

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BEEL RINGERS

NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Great Brickhill Village Hall on Saturday 5th March

Chairman's Welcome

The chairman, Graham Bartholomew, welcomed 25 members to the meeting.

In Memoriam

Members stood in silence to remember Frank Daniels of Loughton who had recently passed away.

Apologies for absence

Hilarie Rogers, Ruth Groves, Stuart Gibson, David Scrutton, Derek White, Jean Mattinsley, Ann Birch, Ted Fawcett, Brian Berry, Alex and John Marchbank, Ross Tyrell, Hilary, Claire, Alice and Sophie Reading.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Autumn Meeting held at Bradwell on the 26th September had been circulated prior to the meeting and published on the Branch website. No amendments were proposed. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Simon Head and seconded by Patricia Rosewell and agreed by a show of hands.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Officers Reports

The Officers Reports had been published on the Branch website and were available to attendees to read. There were no questions on the reports. Approval of the reports was proposed by Alan Marchbank and seconded by Gary Reading and agreed by a show of hands.

Branch Accounts

The Treasurer Sheila Watts opened by thanking all tower correspondents who had so efficiently returned their 2016 membership subscriptions, only 9 towers are outstanding. Sheila gave a brief overview of the financial position and explained that the grants previously awarded to Hanslope and Loughton were included within the General Fund's balance.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Sheila Blenkhorn and seconded by Tine Marchbank and approved by a show of hands. After the meeting the officers approved Alison Fowler to continue in the post of independent Examiner for a further year.

Election of new members:

Nominations were received for the following:

<u>Tower</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Secunder</u>
Mrs Sam Harper	Emberton	Sheila Watts	Phil Haslam
Mr James Hu	Great Brickhill	Dave Middleton	Andrew Howe

Both were approved with a show of hands.

Election of officers

The Chairman informed the members that Lesley Belcher (Newsletter Editor) and Ann Birch (Minutes Secretary) were standing down and thanked them for their contributions over the last few years.

<u>Post</u>	<u>Nomination</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Secunder</u>
Chairman	Graham Bartholomew	Terry Page	Becky Fawcett
Secretary	Gary Reading	Becky Fawcett	Gordon Abbott
Minutes Secretary	Linda Maycroft	Sheila Watts	Chris Abbott
Treasurer	Sheila Watts	Alan Marchbank	Simon Head
RDL Buckingham	Vacant		
RDL Milton Keynes	Graham Bartholomew	Simon Head	Patricia Rosewell
RDL Newport Pagnell	Doug Hird	Dave Middleton	Charles Knight
Guild Rep (1)	Patricia Rosewell	Sheila Watts	Becky Fawcett
Guild Rep (2)	Vacant		
Guild Rep (3)	Vacant		
Newsletter Editor	Vacant		
Branch Archivist	Doug Hird	Becky Fawcett	Terry Page

All of the above were approved by show of hands.

A general appeal for members to come forward to fill the gaps was made by the Chairman. Alan Marchbank suggested that the officers be authorised to co-opt new officers to the vacant posts without the need to refer back the membership, the membership approved this with a show of hands.

Branch Bell Fund proposal

Doug Hird outlined the officers' proposal to set up a ring fenced fund as part of the branch accounts from which grants for bell and associated equipment maintenance and augmentation could be given. Grants from the fund would be made in accordance with the proposed rules:

Grants will be for £50 plus 1% of the work with a maximum of £450, dependant on the balance in the fund being sufficient at the time. Minimum size of project eligible is £200.

The bell fund proposal was proposed by Doug Hird and seconded by Alan Marchbank and was approved by a show of hands.

The Treasurer notified members that a bell fund donation of £25 had been received from members of Downs Barn and Great Linford and thanked the members of those towers.

In addition, Brian Baldwin encouraged members to speak to their PCC about ring fencing funds from wedding bell fees for future bell and equipment maintenance.

Members suggested that the officers consider:

- 1) ways to invest surplus funds to increase the value of the fund, Alan Marchbank offered the support of Stuart Gibson the Guild Treasurer
- 2) how funds will be raised to top up the fund. Alan Marchbank suggested that subscriptions could be increased for Adult member with the increase feeding the fund, the members at the meeting were supportive of the idea
- 3) looking into the possibilities of using gift aid, Alan Marchbank suggested the Guild Treasurer might be able to help.

Officers will discuss and publish the findings in "In Touch" and provide the opportunity for discussion and approval of recommendations at the Autumn Meeting in September.

Great Linford Grant

Graham referred to an email from Alan Marchbank seeking funds towards the replacement of the worn ropes at Great Linford, total cost £1,440.00 including VAT. In line with the rules agreed for the new bell fund a donation of £64.40 rounded to £65.00 was proposed Doug Hird and seconded by Roy Keeves and approved by a show of hands.

Any Other Business

1) Format and name of Autumn Meeting

Linda Maycroft explained that officers had been considering the format of the Autumn meeting based on:

- anecdotal feedback from members that there was not enough opportunity for member input and the formal nature put people off attending

- the low attendance rates
- the example set by other branches - North Bucks are one of only a handful of branches in the diocese that hold an Autumn meeting.

The officers' proposal was to make the meeting more informal and use the time to discuss topical items for example the recruitment discussion that took place last Autumn. The formal part of the meeting would be dropped unless there were matters that needed approval e.g. appointment of new members, grant applications. To mark this change the officers also proposed a change of name to "Autumn Forum".

Members then discussed the proposal and agreed that the approach should be as follows: The meeting would continue to be called the Autumn Meeting, any formal requirements would be notified a month in advance where possible and could include:

- approval of the AGMs minutes (a year was considered to be too long)
- grant applications
- new member approvals

the majority of the meeting would be reserved for discussion items e.g. fundraising for the new branch bell fund.

Acceptance of the revised approach was proposed by Simon Head and seconded by Gordon Abbott and approved by a show of hands.

2) St George's day ringing

Brain Baldwin requested further information about the fundraising element of the day and the requirements for ringing.

Linda Maycroft advised that the decision on how to raise funds was down to the individual tower, sponsorship was just one suggestion, some towers have advised that they would donate some of their wedding fees. If each tower raised £10-£15 we will have met our £500 target.

Linda confirmed the rules set-out by Ringing for England the most important of which was the ability to ring continuously for 30 minutes.

3) Rope splicing course

Sheila Watts reminded members of the forthcoming rope splicing course facilitated by Len Palfrey from the Guild Towers & Belfries Committee that will take place on Saturday 7th May at 10am until 3pm at All Saints, Emberton.

4) Branch Outing to Oxford

Graham reminded members of the branch outing to Oxford and asked members present to promote the outing to others.

Vote of thanks

Graham proposed a vote of thanks to members of Great Brickhill for the ringing and delicious tea and to Revd John Waller for taking the service.

The meeting closed 6.40pm