

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS

RUTLAND BRANCH

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6.00pm on 16th January 2021

on-line by zoom.

The Chairman began by requesting a vote of approval for recording the on-line meeting. All in favour.

1. VOTE OF THANKS

The Chairman thanked Simon Forster for arranging the zoom call, Helen Pollard for preparing and sending out printed documents and reports prior to the meeting, and Sue Webster for newsletters and other communications with the membership.

2. WELCOME

All were welcomed. 24 members were present with one arriving later. Especially welcomed were Guild representatives Chris FitzGerald, and especially new President, Alistair Donaldson.

3. APOLOGIES were received from

Peter Furness and Alan Ellis. Peggy Jennings, Ray Bailey and Val Kellett returned printed voting forms and Jane Wright, and Mary Holmes expressed their votes by telephone.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM

The previous minutes had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. These were accepted unanimously and will be signed as a true record at the next non-virtual committee meeting. Proposed Brian Newman, seconded Ted Phillips.

5. MATTERS ARISING None. The draft Branch committee report had been circulated and was approved ready to send to Guild.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reported the Branch is in a good position financially, with a final bank balance of £2,392 to take into 2021. This figure results from a surplus in 2020 of £157, improving the 2019 bank balance of £2,235. Subs and donations totalled £589 (£847 in 2019) with £332 (£447 in 2019) going to the Guild.

The figures have been examined by Nic Hart, a qualified accountant.

Adoption of the annual accounts was proposed by John Tomalin and seconded by Tim Holt, with all in favour. Whilst John Tomalin and the membership secretary were

keen for us to collect subs from a greater proportion of the membership this coming year using BACS, the Guild treasurer felt that this year's collection shortfall was not experienced in other Branches and suggested the use of standing orders to avoid the need the chase members to make their annual payment.

7. MASTER'S REPORT

Alan Ellis was unable to join the meeting, but sent a report of 5 recruits in Preston, who had an introduction to ringing between lockdowns including use of the simulator at Uppingham. Additionally, learners at Market Overton attended over a four week period. The chairman reported discussions of ways to keep recruits interested, and his plans for zoom meetings to cover some theory supporting their earlier bell-handling.

The draft 2021 programme was discussed and with one small amendment on time of ringing at Preston on 4 July (09.45 to 10.30am) approved. It was circulated prior to the meeting on the branch website and included in the newsletter. For those without access to the internet, paper copies were sent out.

The date for the Branch ringing at the cathedral will be arranged when possible. We may be able to book a summer ring in a couple of months, but this will depend on Covid rules and recommendations.

Monica Spence has booked the Guild display stands for the Preston celebration weekend 3rd and 4th July .

The Guild president described Guilsborough handbell ringing on zoom, which he felt was very successful. He also outlined valuable refresher courses which include a social aspect and refreshments which he recommends to others when it is safe to gather ringers together. He expects a staged return to ringing. Having read of Monica's success in recruitment, he hopes to find out her methods, and perhaps spread this approach more widely. Alan Wordie is hoping to have some Branch banners/flags available to place outside churches to advertise recruiting session within when we start to recruit again post lockdown. It was also suggested there might be a Branch refresher course to which lapsed ringers could also be invited.

8. STEWARD'S REPORT

Ted Phillips circulated this report prior to the meeting and emphasised the safety aspects and preparations needed before resuming ringing after such a long period of down time.

General The Guild Stewards' Meeting 22-Feb-20 was attended by Ted to ensure that any issues relating to our Branch are communicated, and to capture any useful input from other Branches in the Diocese. There is very little to report in 2020 as ringing and maintenance activities were heavily curtailed due to the Coronavirus outbreak. **Visits/Maintenance** 20-Jan Uppingham: 6th Stay replaced (removed on the 12th); 20-Jan Wing: Tower inspection with Jane Peach and Tony Clarke; 29-Jan Lyddington Inspect 3rd Stay and Wheel; Mar-Aug Preston: Refurbishment project; preparation/clean-up; liaison with Taylor's throughout the work as well as with the Guild Steward, Guild Treasurer and local project team. Ringing by August! A short history of the bells at Preston was published by the Project Team and this is available on the Branch website; 29-Oct Caldecott: 4th Stay replaced

Coming up Guild Stewards meeting early 2021 – any input or requests? Planning for any refurbishment or repair in the next few years? It is never too early to start thinking about how to run and finance any work! **End of Lockdown III:** Preparations for ringing ... some Towers may not have rung for 12 months, and we need to be careful when re-starting ringing. If anyone needs help, there are quite a few resources out there: The advice from the Central Council can be found at <https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/> Other good pages full of information are: Rutland Church Bell Ringing – Rutland Branch of the P D Guild of Church Bell Ringers (rutlandbellringing.org) <https://cccbr.org.uk/resources/stewardship-and-management/> <http://www.pdg.btck.co.uk/> **BellMaintenance** I may be able to help with physical inspections and advice – plus I can help source more expert opinion if required. Just let me know if you need any assistance, whether related to the resumption of ringing - or not.

Whenever anyone ventures up the Tower, please remember to be safe – guidelines and help are always available, on the web, or verbally.'

The president added that Easter may prove to be a good time for a tower clean-up prior to maintenance checks.

The report was proposed by Ted Phillips and seconded by Sue Webster and welcomed by all present.

9 ADMITTANCE OF NEW MEMBERS

We have 107 active ringers. Sue Baker (Membership secretary) noted that, thanks to Monica's recruitment and Alan Ellis' courses, all of the nine new members who learned to ring during 2019 have retained interest, and eleven hope to learn to ring this year. Sue thanked Sue Webster for producing the branch newsletter each month, which has helped to maintain interest during periods without ringing. She expects that even some of the most experienced ringers may experience some anxiety on returning to the ringing chamber, and we must take steps to support where necessary.

The intended proposal of two new members at Seaton will be deferred until the next committee meeting.

Sue Baker reminded the meeting how the personal approach, maybe with a phone call, to members at this difficult time could make a big impact if some of our ringers were isolating away from the virus. We may be a group of ringers but we are also all friends.

10. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The chairman thanked the members for paying subs and donations. He suggested there may be an increase in interest in learning to ring when ringing begins again, and he is aware that learners may have to recap earlier work before expecting to progress further. He is preparing four zoom courses to offer to members which will incorporate theory, engagement and discussion and some selected U-tube clips. These will be for those interested in starting to ring, those who might teach and those

who have just mastered bell handling, or competent with rounds and call changes. The dates, likely starting in early February, will be emailed out and included in the branch newsletter.

The chairman suggested we should consider having as many bells ringing out as possible in the summer if the pandemic is being controlled, similar to ringing after the World wars. He thanked Sue Webster for continuing to produce monthly newsletters and to Helen Allton (Guild secretary) for producing a lifeline and conduit for the Branch, from clear guidance about changing CoVid rules to challenging quizzes and interesting links. This thanks will be passed on from the Guild officers present at the meeting. The chairman also thanked Helen Pollard and Peter Furness for their work.

He thanked the Branch committee and our contacts at Guild and concluded by encouraging all ringers to stay safe.

11. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

All members of the committee were prepared to continue in 2021. They were proposed and seconded as a group, and all were in favour. (25 present in the meeting, 3 voted by post, and two by telephone. 30 votes in all.)

Chairman	Alan Wordie,
Ringling Master	Alan Ellis,
Deputy Ringling Masters,	Roger Scholes & Brian Newman
Secretary	Helen Pollard
Treasurer	Simon Forster
Membership Secretary	Sue Baker
Steward	Ted Phillips
Website manager	Peter Furness
Press Correspondent & Newsletter editor	Sue Webster
Guild Management	John Tomalin
Committee members	Tim Holt, David Rippin.

The Chairman noted that the post of Social Secretary is vacant.

12. GUILD OFFICERS' COMMENTS

There were no proposals for guild officer posts.

13. AOB

There being none the Chairman closed the meeting at 18.58pm.