



Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers

Annual General Meeting

8th June 2024 at Moulton

Minutes

908. **Welcome:** The meeting began at 18:14 with a welcome to all by the President.
909. Liz Reading proposed the **Vote of Thanks** on behalf of the Guilsborough branch. She thanked the incumbents for the use of the bells, Peter Storey for taking the service, Geoff Best for playing the Organ, Giles Willson for the reading. Richard Allton & R and Simon Dixon for running the ringing, Debbie Samson, Jenny Ball and their helpers for providing the tea and Moulton Parish for the use of the church and hall after Northampton's town carnival disrupted the branch's arrangements.
910. **Members who had passed away** since the last AGM were remembered during the service. They were: Gwen Austin (Rothwell), Margaret Bell (Wilby), Yvonne Chapman (West Hunsbury), Shirley Cozens (Roade), Selwyn Griffiths (Northampton), Frank Hatchard (Newnham), Chris Klein-Wassink (Helmdon), Jim Linnell (Greens Norton), Pauline Middleton (Pytchley), Alison Milner (Braunston), Mick Pardoe (Braunston), Noel Pearson (Irthlingborough), Mary Poyner (Whissendine), Emily Richardson (Byfield), Lynn Tebbett (Marston Trussell)
911. Members eligible for **50 years membership** were read out. They were: Bill Adcock (Desborough), Alan Chantler (Yelvertoft), Maureen Easton (Desborough), Derek Jones (unattached Peterborough Branch), Martin Rowling (Culworth), Derek Sibson (Barton Seagrave), Jane Sibson (Kettering), Laurence Stapleton (Thorpe Achurch), David Teall (Kings Cliffe), Pat Teall (Kings Cliffe). Bill Adcock, Alan Chantler, Jane Sibson were presented with their certificates by the President, while Derek Sibson's was collected by his son, Andrew.
912. There was a proposal for **Honorary Life Membership** for Ian Willgress, who was asked to leave the room while the nomination was discussed. This was proposed by Gwynneth White and seconded by Jane Rands. Gwynneth spoke of Ian's long period of ringing and accomplishments, service to ringing in Wellingborough & Daventry branches as well as his role in holding branch office and commitment to training. In Jane's absence, Geoff spoke in support of the nomination. There were no comments from the floor and the proposal moved to a vote. The proposal was carried by those present. Ian was presented with his certificate by the President.
913. **The Minutes of the past meetings** were reviewed by members. There was one modification, the number of members in the 100 club reported at the Spring meeting should have been 169 not 189. These were proposed for acceptance by Alistair Donaldson, seconded by David Westerman and the meeting agreed the motion.
914. **Matters arising** related to an updated on the outcome of the branch re-organisation activity in item 906 of the 2023 AGM minutes. At a GMC in October, it was agreed to form 2 committees. Helen Allton reported on the first. This was to identify and propose a package for a membership and communications package to centralise activity and reduce the admin burden at branch level. The committee has met several times, created a list of requirements and scored a number of packages against these requirements. The next steps are to make a shortlist of packages for an in depth examination before selecting a package for roll out. The second committee was looking at any advantages in consolidation of banking across branches. This committee met twice and concluded that there were a number of difficulties at present, due to the complexity of current payment arrangements and the difficulty in determining the source and purpose of payments. This may be revisited after a membership package is introduced.

915. The Guild Management report and Accounts had been circulated to members in the annual report. Alistair Donaldson proposed that this be received by the meeting, seconded by Gwynneth White and the motion was carried.

916. Fees recommendations were taken as individual items.

- a. Membership increase to £10 for adults and £5 for junior members. This was proposed by Chris FitzGerald. The subscription has not increased since 2019. The computerisation of membership will incur ongoing fees of potentially around £1000 per annum. The bell fund has been depleted in recent years and there has not been a proportionate increase in fundraising to counter that decrease. The affiliation letter is also not returning the funding levels of pre Covid, (~ £500 now versus ~£4,500 previously). There are also issues in the delivery of that request through the diocese.

There were a number of questions.

Can the subscription increase be transferred to the BRF? The General fund has the ability to transfer an excess to the BRF, has not done so in recent years but could do so on a regular basis if a surplus was produced in the General fund.

How does the proposed £10 compare to other Guilds? We remain below average. Sally Munnings reported that in Suffolk the membership is £20 per year with half of that being transferred to the BRF.

The subscription increase is approaching 40%, what would the intention be for future increases? No plan to increase the subscription at this rate in the near future. Increases will be required at a later date.

There may be gift aid implications, in that the transfer of subscription to the BRF may have impact on the subscription versus benefit received balance. To be reviewed.

The proposal was made by Chris FitzGerald, seconded by Fiona Barclay and carried by the meeting.

- b. Peal fees remain at 0p per rope. Proposed by Helen Allton, seconded by Richard Allton. The proposal was carried.
- c. Central council fees for the next meeting, to be held in Exeter in September, are up to £220 to cover return rail fare and 1 night's accommodations. Proposed by Helen Allton, seconded by Alan Chanter. The proposal was carried.
- d. Reports to be made available to members free of charge provided that they request the report by end of February. This will allow a better understanding of the number of reports to be printed each year. There was a query about the gift aid implications, that will be reviewed. There was a further query about if the report request could be made as an ongoing request. This to be determined. The proposal was made by Helen Allton, seconded by Nick Watts and carried by the meeting.

917. Bell Fund: There were no grant applications to be proposed at this meeting. John Beresford, as steward, proposed a sum of up to £2000 to be put aside for minor projects in the next year. This was seconded by Nick Elks and carried. There was a question about the expenditure of the small grants, John reported that this rarely exceeded £1000 per year, such that the £2000 was an appropriate level. John also gave an update on recently concluded activity across the Guild.

918. Elections of Officers. As the first meeting under the new rules, the meeting as reminded that trustees and officers have to be proposed in advance of the meeting and nominations cannot be accepted from the floor. The following office holders had been proposed and seconded in advance of the meeting. The trustees were elected by the meeting, as were the nominated officer.

President	Alistair Donaldson	P: Anthea Hiams, S: Elaine Greatrex
Master	Simon Dixon	P: Janet Beresford, S: Stephen Love
Secretary	Helen Allton	P: Anne Wood S: Sarah Bence
Treasurer	Chris FitzGerald	P: Geoff Pullin, S: Jim White

Steward	John Beresford	P: Nick Elks, S: Andrew Bimson
Peal Secretary	Paul Mason	P: David Westerman, S: John Stanworth
Report Editor	Jim & Gwynneth White	S: Alison Wilgress, S: Cathy Dixon
Newsletter Editor	Jonathan Stuart	P: Alistair Donaldson, S: Alison Byrnes
Safeguarding	John Beresford	P: Cathy Dixon, S: Alison Wilgress
PRO	Current holder, Cathy Dixon, not prepared to stand again.	No nominations
Youth Officer	Post vacant	No nominations
Independent Examiner	Stephen Hayward	P: Hilary Hardie, S: John Beresford
Webmaster	Richard Allton	P: Chris FitzGerald, S: Jonathan Stuart
100 club	Cathy Dixon	P: Alistair Donaldson, S: Liz Moore

Central council representatives can be proposed from the floor. The current representatives are Simon Dixon, Alistair Donaldson, Nick Elks & David Westerman. All were prepared to stand again. They were proposed en bloc by Anne Wood and seconded by Su Marsden. The proposal was carried.

919. The Guild Calendar was listed

- a. Summer Festival 2024 – 14th September in Daventry branch. Ringing location tbc, contest and evening ringing at Byfield.
- b. Spring Meeting 2025 – 12th April in Thrapston branch
- c. AGM 2025 – 14th June in Kettleing branch.
- d. Summer Festival 2025 – 13th September in Peterborough branch.
- e. The 10 bells for the remainder of the year are 29th June (Towcester) 14th September (Daventry, to coincide with the Summer Festival) and 9th November (Daventry, Bishop John will be at Daventry that morning). In 2025 these return to alternate odd months, as previously.

920. The 100th Anniversary committee reported on the planned events for 2024. There have been 6 events to date, and plenty of cake. The remaining events were announced as follows:

July	Saturday 13 th	Wellingborough/Thrapston	Stanwick Lakes, ringing day out
August	Saturday 10 th	Rutland	Ringing & picnic around Rutland water
September	Saturday 14 th	Daventry	Guild Summer Festival & branch 8 bell striking contest
October	Saturday 12 th	Kettering	Anniversary Dinner Kettering Park Hotel. Tickets £45 per head, 6:30 for 7:15.
November	Saturday 9 th	Culworth	Guild Quiz & fish & chip supper in Syresham
December	Saturday 28 th	Towcester	Carol Service at Towcester, preceded by ringing & reception afterwards

There is also the anniversary merchandise, featuring the anniversary logo. Mugs and puzzles are available, and clothing can be ordered.

Hilary Hardie wanted the meeting to publicly thank the central committee. While there had been support from branches at specific events, the committee had clearly been working very hard to produce the events and merchandise to date. The meeting responded with applause.

921. John Beresford gave an update on **Safeguarding** in the Guild. Since taking on the role at last year's AGM he has been in discussion with the Diocese's safeguarding team. This has been in a state of flux, with 2 changes in Safeguarding advisor in 18 months. The current appointment is new in post and has not yet been able to engage in a dialogue. The Diocese was proposing a different set of rules to those agreed by the national team. He is hoping to realign to the same approach as the national team propose. DBS and safeguarding checks are performed through the parishes, not through the Guild.

The Guild recommends that there should be a register of attendance taken at ringing activity, ideally indicating the time of arrival and departure. This is a record to show who was present at any time when problems are brought to attention. Anne Wood had been tower captain at Ripon and had been advised to put in place this by the Dean. It does impose an admin burden, however it proved very useful to have a record to turn to than rely on potentially fallible memory when the official enquires were made.

922. The situation at the **Old Black Lion** was presented by Chris FitzGerald. In September last year, on a monthly call between the CCT and the CCCBR, Simon Linford said that the CCCBR was no longer prepared to support the project and was withdrawing all promised funds. Simon Linford had retired as president and the incoming president didn't have the same focus on the project. This followed on from a long period of lack of delivery by CCCBR. CCT had contacted the Guild to see if we had the appetite to take this forward. Estimates were that the fit out would be ~£50k and the initial 3 year running period a similar sum. Was there anyone in the Guild willing to take this forward, applying for grants and arranging funding. The Guild would be supportive but would not be in a position to take on the financial burden.

There were questions from the floor. The work on sound control at St Peter's is disengaged from the work at the OBL. It is being funded separately and will proceed in order to ensure that ST Peters remain available for ringing with the new flats and pub operation next door. The costs for use was raised. There would be costs for local users, want those would be Is not fully known. The £50k for the initial 3 year running period is largely for a centre manager. It is expected that the centre would be self finding at the end of this period, with booking costs covering the costs of running the centre. The agreement with the operator is not concluded, hence there are unknown factors in estimating a costs to users.

Nick Elks & Cathy Dixon proposed and seconded a motion that the Guild should withdraw from the project.

Robert Wood asked that the Guild should express disappointment with the CCCBR over the decision to withdraw from the project. This will be done at the meeting in September.

In further discussion it was noted that just because this project has failed it shouldn't stop the Guild or individual towers wanting to put in place an improved facility to increase access. That might be a combination of sound control, simulators and other training facilities, maybe more centrally and with improved parking or transport access.

It was noted that there are already at least four 8 bell simulators across the Guild, should there be a programme of events at these, seeing they already exist? Simon Dixon reported that there had been few volunteers to form a training subcommittee, helpers would be required to organise and run such activity. He also queried if this should be a top down approach, local areas may be better placed to know that is needed in their area. They can reach out for support if that would be of use.

The position of the Guild and training centres was debated. Some towers are able to teach and are self sufficient in that regard. That is not always possible. Not everyone can teach. Centres can work well as a place where learners can be taught to a level where they can be seeded into local towers with few or no ringers. They can then encourage support in their local area, with training centralised and local support for active ringing. A mixture of approaches will serve the different environments towers find themselves in.

923. **Any other business**

- a. Alistar Donaldson reported on the recent ART train the trainers course. Seven attendees were from the Guild. There is always possibility for further courses, 6 to 8 attendees are required to make this most effective.
- b. Sue Marsden reported that the Ridgman trophy in 2025 will be hosted by Lincoln Guild at Boston on 21st July.
- c. Nick Elks reported that there had been an incident with a broken stay at Cotterstock on the open day.

- d. Alison Wilgress noted that the meeting had not thanked Cathy Dixon for her work as PRO over the last 3 years. This was endorsed by the President and the meeting in general.

924. The meeting was closed at 19:27

Appendix

Top Table:

President – Alistair Donaldson, Secretary – Helen Allton, Master – Simon Dixon, Steward – John Beresford

Members Present

Bill Adcock, Richard Allton, Jenny Ball, Fiona Barclay, James Bence, Sarah Bence, Janet Beresford, Alison Buck, Diane Buckby, Ted Buckby, Helen Camps, Barry Care, Mollie Care, Willian Carter, Alan Chantler, David Clarke, Anne Cook, David Dainty, Brenda Dixon, Cathy Dixon, Nick Elks, Dorothy FitzGerald, Elaine Greatrex, Hilary Hardie, Jim Hedgecock, Sarah Hedgecock Anthea Hiams, Nick Hiams, Helen Manktelow, Alan Marks, Sue Marsden, Jane Marsh, Simon Pearce, Phil Pinchin, Tracey Pinchin, Carole Pullin, Geoff Pullin, Judith Rogers, Robin Rogers, Liz Reading, Tim Samson, Debbie Sampson, Esme Scholes, Helena-Katie Scholes, Roger Scholes, Jane Sibson, Andrew Sibson. Jonathan Stuart, James Thorpe, Helena Thorpe, Nick Watts, David Westerman, Dorothy Westerman, Alison Willgress, Ian Willgress Giles Willson, Anne Wood, Robert Wood,

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sue Baker, Geoff Brown, Chris & Margaret Bulleid, Andrew Christie, Mary & Murray Coleman, Jayne Horne, Josh Horne, Chris & Frank Jenkins, Derek & Sue Jones, Liz Moore, Valerie Payne, Jane Rands, Derek Sibson, Chris Skermer, Alan Wordie,