



Witney and Woodstock Branch

Bell Fund Working Party

Background

The 2018 branch AGM minutes recorded that the Secretary was to request examples, if extant, of other ODG branch bell fund policies and organise a working party to formulate a formal written Witney and Woodstock branch bell fund policy.

A working party comprising the Branch Chair Hazel Howarth (HH), Branch Treasurer Jean Richards (JR) and the Branch Secretary Andrew Goldthorpe (AG) met on Thursday 28th June 2018.

AG reported that a group email sent to all ODG branch secretaries and the guild treasurer had produced the replies contained in Appendix 4.

The Guild Treasurer provided an application form and rules for the ODG fund which have been adapted for W & W branch use.

Previous donations

JR reported that the following donations to towers had been made from W&W branch funds since 2009:

26/04/2009	Freeland PCC (Church Bell Fund)	£50.00
17/04/2014	Clanfield Bell Fund	£200.00
22/03/2018	Friends of St Mary's, North Leigh	£200.00
Total		<u>£450.00</u>

Issues to be covered

These included:

- how the committee deals with applications for assistance
- what kind of sums are appropriate and for what purpose i.e. loan or gift
- what conditions the committee should place on grants
- how the committee approves and monitors such applications

It was agreed that our branch committee exists for the purpose of encouraging bell ringing. As it already makes grants of £150 each to the Guild Bell and Restoration funds, the committee should be prepared to make regular donations, not loans, to assist in the continuation of bell ringing at branch level, otherwise there is no purpose in keeping a bank account with a reasonable surplus. Against this background, it was agreed that a typical donation of £250.00 could be the new level of assistance offered although no particular level of grant or percentage of cost is guaranteed.

The following was created by the working party as the Branch Bell Fund Policy, Rules and Application Form and it is proposed should be accepted at the next branch AGM.

THE WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG) BELL FUND

BELL FUND POLICY

1. The branch committee exists for the purpose of encouraging bell ringing.
2. As it already makes grants of £150 each to the Guild Bell and Restoration funds, the committee should be prepared to make regular donations, not loans, to assist in the continuation of bell ringing at branch level, otherwise there is no purpose in keeping a bank account with a reasonable surplus.
3. A typical donation of £250.00 is the new level of assistance offered although no particular level of grant or percentage of cost is guaranteed.
4. An application form and rules are sent out on request (see Appendices 2 & 3).
5. All requests for the Bell Fund are reviewed by the treasurer, secretary and chair and a recommendation is put to the committee at the next meeting.
6. Applications for donations from the bell fund will normally be an agenda item at the AGM or taken under Any Other Business at the AGM.
7. Should the need arise outside the AGM, application can be made for a business item to be added to a Branch Practice which will also take on the purpose of a Branch Business Meeting. The business meeting must be open to all Branch members.
 - a. Notice of the Branch AGM and other business meetings must be sent to all correspondents of towers with members at least 14 days in advance, and also to the Officers of the Guild (Master, Deputy Master, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary General Treasurer, Assistant Honorary Treasurer, Steward for your Branch). Branch meetings must be minuted, and a copy of the minutes should be sent to the Guild Librarian.
8. At the business meeting or AGM, the committee can request comments or objections to be submitted to the committee within 5 working days.
9. All objections and substantive comments will be incorporated into an amended application by the applicant.
10. The final application will be considered by the committee and a reply given within 10 working days from the date of the final application being presented at the AGM or business meeting.
11. A grant letter is sent out with a provisional grant.
12. On completion of the work an inspection is made and the grant is made based on a positive outcome from the inspection and the value of the grant is modified as required according to the final invoice.

Appendix 2

THE WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG) BELL FUND

RULES FOR APPLICATIONS

1. The following conditions for the eligibility of grant applications are imposed by the rules of the Fund.

- 1.1 Grants may only be given towards the repair, maintenance and renewal of church bells in the Witney & Woodstock branch of the Diocese of Oxford. Grants may not be given towards augmentation of the number of bells in a tower. In that instance the qualifying work is limited to that part of the work which involves the existing bells.
 - 1.2 "Bells" includes the frames and fittings and all other parts and constructions necessary for the proper functioning of the bells, but excludes day to day replacement of ropes, stays or sliders.
 - 1.3 "Repair, maintenance or renewal" does not include routine servicing of the bells, frames and fittings or repairs to the tower structure.
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2. In addition, the branch officers have approved the following guidelines for applicants:

- 2.1 Grants are made at the discretion of the branch officers. No particular level of grant or percentage of cost is guaranteed. Applicants will be advised in writing if the application has been approved and what level of grant is likely to be paid. The branch officers may wish to arrange for an inspection and report on the existing installation before indicating the amount of grant likely to be made. The branch officers reserve the right to finalise the amount of a grant after completion of the work.
- 2.2 Where work has already been completed, retrospective application for a grant is not encouraged.
- 2.3 Current costs must be attached to the completed grant application form. Where other works are undertaken at the same time, the figures should be itemised to enable the branch officers to extract those costs which apply directly to the bells, frame or fittings.
- 2.4 Any grant offer which remains unclaimed three years after the date on which it was voted shall lapse. A new application will then become necessary for the consideration of the branch officers. Where the timescale for any intended work may exceed three years, the branch officers would prefer early rather than late application for a grant.

- 2.5 It is the practice of the branch officers to arrange for an inspection and report following the completion of any qualifying work. No grant will be paid until the work has been completed to the satisfaction of the branch officers. Applicants must arrange their finances such that they do not rely on the grant to complete the payment for goods and services received.
- 2.6 A Faculty, Archdeacon's Certificate or other formal approval may be required. If so required the Faculty, Certificate or other approval must be obtained before commencing any works. Before the branch officers request an inspection of the completed work they require a copy of the formal approval document and a copy of any attached documents or condition(s) applicable to the work carried out. Failure to comply with any condition(s) set out on any approval document will result in the forfeiture of any grant.
- 2.7 The branch officers request that a copy of the bell founders / bell hangers / contractors final account is provided for their consideration when the grant payment is to be finalised.
- 2.8 It is strongly recommended that bells, frames and fittings are adequately insured. Grants will not be made to cover under or non-insured losses.
- 2.9 Though not a condition of the payment of a grant, it is the hope and desire of the branch officers that any work supported by WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG) BELL FUND should be properly maintained for the benefit of future generations. Future grant applications will take into consideration the conditions of bells, frames and fittings for which grants have previously been made.

3. The branch officers have noted an increasing level of self help which involves the use of volunteer labour, local transport etc. and urge that the following points are born in mind before commencing work:

- 3.1 Adequate insurance cover should be provided for:
- a. voluntary helpers against personal injury and third-party claims for damage howsoever caused;
 - b. the bells, frames, fittings etc whilst in the process of loading or unloading at the church and whilst in transit to and from a bell founder or bell hanger or another contractor.
- 3.2 Adequate arrangements must be in place to ensure compliance with the current Health and Safety and all other relevant legislation.
- 3.3 Adequate arrangements should be taken to ensure that the normal ringing of the bells will not be restricted or prevented as a consequence of failure to comply with requirements of Health and Safety or other relevant legislation.

Appendix 3

THE WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG) BELL FUND

GRANT APPLICATION FORM

This form may only be used for grant applications from **THE WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG)**. Applicants are advised to study the notes overleaf before completing the form and to retain a copy of the completed form for their records.

Parish Dedication.....

Applicant..... Address.....

Position.....

Date..... Telephone

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WORKS (Please attach a copy of the full quotation)

Agreed / Estimated start date

Estimated completion date

(Delete as applicable)

2. FORMALITIES

If formal permission has been sought for the work to commence either attach a copy of the appropriate certificate or indicate the estimated date of receipt of permission and forward a copy of the certificate when it has been issued. Any conditions attaching to the formal permission must be included. (See guideline number 2.6).

Please indicate if either the **OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS RESTORATION FUND, THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BELL FUND** or the **WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG) BELL FUND** has previously supported work at this location.

Yes No

3. FUNDS

a) Estimated cost £..... c) Funds promised £.....
(including VAT if applicable)

b) Funds in hand £..... d) Raised in last year £.....

e) Other capital expenditure envisaged £.....
(i.e. tower, roof, heating etc)

..... £.....

f) Has the P.C.C. contributed to either the **OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS RESTORATION FUND, THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BELL FUND** or the **WITNEY & WOODSTOCK BRANCH (ODG) BELL FUND** in the past 5 years?

Yes No

If not would the P.C.C. consider contributions in the future?

Yes No

4. RINGERS

a) Number of Guild members b) Other members

c) Number of ringers attending service ringing

Appendix 4

Examples of ODG Branch Bell Funds

1. The Newbury Branch doesn't have a specific written bell fund policy as they don't have a bell fund. Their Branch Fund is a general purpose one and applications are dealt with on a case by case basis. Depending on what the application is for, it would normally be considered by the Branch Officers for approval.
2. The CNBBF is held with the CBF C of E Deposit Fund and administered by the ODG General Treasurer.
 - a. We do not have a constitution or trustees. Money deposited in the fund comes from donations from branch members (usually 50p per member per annum) paid along with the annual subscription and transfers from the General Fund, which are proposed and voted on at the Branch AGM in March.
 - b. Grants for projects are made from the interest that has accrued in the CNBBF. Any grants are proposed and voted on at the Branch AGM. Previous to the AGM, these are discussed at a Branch officers' meeting in January and then put forward at the AGM.
 - c. When money needs to be withdrawn from the CNBBF towards the payment of a project, the ODG General Treasurer arranges for this to be transferred directly to the PCC account concerned. Grants are not paid out until the work has been completed.
 - d. The CNBBF was first set up in 1996. Over the years grants have been made to Ascott-u-Wychwood, Fulbrook, Asthall, Chadlington, and Enstone, of amounts ranging from £150 to £25 and totalling £575.00. Three of these projects were major restoration works.
 - e. Recently work has taken place at Taynton. We did not contribute to this as they were able to raise the funds needed although they received a substantial grant from the ODBF. The CN Branch makes an annual donation to the ODBF which again is approved at the Branch AGM.
 - f. Work is about to start at Ascott-u-Wychwood and at Shipton-u-Wychwood in October.
 - g. Both of these towers are scheduled to receive £150 each when the work has been completed.
3. Old North Berks Branch does not have a written policy but this is what usually happens:
 - a. We have two branch committee meetings each year in February and September. Applications are initially dealt with at these meetings.
 - b. How we deal with applications:
 - c. If the amount to be donated is £500 or less, the committee can accept or reject the application at this stage. If accepted, the Treasurer will make a donation from branch funds directly to the applicant when required.
 - d. If the amount to be donated is more than £500, the matter is discussed and it is usually decided how much we should donate. Then we approach the branch membership for ratification via the AGM in March. If the matter is urgent and it is too long to wait for the AGM, the Secretary is instructed to call an EGM.
 - e. What kind of sums are appropriate and for what purpose:
 - f. We usually try to donate between 5-10% of the total cost, depending on the size of the project and the circumstances of the applicant tower.
 - g. We will consider projects of any size, from rebushing clappers to full rehangs and augmentations. We usually only consider work to bells and not for items such as ropes and simulators.
 - h. Conditions placed on grants:
 - i. The only condition is that the work takes place.
 - j. Whether we loan or gift:

- k. All amounts are donated from branch funds and are gifts not loans.
 - l. How the committee approves and monitors such applications:
 - m. Each application is discussed at a committee meeting. If the amount to be donated exceeds £500, this is put to the whole membership via the AGM. Following discussion, the membership can accept the committee's recommendation or can vote for a different amount or nothing (which would be very unusual) to be donated.
 - n. The committee are regularly updated by the applicants on the status of their projects and the Treasurer makes payments from branch funds when they are required.
 - o. How we obtain funds for donations:
 - p. ONB Branch has around 260 members. Every year each branch member pays a voluntary £2 to the branch. This money is ring fenced by the Treasurer for spending on bell projects within the branch. Each year we hold two social events with raffles and the proceeds are also ring fenced by the Treasurer for bell projects.
4. In the Central Bucks Branch there is a small bell fund which was started some years ago from a bequest from the late George Edmans. Originally the amount available for grants was limited to the income of the fund, and the capital could not be touched. That was, however at a time of high interest rates, and with the advent of low rates the amount of income was tiny, effectively rendering the fund useless. A review was carried out in 2012 and a copy of the resulting paper is attached. The recommendation was accepted and the Rules were changed at the 2013 AGM. I am attaching a copy of the (current) Rules.
- a. The Rules limit grants to minor works, and the Committee (as Managers) has determined that grants should only be made for matters which are necessary for the safe and proper operation of the bells. This includes ropes clappers stays etc., but an application for assistance with new muffles was turned down on the grounds that they were “not necessary ...”. There is currently something over £4,000 in the Fund and grants have been made over recent years towards new ropes and repair/replacement of clappers. Our “rule of thumb” has been to aim to provide up to 50% of the relevant costs (subject of course to the Fund Rules limit of £500), but taking account of grants available from elsewhere, as required by the Rules.
 - i. The Fund shall be known as the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers Central Bucks Branch George Edmans Bell Fund or the CBB Bell Fund.
 - ii. The object of the CBB Bell Fund shall be to provide financial assistance to Churches in the Central Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers for the purpose of maintaining and improving their bell installations.
 - iii. The CBB Bell Fund will be set up initially by investing the bequest from the late George Edmans together with any other monies subsequently received for or donated to the CBB Bell Fund. Grants may be made at the sole discretion of the CBB Bell Fund Managers out of all monies held by the Fund, up to a maximum in respect of each grant of £500 or such other sum as may from time to time be approved by a Central Buck Branch Annual General Meeting, provided always that no grant shall exceed 25% of the aggregate value of the Fund at the date of grant. Financial assistance will be limited to minor works including new ropes, fittings such as pulleys wheels sliders and stays, repairing or replacing clappers. The CBB Bell Fund will not make grants for major work such as bell re-hanging, augmentation or new frames.
 - iv. The membership of the CBB Bell Fund shall be the Ringing Members of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers who are shown in the Guild Report as being ringers in towers of the Central Bucks Branch. The elected Trustees of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers will be ex-officio, non-voting members of the CBB Bell Fund.

- v. The CBB Bell Fund Managers, who will administer the CBB Bell, will be the Branch Officers elected from time to time at the Central Bucks Branch AGM. They will have day-to-day stewardship of the fund and be responsible for the investment of the capital.
- vi. Any member of the CBB Bell Fund may make an application for a grant to the Secretary of the Central Bucks Branch. On receipt of an application a meeting of the CBB Bell Fund Managers will be convened as soon as practicable. In considering the application the CBB Bell Fund Managers will take into account the total scope of the works and money received or promised from other sources such as the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.
- vii. The CBB Bell Fund will be an agenda item at each Central Bucks Branch AGM when the CBB Bell Fund Managers will report on funds available, applications received, grants authorised and grants paid. The Central Bucks Branch Treasurer shall maintain accounts for the CBB Bell Fund and prepare a Balance Sheet as at 31 December in each year and an Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date. The Auditor of the Central Bucks Branch will audit all CBB Bell Fund accounts. Such accounts will be presented for approval at the Branch AGM.
- viii. No grant shall be paid until the work in respect of which the grant was made has been completed to the satisfaction of the CBB Bell Fund Managers. Any grant authorised by the CBB Bell Fund which is not claimed within one year of the date on which it is authorised shall lapse. A fresh application may be made.
- ix. Such bank accounts as may be required shall be opened in the name of the CBB Bell Fund. Cheques and other orders drawn on these accounts shall be signed by two of the CBB Bell Fund Managers.
- x. CBB Bell Fund Managers shall invest the capital of the CBB Bell Fund in any manner that they think fit, authorised by law.
- xi. If at a Branch AGM the Members decide that the CBB Bell Fund should be dissolved then the CBB Bell Fund Managers shall dispose of the assets of the CBB Bell Fund (after payment of all debts and liabilities) to the satisfaction of the elected Trustees of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.
- xii. No alteration or addition or deletion shall be made to these rules except at a Central Bucks Branch Annual General Meeting. Notice of any proposed alteration or addition or deletion of these rules shall be given to the Central Bucks Branch secretary at least one calendar month prior to the date of the Meeting.

5. The North Bucks branch bell fund guidance is available on their website -

<http://www.northbucksbranch.org.uk/the-branch/branch-bell-fund/>

- a. The Branch has a small bell Fund which can help fund work on bells in North Bucks Towers.
- b. Scope of the Fund
- c. Grants will be considered for any work in North Bucks towers on: bells (including augmentation), fittings, frames, sound control, simulators, rope guides, and the provision of ropes.
- d. Grants
- e. Grants will be for £50 plus 1% of the project costs including VAT, with a maximum of £450, dependent on the balance in the Fund being sufficient at the time. If VAT can be claimed back, the grant will be for £50 plus 1% of the project costs excluding VAT. Minimum size of project eligible is £200.
- f. Grants will remain valid for three years from agreement of the grant at a Branch meeting. The tower may re-apply for a grant after that time.
- g. Grants will be payable on completion of the project, following approval by the Branch Officers, and on receipt of a paid invoice, as appropriate.

- h. Grants will not be awarded retrospectively.
 - i. Management of the Fund
 - j. The Fund is held within the existing North Bucks Branch account, but ring-fenced for the purposes described here.
 - k. The Fund is managed by the Branch Treasurer, and will be audited annually by an independent examiner.
 - l. The balance and status of active grants will be reported as a separate item at each North Bucks Branch AGM for information.
 - m. The rules of the Fund will be made freely available, and can be changed as need dictates by the proposal and agreement of a change at a Branch meeting.
 - n. Grants to be applied for in writing to the Branch Secretary.
 - o. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Branch Officers, who will arrive at a recommendation for the next branch meeting where the application will be decided.
6. The EBSB branch does not have a bell fund. They have given grants for work on bells from their general branch funds. These have been few and far between and tend to be decided on an individual basis, but they do have a document (see image below) with guidance notes.

EBSB BELL RESTORATION GRANT GUIDELINES

Version 1.2

25-04-09

1. In general, the branch will endeavour to make a grant of 1% of the total cost of the bell restoration work (including new bell casting, recasting, bell fittings, bell hanging, augmentations and VAT).
2. Building work, ringing room decoration and any work not directly associated with the restoration work are excluded. General maintenance (e.g. painting frames) and wear and tear items such as new ropes and replacement stays are also excluded.
3. Applications should be supported by estimates approved by the P.C.C.
4. Grants will only be offered to projects that receive Diocesan approval (i.e. Faculty or Certificate).
5. Applications will only be considered at the Branch AGM and Half Yearly meetings, and grants must be approved by a majority of members voting.
6. Towers are allowed to make further applications, up to one year after the work has been completed, if previous applications have been refused due to lack of branch funds.
7. If the work has not been completed within 3 years of the grant being approved, the grant will lapse and a further application will need to be made.
8. The branch may approve grants of part of the total cost of the work.
9. Payment will only be made after the work has been completed, and approved by a member of the Guild Towers and Belfries committee.
10. The branch reserves the right to revise grants up or down based on final costs, particularly if less work is completed than was anticipated when the grant was offered.
11. As a guide, the funds in the branch accounts should not be allowed to fall below £2000 (at 2009 prices). Grants approved but not paid must be taken into account. Funds potentially available for bell restoration work will be identified in the branch accounts.