

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

East Berks & South Bucks Branch

Minutes of the Half Yearly Meeting held at Chalfont St Giles on Saturday 14th October 2023

The meeting was attended by 31 members representing 9 towers, and the Guild Master.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Diane Darren, Marcia Dieppe, Jill Glennerster, Mandy Salter and Peter Sippitt

2. Minutes of the AGM held at Maidenhead on Saturday 22nd April 2023

These had been circulated via the User Group. They were adopted and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

Members were reminded to send recent photographs to Ken Darvill so that the website can be updated.

4. Election of New Members

The following were nominated for membership of the Guild:

Caroline Pritchard – High Wycombe, proposed by Patricia Newton

George Pickwell – High Wycombe, proposed by Patricia Newton

Diane Monroe – Hughenden, proposed by Verity Nicholls

Keith Monroe – Hughenden, proposed by Verity Nicholls

Pamela Walters – Clewer, proposed by Vikki Bulbeck

Stuart Galloway asked for clarification of the requirements for election to the Guild. New members must be competent to ring for Sunday Service.

These nominations were seconded by Rosalind Garrett-Bowes and all were elected unopposed.
George Pickwell was presented with his certificate.

5. Branch 6 Bell Striking Competition Rules

Following the heated discussions at the Branch 6-bell Striking Competition in June, the officers had discussed the rules and proposed changes to clarify who is eligible to ring for a tower band. The proposed changes had been circulated via the User Group prior to this meeting.

Ken Darvill suggested that the rules should be reviewed at some stage to encourage more towers to take part. Post-Covid, towers are finding it increasingly difficult to ring for Sunday service with their own ringers and calling upon members from other towers. To encourage improvement in Sunday service ringing we may need to recognise that Sunday service bands may consist of ringers who are members of more than one tower. The Chairman (John Davidge) noted that the rules allow for that if ringers are listed under that tower as their second tower.

The new rules state that a tower member's name should be submitted at the time of subscription renewal. Stuart Galloway objected to this wording on the grounds that ringers may change tower during the year (e.g. because they can no longer get up tower steps). He suggested that John Davidge had been totally in the wrong at the Branch 6 Bell Competition at Chesham when he declared that Windsor Curfew Tower band was disqualified because they did not meet the criteria for the contest.

The Chairman pointed out that the same team had rung the previous year and were allowed to ring as a scratch band. The new rules now include the option of scratch bands.

Matthew Johnson pointed out that the rules are for clarification of the interpretation of the rules. He agreed that Ken Darvill makes a good point and perhaps we should look at Sunday service bands in future.

Stuart Galloway pointed out that at Chesham five of their ringers are over 80 and that we should concentrate on getting people into ringing not having inter-band squabbles because someone has mis-interpreted the rules.

The Chairman put the rule changes to the vote and they were accepted with one vote against.

6. Branch Programme 2024

The secretary (Patricia Newton) thanked tower correspondents for responding quickly to her requests to book towers. The programme for 2024 is nearing completion and will be circulated soon. There will be a Tower Captains' Meeting on 10th February at Beaconsfield, the Branch AGM will be at High Wycombe; the Branch 6-bell contest will be at Hitcham; subject to final confirmation the Lorna Newton Contest Final and Half Yearly Meeting will be at Fulmer and we hope that Chenies will be able to host the Christmas practice followed by seasonal refreshments.

7. Guild Events

Patricia Newton informed the meeting that EBSB Branch will be hosting the Guild 8-bell Competition and AGM on Saturday 18th May. The contest will be at St Giles, Stoke Poges, and the meeting and other events will be at the other church in the village. This is a major event and the Stoke Poges ringers will require help from other Branch members with catering, etc.

Katie Lane, Guild Master, had nothing to add regarding Guild events but said it was good to see EBSB members again.

7. Any Other Business

The Chairman thanked his own Chalfont St Giles ringers for providing refreshments.

The draw was made for the 100 Club.

Lorna Newton Competition Results

John Davidge thanked Robert Newton and Annie Davies for judging the contest. The results were as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------|
| 1 st | Windsor Curfew Tower | 18 faults |
| 2 nd | Amersham | 22 faults |
| 3 rd | Chesham | 29 faults |
| 4 th | Bray | 31½ faults |
| 5 th | Lane End | 60 faults |

Robert Newton presented the trophy to the winning team. The runners up trophy had not been returned by Bray so will be passed on to Amersham at a later date. A suitably engraved wooden spoon was presented to Lane End, with the Chairman complimenting them on being 5th in the Branch.

Patricia Newton
October 2023