## OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS BICESTER BRANCH

### MINUTES AGM HELD AT KIRTLINGTON SATURDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2019

**(1) OPENING REMARKS** Mrs Teresa Carter (Vice President) took the chair. She welcomed 17 other members, from 8 towers, of the Branch to the meeting (as well as the Guild Master, Katie Lane) and called first for a minute’s silence in memory of John Harris. She expressed her thanks to Steve and Judith Vickars for the arrangements for the meeting; Penny Wood for taking the service; and Bob Hessian for playing the organ. A retiring collection was given to St Mary’s, Kirtlington.

**(2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Gus Bridges

**(3) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING** The minutes of 5 March 2018, 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** None

**(5) CORRESPONDENCE** Details of the Young Ringers’ Award Scheme (under 18 on 1/9/19)had been receivedfrom Robert Newton email: [edsecretary@odg.org.uk](mailto:edsecretary@odg.org.uk)

**(6) OFFICERS’ REPORTS**

##### Secretary (Kathryn Grant) and Branch Ringing Master (Jeremy Adams)

We held our AGM in Bicester on an evening in March following a Branch Practice and elected one new member to double the Bletchingdon band. Approximately a quarter of the Branch’s membership were present and, apart from electing Steve Vickars as website officer, all other officers stayed in post.

There has been a resurgence of activity within the Branch led, in part by more participation at Branch Practices (a couple at Bletchingdon were almost too popular) and ringing quarter peals. We started the year with a quarter peal as an 80th birthday compliment to President, Willie Haynes, rung by Branch members. Two of our newer ringers, Steve Vickars and Ellie Seddon, both of Kirtlington, rang over 20 in the year (and, taught by Steve, Ellie became the 100th ringer to achieve Level 5 ART certificate). Gus Bridges, Bletchingdon rang his first quarter, Jill Bailey, Anne Martin and Sue Macready their 4th whilst Richard and Jan Haseldine rang about 20 including one, with their son in Yorkshire, to celebrate the birth of their grandson.

In addition, following a taster evening in July in Weston-on-the-Green, run by Lesley Belcher of the North Bucks Branch under the auspices of ART, nine individuals started to learn bell handling and made enough progress to ring on 11 November on the centenary of the Armistice along with every tower in the Bicester Branch. We, in the Bicester Branch, owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to fellow ringers who have so willingly given of their time to teach a new band.

Our Branch outing was held in April to 5 towers in the Old North Berks Branch where Steve Vickars, our organiser, had grown up. Although only fifteen ringers from three branches were able to come we rang at Drayton, Milton, Steventon, West Hanney, and Marcham.

We held our striking competition and BBQ on 1 September in Islip. Ludgershall and Islip entered tower teams, but we mustered five separate teams with the gentlemen’s team somehow winning the trophy. Thanks to all who helped, took part and particularly to Philip Curtis who expertly judged the teams’ efforts.

Sadly on 8 April John Harris of Launton died after a long period of ill health – he was our Vice-President for many years and known to retain his interest in ringing and the Bicester Branch to the end. May he rest in peace.

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

##### Treasurer (Sally Wale)

On 31st December 2018 the Current Account stood at £726.28 and the Deposit Account at £6,856.90, which is invested with the Church of England Central Board of Finance. The interest we received was £33.91 and the interest rate was 0.27% this year.

Subscriptions were £520, and wedding donations £210. We had five fewer ringers in 2018 than in 2017, but wedding donations were up by £80. This sum I have kept as cash as we came into the year with only £19.15 in cash.

We donated £500 to Kirtlington towards refurbishment of their bells. Donations of £150 were sent to ODG Bell Fund and to the Bell Restoration Fund from the Branch. £320 was sent to the Guild as Branch donations.

£50 was donated to the Association of Ringing Teachers for help and support given through them to teaching new ringers learning at Weston-on-the-Green.

The new financial summary layout requested by the Guild last year has been continued in its format together with the one that I have used over the years. Between the two layouts it should be possible to compare the years 2017 and 2018 instantly, while the original breaks down figures to answer smaller financial questions you may have. With two financial summaries I have discontinued the hand written ledger and kept a copy of both statements in the ledger.

There are still no ringers at Fritwell, Ambrosden nor Souldern.

Tower Captains have been reminded about annual subscriptions and the response so far is good.

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

On the proposal of Jeremy Adams, seconded by Sue Carter, the report was adopted. All in favour.

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

Guild Publications: *Odd Bob* – Printed May and November - Next Issue May 2019 and an Annual Report

New Guild website <http://odg.org.uk/>

Tim Hayward reported that the new website had failed to fulfil the brief and did not meet expectations.

Due to a technical issue it cannot be up-dated efficiently. In order to develop a website that is fit for purpose and reflects and invests in the needs of a 21st century Guild, it has been agreed that the way forward is to start again.

Investigations into using a commercial company have taken place but after consideration it has been decided that this would be an expensive & not necessarily valuable investment. Expenditure so far of about £1,000 will be written off.

The new website “New Website +1” will focus on our members and our towers, it will be easy to keep up to date and provide a wide range of information, not only to our members but other ringers who wish to use it as an information resource. The aim is to get it up and running as soon as possible with the understanding that it will be a developing process.

Feedback welcome.

###### Future of the General Committee

At the last committee meeting members discussed the future of the General Committee and how well the Guild meets its basic requirements of recruitment/retention, keeping the bells in good order and Sunday ringing.

Some points from the discussion:

* Guild is not good on recruitment and does not support branches effectively;
* The website is getting better;
* The Annual Report is excellent;
* Top end training is very good;
* Public relations are limited and there are few shared resources. For example, the Guild has an excellent model bell, but members do not realise that it is available;
* Excellent publications on the bookstall.
* The Guild is not monitoring members.
* There used to be a communications group, maybe this should be reinstated.
* A map of the Guild is being developed visually indicating where towers are active, ring for services, train new ringers etc., as against the weaker areas.
* Membership is growing, it is greater than last year.
* How can the number of teachers in a branch can be assessed?

Tony Crabtree is heading this process, any comments to him.

###### Central Council Representatives’ report

The Central Council are to update their rules, trying to get into the modern world, but it is taking time to cover all areas.

The Dove Data system: it is being updated (by one person, Roger Baldwin, on an old DOS system). There is a lot of work to be done and no forecast date for finishing.

The “Framework for Method Ringing” project has been through a major consultation and significant refinement. The framework, with supporting examples and explanations, and a comprehensive FAQ, is available at: [**https://cccbr.github.io/method\_ringing\_framework/**](https://cccbr.github.io/method_ringing_framework/)

###### Safeguarding Policy.

The permission to ring form has been updated..

<http://odg.org.uk/main/policies/safeguarding.php>

The C2 Safeguarding course was run on 15th September 2018. It is intended to run the course annually and the trainers will be asked to make it even more relevant to the needs of bell ringers.

You are reminded that if you have a young ringer in the tower you must have a permission to ring form and keep a register. All paperwork should be securely stored.

###### Privacy and Policy Statement

The Guild’s Privacy Policy and Statement has been revised to ensure it complies with the GDPR legislation. It is hoped the policy has been written in a way that is useful for branches and it will be published on the web-site.

###### Education Committee

Arranges c[ourses](http://odg.org.uk/education/courses.php) catering for a wide range of needs (details given in Guild events). It would be appreciated if tower captains could encourage their ringers to apply for suitable courses. Sadly, not all of our course notices 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 us: ([edchairman@odg.org.uk](file:///C:\Users\Anne\Documents\BELL%20RINGING\AGM%202018\edchairman@odg.org.uk) or [edsecretary@odg.org.uk](file:///C:\Users\Anne\Documents\BELL%20RINGING\AGM%202018\edsecretary@odg.org.uk)).

###### Towers and Belfries

The Towers and Belfries committee is very active with courses, grant inspections, TMA (Tower Maintenance Award) inspections, general advice and minor work.

The Committee would welcome new members; particularly in the East and especially the North East of the Guild. New members do not necessarily need to be “experienced” in belfry matters but must have a practical outlook, be keen & able to learn and be prepared to work as part of a team. Please contact Tony Crabtree if you are interested.

Two maintenance courses were run last year. One at Longcot dealing with clapper maintenance and correction of odd-struckness. The second was a major all-day affair held in October at Lower Heyford, Weston-on-the-Green and Middleton Stoney. Several topics were offered, covering safety, rope splicing, bell maintenance, belfry & tower improvements and major projects.

Three courses are to be arranged for 2019. Towers are asked to contact the Towers and Belfries committee if they would like a TMA inspection. Currently 80% of towers do not have an award.

###### Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2019 will remain as last year

(a) Resident ringing Members & Associate Members £8

(b) Non-resident Ringing Members £8

Peal fees 50p per rope

###### Restoration Fund

Stuart Gibson thanked all the branches that have contributed to this fund. He has started to pursue merging the Bell Fund and the Restoration Fund now that the war loans have been repaid. Comments to be addressed to Stuart.

###### Armistice Day Special Ringing

The Central Council thanks all members who rang on 11th November. Hundreds of bands were augmented by new ringers for this occasion. As a result of all the posts Bellboard went into melt down.

###### Diary of Events 2019

There is a Youth Ringing Event on April 13th 2019 and another may be organised later in the year. All under 18s will need to be escorted by a responsible adult throughout the day. The Towers and Belfries sub-committee are to organise 3 courses which will be added to the Diary. The diary of events for 2019 was reviewed proposing some changes to the 15 year plan to ensure hosting of events was more even between the branches.

Contact email addresses for Guild officers are on the ODG website <http://odg.org.uk/officers.php>

On the proposal of Kathryn Grant, seconded by Michael MacArthur, the report was adopted. All in favour.

##### Website Manager (Steve Vickars)

In the past year, 27 posts have been added to the branch site, comprising 10 branch practices, 7 special practices, 4 quarter peals, one social and 5 other categories.

A page is being built to record the various branch quarter peals achieved and a “Contact us” form has been added to capture contact details for prospective and existing ringers to keep our records up-to-date. We have also just added a tool to provide statistics of site visits.

During the past year a number of attempts have been made to engage with the Oxford Diocesan Guild to establish the branch’s website on their web server. This however, has to-date proved somewhat protracted, likely due to the issues which the Guild has been having in establishing their new web server.

Consequently, we have continued to use the generous services of Anthony Cole in hosting our website, maintained using the WordPress content management tool. During this time I have been assisted by Kathryn and Anne, who now have accounts on the WordPress tool.

Should the committee wish, there are numerous options for hosting the Branch website on a commercially available environment, costs usually range between £5 and £10 per month.

It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent by the secretary to Anthony Cole for his continuing assistance despite having moved away.

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

**(7) ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

The following new members were elected:

Andrew Wilkinson (Weston-on-the-Green) Proposed: Bob Hessian Seconded: Jeremy Adams

Gerald Bushby (Weston-on-the-Green) Proposed: Bob Hessian Seconded: Jeremy Adams

Helen Nicholson (Weston-on-the-Green) Proposed: Bob Hessian Seconded: Jeremy Adams

Mandy Jones (Weston-on-the-Green) Proposed: Bob Hessian Seconded: Jeremy Adams

Jane White (Middleton Stoney) Proposed: Anne Martin Seconded: Michael MacArthur

Lucy Miles (Middleton Stoney) Proposed: Anne Martin Seconded: Michael MacArthur

Charlie Bates (Kirtlington) Proposed: Steve Vickars Seconded: Judith Vickars

Helen Mealins (Kirtlington) Proposed: Steve Vickars Seconded: Judith Vickars

David Grimshaw (Kirtlington) Proposed: Steve Vickars Seconded: Judith Vickars

Sally Cross (Bletchingdon) Proposed: Sue Macready Seconded: Steve Vickars

Raffaella Zero (Islip) Proposed; Teresa Carter Seconded: Sue Carter

**(8) ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

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

Vice Presidents: Jeremy Adams Proposed: Willie Haynes S: Teresa Carter

Vice Presidents: Teresa Carter Proposed: Willie Haynes S: Sally Wale

Secretary: Kathryn Grant Proposed: Jeremy Adams S: Anne Martin

Treasurer: Sally Wale Proposed: Steve Vickars S: Judith Vickars

Guild Representative: Anne Martin Proposed: Kathryn Grant S: Jan Haseldine

Joint Ringing Master: Jeremy Adams Proposed: Anne Martin S: Steve Vickars

Joint Ringing Master: Richard Haseldine Proposed: Willie Haynes S: Sally Wale

Website Manager: Steve Vickars Proposed: Jeremy Adams S: Kathryn Grant

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

Spring General Committee & Bell Fund Kirtlington Saturday 9th March **Cakes please to Judith Vickars!**

Radley course Saturday 6th April **Two members booked this year**

Youth ringing event Saturday 13th April

*Branch outing (to be arranged by JA & RH) Saturday 27th April*

St George’s Day Tuesday 23rd April

Ringing Day (North Bucks Branch) Monday 6th May

8 bell striking competition (North Bucks Branch) Monday 6th May

**Guild AGM (Great Missenden) Saturday 18th May All encouraged to attend**

*Branch ringing course Saturday 7th July*

Central Council Weekend of Activities (London) 7th /8th September

*Branch striking competition (agreed to be held in Islip) & BBQ Saturday 7th September*

Michaelmas Course (EBSB and neighbouring branches) Saturday 28th September

Six-Bell Striking Competition (EBSB Branch) Saturday 5th October

Steeple Aston Course (Steeple Aston) Saturday 26th October (undersubscribed in 2018)

Ten-Bell Course Saturday 2nd November

Ten-Bell Striking Competition (Sonning Deanery Branch) Saturday 23rd November

Autumn General Committee Meeting (Sonning Deanery) Saturday 23rd November

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

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

**(11)** A first ¼ Guild certificates had been prepared for presentation to Gus Bridges.

**(12**) **GENERAL DISCUSSION ON TOPICS SUGGESTED BY BRANCH MEMBERS**

###### *(a)*    Practices split – some introductory for inexperienced ringers; method practices

RH proposed that special practices with previously announced methods should be held in towers other than at the time of the host towers’ usual practice night eg Saturday. He would try a couple of dates in 2019 to see how they go.

###### *(b)*   Specific practices – ringing up & down; calling/ conducting/ better handling of heavy/ light bells; better striking/ counting places (workshop as in VWH branch)/ original (plain hunt with bobs and singles); quarter peal week

AM felt that focussed practices concentrating on aspects of ringing would be beneficial. SV agreed to organise one or two for specific topics.

###### *(c)*    Recognising achievements – first quarters; first quarters inside; quarters on higher numbers of bells

SV felt it was important to celebrate achievements and recognise new attainments eg details on website.

###### *(d)*   Supporting new bands i.e. W-o-t-G

SV suggested that the previous donation from the branch of £50 should be increased by another £100 in recognition of the support given to the branch by ringers outside the Bicester branch. The majority were in favour. KG felt that ongoing support from the branch was important too and SV agreed to help ring for services at Weston-on-the-Green given that the service pattern in the Akeman Benefice is better suited to ringing at W-o-t-G.

###### *(e)* Daytime ringing

Currently there is Tuesday afternoon ringing at Bletchingdon once a month which is open to all with the next practice scheduled for 26th February. AM agreed to give the secretary details so they can be emailed to all members.

###### *(f)* Taking part in the Guild Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

KG said that the Bicester branch is one of the few in the Guild without a tower in the current ‘awards’ and suggested that this should be a worthwhile goal for one of our towers eg Kirtlington/ Islip – more information about the scheme from John Davidge at Chalfont St Giles. <http://odg.org.uk/main/reports/tower_maintenance_award_scheme.html>

###### (f) Adding new members to email list

SV had added a contact form to the Branch website so that members could ask to join the mailing list. Although the mechanism to update the mailing list relies on Anthony Cole, it’s a useful way to keep members informed.

**(13) DATE OF NEXT MEETING** AGM on Saturday 15 February 2020 – evening with/ without service.