## OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS BICESTER BRANCH

### MINUTES AGM HELD AT BICESTER SATURDAY 5th MARCH 2018

**(1) OPENING REMARKS** Mrs Teresa Carter (Vice President) took the chair. She welcomed 15 other members of the Branch to the meeting (including the Guild Steward, Colin Lee) and called first for a minute’s silence in memory of Wendy Taylor.

**(2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Sue Carter, Hilarie Rogers, Anthony Cole, John Harris, Sue Macready

**(3) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING** The amended minutes of 18 February 2017, which had been made available on the Branch website, were accepted on the proposal of Jeremy Adams, seconded by Anne Martin, and signed.

**(4) MATTERS ARISING** At the 2017 AGM it had been agreed that £500 would be donated towards work (totalling £4,347.60) on Kirtlington bells - this would be paid in 2018. £150 (agreed in June 2017 by the Branch officers for the purchase of a simulator in Kirtlington) had been paid and was shown in the 2017 accounts.

**(5) OFFICERS’ REPORTS**

##### Secretary (Kathryn Grant)

This year’s AGM was held on Saturday 22 February at Kirtlington, where we elected 3 new members from Kirtlington, and Ludgershall. Later in the year we hosted the Guild Ringing Day with striking competition in Islip, and our own Branch striking competition (18 ringers) with barbecue in September which was won by the team representing Ludgershall.

During the year, the Cole family moved to the Highlands of Scotland – a great loss for the Branch given the enthusiasm and contribution made by all of them to ringing and social events in the Branch. Despite that our Branch Practices have continued with varying degrees of support but plenty of enthusiasm particularly shown by the new ringers at Kirtlington. Four members of the Branch have taken part in the Guild training days in the year which they’ve enjoyed.

Piddington ringers rang for the 2017 BBC Music Day in memory too of Wendy Taylor who died in February. During April, Jeremy Adams, our Branch Ringing Master, arranged an outing in the Witney and Woodstock Branch area. Following on from two first quarters last year, a further two members of the Branch rang their first quarters in 2017.

*Kirtlington, Oxfordshire*

*St Mary*

*Saturday, 9 September 2017 in 40m (16cwt)*

***1260 Plain Bob Doubles***

*1 Judith Vickars*

*2 Kathryn Grant*

*3 Jeremy Adams*

*4 Ron Burgess*

*5 Hugh Deam (C)*

*6 Steve Vickars*

*Rung to celebrate the recent completion of Lottery funded structural and internal works at St Mary's, Kirtlington*

*Bletchingdon, Oxfordshire*

*St Giles*

*Sunday, 8 October 2017 in 39 mins (8–0–1 in A)*

***1260******Plain Bob Doubles***

*1 Katherine A Stonham*

*2 Ellie Seddon*

*3 Jonathan Cresshull (C)*

*4 Joanna E Knight*

*5 Steve Vickars*

*6 Alison T Merryweather-Clarke*

*First quarter peal - 2*

*First quarter peal – Treble*

We now have an active Facebook page ‘Bellringers of Kirtlington, Bletchingdon and environs’, in addition to the website, and an email list of 36 ringers to try to keep communication effective within, and beyond, the Branch.

On the proposal of Teresa Carter, seconded by Sally Wale, the report was adopted. All in favour.

##### Treasurer (Sally Wale)

The Current Account stood at £1,239.28 on 31 December 2017. The Deposit Account stood at £6,822.99, with the Church of England Central Board of Finance. Subscriptions were £560, and wedding donations were £130.

The new financial summary layout had been requested by the Guild.

We withdrew £1,000 from the Deposit account as agreed, which was a 10% donation towards the work of rehanging the bells at St Andrew’s Oddington for stationary rope operated chiming. Interest accrued from the Deposit account this year was £19.50.

Donations of £125 were sent to ODG Bell Fund and to the Bell Restoration Fund from the Branch. We also supported Kirtlington with a donation of £150 towards a ringing aid to enable learners to ring tied bells with the simulator. This is in use with a thriving band of ringers which is increasing in numbers and Steve Vickars has opened the invitation to use it to ringers from other towers.

There are now no ringers at Fritwell, Ambrosden or Souldern.

Tower Captains have been reminded about subscriptions and it is hoped that this year we will have a quicker response than last year. The suggestion was made that, by using social media, subscription payment/ collection might be improved.

The accounts have been audited again this year by Chris Rippon, Treasurer of the Islip Village Hall Committee, and the Treasurer has written to thank him on behalf of the Branch.

On the proposal of Steve Vickars, seconded by Teresa Carter, the report was adopted.

###### Report from Guild Representative (Anne Martin)

1 Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee

**The Guild has vacancies for the office of General Secretary** and also, on the Towers and Belfries Committee – see later. Some of the tasks of the General Secretary have been shared out amongst other officers, so the General Secretary’s job has been slimmed down.

Ringing Day Chipping Norton Branch Monday 7 May

**Guild Festival**

This was the discussion question last year. The next festival is scheduled for 2021. However, following the feedback from the discussions, it was agreed that the Festival would be discussed by F&GP closer to this date, to consider whether the frequency should be extended to mark significant anniversaries only.

2 Public Relations

**New Guild website** is being developed.

Elva Ainsworth, PRO, gave a presentation of the new website at the November 2017 Committee meeting. She is working through responses from the branches regarding the best ways to support them.

In due course, the Branch members will be required to update their entries. Training will be given – 2 people per Branch. There is the intention to have the new website in good shape for the AGM on Saturday 12 May at Bodicote (note change of date, due to Royal Wedding).

They are still looking for interesting video or audio clips so please look out for opportunities. **Representatives from Committees and Branches who would like to be trained (remotely) in updating the website to be submitted by the end of February. One-to-one training to be run in March/April.**

Mark Regan, Master at Worcester Cathedral, is due to run “How to talk about ringing!” on 21 April at Amersham - see <https://site.corsizio.com/c/59e337b4932ced07ee4b7ce8>.

3 Education Committee

The Chairman, Tony Crabtree, gave details of basic courses at Radley 7 April 2018/ Steeple Aston 27 October; more advanced method ringing, Michaelmas- Saturday 29 September and 10 bell ringing focusing on Grandsire Caters at Shrivenham on 3 November. Applications for the Michaelmas and Steeple Aston courses were up last year. The Michaelmas course included a ‘Conducting’ course which was well received.

The committee would be grateful if a volunteer or volunteers were to come forward to help organise the volunteers, and also for booking the towers. Please contact the Education Committee if you know of anyone who might be willing to help with these essential tasks.

It would be appreciated if tower captains could encourage their ringers to apply for suitable courses. Sadly, not all notices for courses reach the intended audience. If you feel that there are any areas and topics, which are not currently being covered, or if you need help or advice in organising training activities at tower or branch level, then please get in touch with the Education Committee: ([edchairman@odg.org.uk](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CKathryn%20Grant%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CW11MTMMK%5Cedchairman%40odg.org.uk) or [edsecretary@odg.org.uk](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CKathryn%20Grant%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CW11MTMMK%5Cedsecretary%40odg.org.uk)).

4 Safeguarding Policy

The details of the Safeguarding Policy are still being discussed.

There is an article on safeguarding in the November 2017 Odd Bob with the latest news.

Katie Lane has had talks with the Diocesan Safeguarding officer about the difficulty of having a Children’s Officer in every tower, and has sent out a fact-finding request for each tower as to the feasibility of this. Katie will bring the findings to the next Committee meeting on 10 March.

5 Towers and Belfries

Two new members, David Bardwell (Tilehurst) and Andy Slater (Mortimer) have been co-opted onto the committee, and enquiries are being made in the north of the Guild to try and identify further members to cover that area. However, it must be the right person with technical and mechanical knowledge.

A maintenance course is being planned for September/October probably in the Banbury, Bicester, Chipping Norton areas.

6 Library Review

Work on the trial electronic archive continues - the screens are now consistent in their design and from the point of view of the application, the archive can be regarded as ready to use. Volunteers are still required to scan and photograph documents in the library for placing in the archive. If you are able to help, or provide feedback, please contact the Librarian (Doug Beaumont).

Update March- Electronic archive: There has however been only one offer of help with the photography/scanning of library material, and unless this situation changes there can be no real progress with setting up the archive.

7 Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2018 will remain as last year: (a) Resident ringing Members & Associate Members £8; (b) Non-resident Ringing Members £8 Peal fees 50p per rope

Armistice Day Special Ringing

There was discussion about the requirement to ring muffled in the morning then open in the evening. The view was that many churches have an evening service, so this would not be practical, particularly if it involved removing muffles with the bells up.

Ken Darvill has agreed to be the Guild’s point of contact for any requests from people wanting to learn to ring initiated through the ‘Ringing Remembers Project’.

A new campaign to replace the 1400 ringers lost in the first Great War - to be acknowledged with ringing at 7.05pm on 11 November. Churches wishing to participate are asked to complete the form found at [www.brunopeek.co.uk<http://www.brunopeek.co.uk/>](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CKathryn%20Grant%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CW11MTMMK%5Cwww.brunopeek.co.uk%3Chttp%3A%5Cwww.brunopeek.co.uk%5C%3E) no later than 31 July, to ensure the Battle's Over organisers can list their involvement, and send them further information. Oxfordshire County Council has been active in encouraging all churches to participate.

Bell Fund

The Managing Trustees of the Bell Fund would like to thank to all those who helped to arrange the Ringing Day which was held in the Bicester Branch and raised £763.

Ringing Criteria for the Radley Course

*To ensure the safety of the students, helpers and tutors on this course a standard of ringing competence and understanding is required.*

*While we try to make sure that all of the bells we use are suitable for teaching, they may be much lighter or heavier than the bells in your home tower, there may be steps or ladders to access the ringing room, the length of the draught may be much longer or shorter than you are used to, and there may be any number of other peculiarities to deal with.  For this reason, we ask that you are able to ring a bell competently and confidently on your own, and you should ideally have experience of ringing a range of different bells, including bells in other towers, so that you are not impeded in your progress and can take full advantage of the tuition provided on the course.*

*All students must be members of the Oxford Diocesan Guild, and therefore regular Sunday service ringers.*

*The Tower Captain or Tower ringing Tutor should fill in the ringing ability section on the application form giving their name to this.*

*If the student is under 18 a permission to ring form needs to be filled in and this will be forwarded on receipt of the application. A parent or an appointed responsible adult needs to be present on the course. This could be a helper.*

*This criteria will also help the tutor to plan the course as they will be aware that the student understands these requirements.*

The Bicester Branch will be responsible for hosting the 2019 Guild Spring General Committee Meeting.

On the proposal of Kathryn Grant, seconded by Jeremy Adams, the report was adopted.

##### Branch Ringing Master (J Adams)

Over the last year the ringing activities of the branch have followed a similar pattern to that of recent years. Branch practices have continued monthly with mixed levels of attendance. At times there have been few of us, but other practices have been quite well-attended. Special practices have also taken place monthly (alternating between Bicester and Islip). It hasn't always been possible to ring the planned methods, but we have successfully adapted the ringing to suit those attending each time.

A highlight of the year was the outing in April to churches in the Witney area – Freeland, North Leigh, Witney, Ducklington and Yarnton - with a very good lunch at the pub in Freeland. Our out-going ringing Master, Anthony Cole, had learnt to ring in this area and later also served as tower captain locally, so it seemed especially appropriate to visit these parishes on his last outing with us. The branch has felt the loss of Anthony, Sarah, Samuel and Grace this year following their move to Scotland, but at least we were all able to gather for a fitting send-off, kindly hosted by Kathryn Grant in June.

The branch hosted the Guild Open Day this year on 1 May and the Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition at the end of the day at Islip. Many people contributed to the success of this event by opening towers, supervising ringing and helping with teas so a big thank you to all involved.

The annual Striking Competition and Barbeque was held on 2 September in Islip, this time kindly hosted by Sally Wale. Three teams competed this year, with the team from Ludgershall triumphing to claim the Clifford East Shield for the first time since 1984. Congratulations to them.

Looking forward we are hoping to have as many towers as possible ringing for the Armistice centenary in November as part of the 'Ringing for Peace' initiative. A few Quarter Peals have been rung in the towers of the branch this year and it would be good to try and organise some more during the coming year. If anyone would like to ring in one then please let us know.

An interesting development in the last year has been the installation of a ringing simulator in Kirtlington thanks to Steve Vickars who has generously invited people to make use of it, so do speak to him if you'd like to have a go.

Steve has also kindly taken on planning the outing for this year, re-visiting his old home range in South Oxfordshire on Saturday 21 April. The planned towers are Drayton, Milton, Steventon, West Hanney and Marcham. Please let Steve know if you'd like to come along.

Branch practices and special practices are planned to continue as they have done, but if anyone has any special requests or new ideas then do let me know.

On the proposal of Ian Smart, seconded by Steve Vickars, the report was adopted.

##### Website Manager (Steve Vickars)

We are still very grateful to Anthony Cole for hosting the Branch site on his server in Scotland. Normal service was resumed in late June after the Cole family’s move and the site has been largely available since then, notwithstanding electrical work, severe gales, and snow.

Having largely concerned myself at the start of the year with non-webmaster related activities (running Kirtlington tower, and gaining full ART membership) I have now turned my attention to the Bicester Branch website.

The website has been kept up-to-date over the past year, including Branch events, reports on practices, as well as essential documents required for Branch meetings.

I have been in touch with the Oxford Diocesan Guild web master and server administration team with the intention to move our Branch’s web pages to the ODG server, which I understand, also runs the WordPress Content Management application. I have also registered interest in being able to update Branch details directly on the actual ODG pages and expect a response in the near future.

I believe that the relocation of the Branch web pages should provide a useful opportunity to review and revise, where required, the structure and content of our web pages (including expected updates to Safeguarding), as well as updating our distribution list of members’ email addresses.

We can also review how we reach out to and involve our members, for instance, taking advantage of social media including integrating Facebook and Twitter with our site.

In response to a query re GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation, in effect from May 2018) the necessary compliances will be made.

On the proposal of Ian Smart, seconded by Richard Haseldine, the report was adopted.

 **(6) ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

The following new member was elected: Gus Bridges (Bletchingdon) Proposed: Steve Vickars S: Jeremy Adams

 **(7) ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The following were elected: President: Willie Haynes Proposed: Teresa Carter S: Jeremy Adams

Vice Presidents: John Harris and Teresa Carter Proposed: Steve Vickars S: Kathryn Grant

Secretary: Kathryn Grant Proposed: Teresa Carter S: Jeremy Adams

Treasurer: Sally Wale Proposed: Steve Vickars S: Jeremy Adams

Guild Representative: Anne Martin Proposed: Jan Haseldine S: Richard Haseldine

Branch Ringing Master: Jeremy Adams Proposed: Ian Smart S: Steve Vickars

Deputy Branch Ringing Master: Richard Haseldine Proposed: Willie Haynes S: Jeremy Adams

Website Manager: Steve Vickars Proposed: Michael MacArthur S: Jeremy Adams

**(8) GUILD/ BRANCH EVENTS TO BE NOTED**

Guild AGM in Bodicote on Saturday 12 May

Branch ringing course Saturday 7 July – details to be confirmed

Branch striking competition Saturday 1 September – proposed Islip

Guild 6 Bell striking competition Saturday 6 October – Central Bucks Branch

Centenary of end of First World War Sunday 11 November

 **(9) DONATIONS TO BELL FUND AND RESTORATION FUND OF ODG**

On the proposal of Jeremy Adams, seconded by Anne Martin £150 will be given to each fund. All in favour.

**(10)** First ¼ Guild certificates were presented to Judith Vickars & Ellie Seddon.

**(11) DATE OF NEXT MEETING** AGM on Monday 18 February 2019 – evening with/ without service.