



Minutes of the Witney and Woodstock Branch AGM

Zoom - 27th February 2021, 19:00

Present:

Catherine Lane, Tony Crabtree, Stuart Gibson, Hazel Howarth, Jean Richards, Richard Law, Andrew Goldthorpe, Lindsey Thornton, Richard White, Anthony Williamson, Michael Probert, Neil Ephgrave, Julie Minch, Jane Burgess, Ron P. Burgess, Roger Barnes, Margaret Barnes, Gillian Forrest, Alison Merryweather-Clarke, Sue Rhodes, Steve Vickars.

1. Apologies.

Marysia Hermaszewska, Richard Ford, Madeline Bone, Jennifer Pratley, Carol McRobbie, Katherine Goldthorpe, Grace Goldthorpe, Martin Spurrier.

2. Requests for urgent items of Any Other Business

There were none.

3. Chair's welcome and minutes from 2020 AGM

Hazel Howarth chaired the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked members for their attendance.

Throughout the year there have been no meetings of the full W&W committee.

There were no corrections to the 2020 AGM minutes.

The minutes were approved and signed. Proposed Julie Minch, Seconded Anthony Williamson, carried nem con.

4. Ringing Master's Report – Richard White, Ringing Master

There was nothing to report due to lockdown curtailing bell ringing nationally.

5. Treasurer's Report – Jean Richards, Hon. Treasurer

The branch accounts for 2020 show a current balance of £3,324.09 and a surplus of income over expenditure of £302.28.

Income from subscriptions was £549 (183 @ £3, of which 3 were second branch members).

A retiring collection at the AGM in South Leigh raised £50.00.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, there was no further income or expenditure in the year.

My thanks to Anthony Williamson for acting as the Independent Examiner for the 2020 accounts.

Jean Richards

Branch Treasurer

Balance Sheet

Opening Balances:

Current Account £2,235.38

Deposit Account £770.31

Cash float £16.12

Excess of income over expenditure £302.28

£3,324.09

Closing Balances:

Current Account £2,534.38

Deposit Account £773.59

Cash Float £16.12

£3,324.09

6. Secretary's Report – Andrew Goldthorpe, Hon. Secretary

It is hard to believe that it is now over one year since ringing stopped for most towers across our branch. A few towers have rung three and four bells, whilst others have chimed or not rung at all. On the social side, a number of towers, notably Ducklington, have kept regular online contact going with their weekly Zoom "virtual pub" meetings, joined by our friends Hannah and Peter from Australia.

In April, the branch sadly lost one of its longest serving ringers. Terence Rouse passed away at home surrounded by his family at the age of 85. Terry's father taught him to ring at the age of 11 so we know he was a ringer for over 70 years, having served as Bampton Vice Tower Captain for over 40 years.

Later in the year, our good wishes went with Chris Moxon on his move back to Yorkshire, accompanied by anticipation of a Witney & Woodstock branch outing to God's Own County when current restrictions are a distant memory! Chris was a major factor in reviving Treble Bob ringing across the branch and was a great source of knowledge for the new ringers across the branch, sometimes ringing five nights a week. We shall miss his commitment and enthusiasm in the tower.

Thanks to the remarkable internet browser-based Ringing Room, Chris is still able to join our virtual practice nights. Ringing room has enabled many of our beginners to make great strides in their understanding of methods and bellringing theory. Many local ringers have enjoyed the benefits of

virtual ringing, be it in focused sessions introducing them to ringing room, or regular late-night sessions with ringers' way above their pay grade, some of whom come from other branches of the ODG, some from other continents. Some grasped the concept of counting places for the first time and progressed from tentative plain hunt in the tower to ringing virtual affected touches of bob doubles and bob minor. Still others have consolidated surprise minor and taken their first steps into surprise major methods, progress that would have been unlikely to have been as rapid had the need to gather living ringers been required! Of course, it remains to be seen if skills acquired over the internet can be translated into competent handling in the tower, but the virtue of ringing room is all about accelerated opportunities to learn the work in a supportive environment.

Another unexpected benefit of lockdown was the motivation it provided to Alison Merryweather-Clarke, Lorna Curtis, Andrew Goldthorpe, Marysia Hermaszewska and Toby Goss amongst others to learn handbells. Grateful for the support of Roger Barnes and evangelical handbell ringers in Oxford City, ONB and VOWH branches, progress has been made varying from plain hunt minor to Little Bob Royal for Alison! Alison has been joined by four other handbell novices and beginners in regular handbell practices in North Leigh, providing entertainment to passers-by on the village green! Toby Goss rang his first course of bob minor in hand with Alison and Lorna Curtis, possibly the first in hand in the branch this millennium, but hopefully the first of many.

The branch would like to offer its thanks to members of ART, the ODG and CCCBR for their painstaking negotiations with the Church of England and PHE regarding returning to ringing. I am sure we all hope to return to our towers sooner rather than later. Who knows, with so many people adopting new working practices from home, desperate to escape their four walls, there may even be an exciting opportunity to attract new ringers!

Finally, the restoration and augmentation of the unringable 5 at Broadwell to a ground floor 8 has made sporadic progress through the lockdown, and I'd like to thank Tony Crabtree, Chair of the Towers and Belfries committee for all his hard work.

7. Election of New Members

<i>Tower</i>	<i>New Member</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Seconded</i>
Freeland	Judith Carr	Neil Ephgrave	Sue Rhodes

The election of new members was agreed by those present at the meeting.

8. Election of Officers

All officers were willing to continue except for Jean Richards (Hon. Treasurer). The meeting offered its thanks Jean for 10 years of loyal service and presented a gift in appreciation.

Members of the committee are:

Position	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Hazel Howarth	Anthony Williamson	Lindsey Thornton

Hon. Treasurer	Richard Law	Andrew Goldthorpe	Alison Merryweather-Clarke
Hon. Secretary	Andrew Goldthorpe	Hazel Howarth	Richard White
Ringling Master	Richard White	Julie Minch	Sue Rhodes
Deputy Ringling Master	Anthony Williamson	Alison Merryweather - Clarke	Michael Probert
Branch Rep.	Michael Probert	Alison Merryweather - Clarke	Anthony Williamson
Branch Rep.	Vacant		
Assistant Secretary	Lindsey Thornton	Alison Merryweather-Clarke	Michael Probert
Webmaster	Andrew Goldthorpe	Anthony Williamson	Ron Burgess

9. Items for discussion

a. Donations

- The Treasurer confirmed that the Branch had sufficient funds to donate £300 to the combined Guild Fund. Proposed, seconded, carried nem con.

b. Ringling Master's Honorarium

- This was kindly waived by Richard White.

c. Donations from Branch Funds

- Alison Merryweather-Clarke proposed donating a sum equivalent to approximately 20% of the branch reserves to the VOWH branch project at Longworth
- A discussion followed regarding the criteria for donations contained in the branch Bell Fund policy adopted at the 2019 AGM, whether branch funds should be reserved for W&W projects particularly bearing in mind the regular donation that the branch has made to Guild funds, and expense incurred on the Broadwell project amongst other planned W&W projects.
- The Chair proposed deferring the discussion until the situation becomes clearer post lockdown.

10. Branch Practices / Training

The Ringing Master and Deputy Ringing Master are preparing the ringing card and reviewing branch practices. Firsts' fortnight to be added to the ringing card as an event to encourage participation.

Action: Ringing Master

11. Programme for 2021

- a. 6 bell striking competition: June 2021
 - a. Tbc, led by advice from the Guild

Action: Ringing Master

- b. Branch social: July 2021
 - a. Tbc, led by advice from the Guild.

Action: Secretary

- c. Branch outing: October 2021
 - a. Tbc, led by advice from the Guild

Action: Ringing Master

- d. Quiz Night: January 2021
 - a. Tbc, led by advice from the Guild

Action: Heather Horner

- e. 2021 AGM: 19th February 2022.
 - a. Secretary to approach Bampton.

Action: Secretary

12. Any other business

- Tony Crabtree reported on:
 - The availability of the Stall Pits mini ring for any future events
 - The joint enterprise by the CCCCBR and ART carrying out a programme to enable a safe return to ringing
 - The Guild 6 bell striking competition is pencilled in for the first weekend in October. W&W Branch Ringing Master to determine if a team will be entered.

13. Concluding vote of thanks

The meeting closed at 20:15

Andrew Goldthorpe, Hon. Secretary