringers and when representing ringing at large.

ALWAYS ✓

1. Create a tower environment where all feel safe, respected, welcomed and valued.
2. Create a positive learning environment where feedback is timely and supportive
3. Respect your surroundings, the tower, church and the community where you ring.
4. Understand and observe others' personal boundaries.
5. Ring responsibly, with the well-being of your band and visitors in mind.
6. Look out for others' safety, raise concerns promptly and know what to do if you witness unacceptable behaviour.
7. Make sure all your interactions, online or in person, show empathy and courtesy.
8. Consider the impact of your words and actions on others; apologise if you're at fault.
9. Uphold the safeguarding policies of your parish and the ringing societies to which you belong.
10. Take pride in being part of the ringing community.

NEVER ✗

1. Engage in, trivialise or endorse any form of abuse, bullying or harassment, or let these go unreported.
2. Engage in banter or language which could make someone feel demeaned, threatened or unwelcome, whether in person, by phone, online or via social media.
3. Undermine, ridicule or intimidate a less experienced ringer.
4. Personalise disagreements; deal with the issue, not the person.
5. Allow your decisions as a ringer to be compromised, by prejudice or any other cause.
6. Act unlawfully in your role as a ringer or in a way that brings ringing into disrepute.

If you witness unacceptable behaviour and are not sure how to respond, contact your parish or association safeguarding officer. Where someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent attention, call your local authority's children's or adult social services team, or the police on 999.

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For more information contact
Secretary, Oxford Diocesan Bell Ringers

secretary@odg.org.uk



Oxford Diocesan Guild
of Church Bell Ringers