

Server Manager Report

This is my first (half) year as Server Manager, having taken over from Aidan Hopkins in the middle of last year. Aidan set up the Guild server in 2008 and had been the Server Manager until I took over. I would like to thank him for all he has done for the Guild as Server Manager in setting up the server and keeping it going for the benefit of the Guild. This type of 'managed server' with various management interfaces is unfamiliar to me as I work in what is known in IT as 'bare metal' support. Consequently I have had a steep learning curve to get familiar with the server management and understanding what can and can't be done in this environment. I would like to thank my assistant, Ken Darvill for dealing with the majority of the day to day issues while I get to grips with this. Ken has been very efficient and often seems to deal with issues before I've even read the email!

As well as hosting the Guild website and websites for several of the branches, the other main use of the server is as an email server. The server hosts mailboxes for some of the officers but most of the mail function is to forward emails addressed to one of the many generic odg.org.uk and branch email addresses to individual's emails. The server also hosts an email distribution list management system for sending out mail to lists of members. There are lists for members at Guild, Branch, and tower level. The server also hosts the website of the Lincoln Diocesan Guild for which they pay a proportion of the rental costs.

The majority of the server management deals with changes to these lists and the forwarding addresses for the generic email addresses. This gets particularly busy around the time of tower, Branch and Guild AGMs, when most of the changes occur. Please remember to let us know of these changes as soon as they occur so that emails get forwarded to the correct person. It is not always clear who is responsible for some of the email lists so these are not always kept up to date. We can only make the changes we are told about!

At the beginning of November we had a problem with the email distribution list management system which was eventually resolved by reverting to a slightly older version of the system kernel. This highlighted the fact that the operating system on the server had not been upgraded since it was set up, apart from ongoing patches. As noted in the F&GP committee report they have accepted a proposal to upgrade the server operating system during 2016. As part of this upgrade the server will also migrate to a newer, faster hardware platform.

Richard Stanworth
Server Manager