

## **PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS**

### **RUTLAND BRANCH**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6.00pm on 15th January 2022**

**In the Caldecott Village Hall.**

#### **1. VOTE OF THANKS**

The Chairman thanked Canon Jane Baxter for the Service and Organ Playing; Mary Davidson, Brian Newman, Judy Lea and Jayse Newman for the organisation and running of the Hall and victuals.

#### **2. WELCOME**

All were welcomed. 19 members were present. Especially welcomed were Guild representative Alistair Donaldson, President

#### **3. APOLOGIES were received from**

Guild representatives Cathy and Simon Dixon and 12 members of the Branch sent their apologies for absence.

#### **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 committee meeting.

**Proposed Brian Newman, seconded Sue Webster.**

#### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

The Branch Report had been prepared by Helen Pollard and previously circulated with the AGM documentation to all members so to be taken as read; we would specifically like to thank the Guild Flying Squad for their support during the year.

Report accepted: **Proposed David Rippin, seconded Ted Phillips.**

#### **6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer reported the Branch is in a good position financially, with a final bank balance of £2,400 to take into 2022. This figure results from a surplus in 2021 of £50, although it should be noted that this would represent a deficit in a normal year. Subs and donations will be a focus in 2022 as the numbers paying have been dropping in successive years. Since they are closely associated, the role of membership secretary will be included with that of the Treasurer from now on; there are 102 active members.

Details of the Branch account details have been circulated to facilitate online payment of subs and donations; additional publicity will be given to this effort.

The figures have been independently examined by James Robinson, a qualified accountant.

Adoption of the annual accounts was **proposed by Simon Forster and seconded by Alan Ellis, with all in favour.**

## **7. MASTER'S REPORT**

Alan Ellis began by announcing his resignation from the position of Ringing Master for personal reasons.

Ringing is gradually returning to normal levels, but there are still difficulties. Recruiting and Training are doing well, with support from the Guild; there are 10 Trainees at Preston, 2 at Whissendine, others throughout the Branch.

Handling is a focus for our training, as it is the basis of good change ringing; we still have a long way to go to enable Sunday ringing in all our Towers that want to ring, and Leaders will be needed.

Recruitment works best where there is a strong community, such as Preston, but this is being challenged by the changes in the percentage of people who live permanently in each village. Looking forward, we are in better shape than many branches, but it will take further efforts to build up numbers.

Thanks were given for all the support, and Alan Ellis will still be available to assist when possible.

The Program for 2022 was discussed, with the addition of ringing to reflect HM Accession to the Throne 6<sup>th</sup> February and VJ Day on August 15<sup>th</sup>; **Alan Ellis proposed the Programme and it was accepted by all present.**

## **8. STEWARD'S REPORT**

Ted Phillips circulated this report prior to the meeting and emphasised the safety aspects associated with maintenance.

**General** The Guild Stewards' Meeting 2021 was attended by zoom; Ted ensured that any issues relating to our Branch were communicated to the other Branches in the Diocese. As in 2020, there is very little to report in 2021 as ringing and maintenance activities were heavily curtailed due to the ongoing Coronavirus restrictions.

Muffles are often neglected – and their use for ringing in mourning for Prince Philip highlighted that they need some maintenance to be useful when needed or new sets acquired. Alan Ellis has installed some alternative clapper silencers using conveyor belt material, and these make very good muffles, for an outlay of about £12 for the 6 bells at Preston.

**Visits/Maintenance** 7 Tower inspections were executed, plus 5 Stays replaced.

**Coming up** Guild Stewards meeting 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

**Bell Maintenance** Ted can help with physical inspections and advice – plus sourcing more expert opinion if required.

Whenever anyone ventures up a Tower, remember to be safe – guidelines and help are always available, on the web, or verbally. Never be alone.

The report was **proposed by Ted Phillips and seconded by Alan Ellis** and welcomed by all present.

## **Website (currently maintained by Ted Phillips)**

The Website has been kept up to date, with the small amount of activity that has prevailed during these COVID times. It contains the Newsletters and links to all of Rutland's Towers, with contact details, plus useful links to ringing resources. Although lightly used, the website is a first point of call for new and visiting Ringers; any suggestions for improvements or additions are welcome!

## **9. ADMITTANCE OF NEW MEMBERS**

Henrie Kiddle was **proposed by Bob Williams and seconded by Alan Wordie**; and Charles Kiddle was **proposed by Bob Williams and seconded by Hilary Williams** and both accepted by the meeting as new members.

There are a few new ringers who are close to being able to ring unaccompanied; these will be considered for admission to membership by the Committee at normal meetings as they progress during the year. Tower Captains and Committee to look out for those who can be considered for membership.

See the Treasurer's report for membership details.

## **10. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

2021 has once again been hit with lockdowns and isolation of the vulnerable due to the covid pandemic. However, it was not a total write-off.

The AGM was held on 16 January on a huge zoom call, where everybody behaved and the agenda was covered, with reports and committee nominations, in a polite manner.

The elected committee held meetings during the year by Zoom convened by Simon Forster. Member communication was by Sue Webster's regular monthly newsletter often with notices and advice from the Guild Secretary (thank you Helen). Where and when possible and based on the lockdown rules, ringing recommenced in the summer where towers enjoyed airy chambers and ringers wore face coverings. I did not hear of anyone tracing covid to a ringing group. Well done everyone with your biosecurity.

An early return to the tower in April was to toll 99 blows to recognise the death of HRH Prince Phillip. In the summer we had ringing for a number of weddings and funeral as lockdown was lifted. Some towers welcomed back ringers on practice nights, but full respect was always given to those present (face coverings) and those who did not wish to risk catching the virus so stayed away. We look forward to welcoming everyone back soon. Thank you Ted for all your Stewarding assistance.

After the repairs and rehangings of Preston bells in 2020 the village managed to arrange a celebration and with some clever IT - ringing at ground floor could be viewed alongside the bells swinging in the bell chamber. The Preston band continues to grow and learn.

Meanwhile there has been much interest from new ringers in learning to handle bells and the Ringing Master, Alan Ellis, has been doing sterling work with a few towers; Sally Watts has raised interest in Grettton and Sally and Brian Newman will start teaching them in Caldecott in 2022. Henrie Kiddle has been teaching 3 from Lyddington at Seaton, and Uppingham continues to be a centre for teaching. I am sure there are other towers who have embraced the interest of local communities. We need now to co-ordinate improvements in 2022, and this will be on the January committee agenda.

Rutland especially thanks the Guild “flying squad” who have travelled to Rutland and provided assistance on a few 8 bell practice nights and a very well received Plain Bob Doubles/Minor practice where theory and practical were considered together. The breaking out of rounds/Plain hunting into methods is often found difficult, so targeting this is a good use of time and resource and will continue in 2022. It will be wonderful if as many new ringers can ring for HM The Queen’s Platinum celebrations. A PR photo beckons.

2021 Social events and tours have been deferred but the programme for 2022 includes both. All in all, the Branch is still in good health. A plea from me and the Treasurer - is for members to pay their annual subs and donations as soon as possible (January 2022) and with that in mind the Branch bank details are:

HSBC Stamford  
 Sort code : 40-43-05  
 Account number : 31507540  
 Acc Name : PDGCBR - Rutland

A huge thank you to the 2021 committee and all tower captains and teachers who work to ensure there will always be bells ringing in Rutland. An especial thank you to Alan Ellis who is stepping down as Master but not as teacher, and particularly Helen Pollard who has been Hon. Secretary for over 10 years, kept me and my predecessors right and been a marvellous conduit for correspondence and ensuring the correct papers are presented at AGMs and meetings. Thank you both.

## 11. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Apart from the Ringing Master, we have also lost the services of our Secretary, Helen Pollard. A voting list was prepared and circulated in advance of this meeting. The Chairman enquired and it was confirmed there are no further nominations for any of the positions. The 2022 Committee was accepted by the meeting as follows:

Post	Nomination	Proposer	Secunder
Chairman	Alan Wordie	Alan Ellis	Mary Davidson
Ringing Master	Brian Newman	Simon Forster	Judy Lea
Treasurer/Membership	Simon Forster	Brian Newman	Ted Phillips
Steward	Ted Phillips	Mary Davidson	David Rippin
Deputy RM	Roger Scholes	Proposed en bloc by Sue Webster and seconded by Ted Phillips with all in approval	
PR and newsletter	Sue Webster		
Guild Management Rep	John Tomalin		
Committee members	Tim Holt		
	David Rippin		
	Henrie Kiddle		
	Charles Kiddle		
	Alan Ellis		
	Sharon Bromilow		

The Chairman noted that the post of Social Secretary and Website Manager is unassigned and volunteers are always welcomed otherwise a Committee members will be asked to take the role during the year.

## **12. GUILD OFFICERS' COMMENTS**

Alistair Donaldson congratulated the Rutland Branch on a successful year, with commendable organisation. Thanks were given for acknowledging Guild support, and for help with Guild Zoom training meetings (Alan Wordie).

There is a drive to update the Guild Rules. A Committee has been proposed to revise and update the rules and volunteers are requested to assist in this effort.

The Old Black Lion pub in Northampton is being refurbished, and there may be an opportunity to use one of the existing buildings, with appropriate refurbishment, as a Training Centre; we need to define what it is and how it will be used. Funds are potentially available, and a manager would be appointed to support training as well as Quarter Peal efforts. Timing to align with the Guild Centenary would be the aim.

There is a potential GMC proposal to use £10,000 of available funds to assist with the adjacent St Peter's refurbishment with especial focus on sound moderation to allow ringing throughout the day.

A request for ideas and thoughts on how to celebrate PDGCBR Centenary in 2024 was put to the meeting. A photo contest, with a theme of seasonal views around the subject of Bell Ringing was announced; entries and questions to be emailed to [pdgcb100@gmail.com](mailto:pdgcb100@gmail.com)

Cathy Dixon is the Guild representative for the 100 Club and welcomes everyone to join; Simon Forster volunteered be our link to the 100 Club if required.

There is a Guild Quiz available for purchase; (please ask a member of Branch Committee if interested).

The Guild website has the facility to support Branch sites; this is being developed by the Guild webmaster – we should contact him to discuss how our Branch website can fit into this scheme if applicable to us.

## **13. AOB**

There being no further competent business the Chairman closed the meeting at 18.58pm.