

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL BUCKS BRANCH OF THE ODG

HELD IN WING CHURCH ON SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2009 COMMENCING AT 5PM

Present: 27 Branch members (including those named below) and 6 Non-members as per signed attendance list.

Chairman Andrzej Puchalski

Vice-Chairman Jan Robinson

Secretary Heather Dobson

Acting Treasurer Terry Wagstaff

Ringling Master Ed Houghton

Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from Ann Aylott, Anne Pedley, Sue Gomme, Peter Fay, Jo Anderson, Mandy Cliffe, Louise Wetherall, Edwina Carpenter, Jane Shrimpton, Jo Poole.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present. The meeting gave a vote of thanks to the ladies who had prepared a very substantial tea.

1. Minutes of the AGM held on 9.2.08 at Wingrave

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had been made aware of a small number of errors to these minutes and that they would be corrected. Subject to such corrections it was proposed by Jan Robinson, seconded by Jane Vowles and carried unanimously that the minutes be adopted.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

None were raised.

3. Reports

The Chairman informed members that to save time, copies of the reports from the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer (the annual accounts) and the Ringing Master had been prepared and a copy had been made available to every member present (see copies attached to these minutes). The Chairman gave members a short period to review them then asked if any member wished to raise a question.

Diana Slevin asked when the positions of Secretary and Treasurer, which had been left vacant at the last AGM, had been filled. The Chairman replied that Heather Dobson had agreed after the last AGM to carry out the Secretary's duties and been formally appointed Secretary at the 6 bell striking competition held at Drayton Parslow and that Terry Wagstaff had been acting as Treasurer for the short term as he was the only person willing to do so; these appointments would probably be changing at this meeting.

There were no other questions on the reports or the accounts. The Chairman then proposed that the accounts be adopted, seconded by Jane Vowles and carried unanimously.

4. New members

The following new members were elected unanimously:

Wing Alex Benn, John Benson. Nominated by Andrzej Puchalski, proposed by Ed Houghton, seconded by Richard Goldson.

Winslow Becky Pryse (as a re-election), Mary Hunt, Jan Lewis. Nominated by Diana Slevin, proposed by Philip Roberts, seconded by Ryan Noble.

Swanbourne Tony Wallis, Robin Bailey, John Bailey. Nominated by Stephen Alderman, proposed by Clare Carpenter, seconded by Heather Dobson.

Aylesbury Pam Reeve (as a re-election). Nominated by Mike Dodd, proposed by Heather Dobson, seconded by Jan Robinson.

Honorary members

No nominations for honorary membership had been received.

5. Election of Officers

President The Chairman proposed that Mary Lee, having been a member of the Branch for over 50 years, be elected as President. Terry Wagstaff seconded this appointment and the members unanimously carried such a well deserved nomination. Mary Lee thanked the members and said how delighted she was to accept the post.

The following appointments were all carried unanimously:

Chairman Jan Robinson took over the chair to deal with the appointment of the Chairman. Andrzej Puchalski was proposed by Heather Dobson, seconded by Hal Drysdale. Andrzej then re-took the chair.

Joint Secretaries Heather Dobson and Diana Slevin indicated that they were willing to become joint secretaries and make appropriate arrangements between themselves to share the task. Proposed by Andrzej Puchalski, seconded by Ryan Noble.

Treasurer John Lomas indicated that he was willing to be treasurer. Proposed by Andrzej Puchalski, seconded by Hal Drysdale.

Ringling Master Ed Houghton was proposed by Andrzej Puchalski, seconded by Hal Drysdale.

Vice-Chairman and Newsletter Editor Jan Robinson was proposed by Andrzej Puchalski, seconded by Richard Goldson.

Deputy Ringling Master Jane Vowles was proposed by Andrzej Puchalski, seconded by Kate Edgar.

Branch Stewards Hal Drysdale proposed by Paul Bagni, seconded by Ernie Weight. Paul Bagni proposed by Ed Houghton, seconded by Diana Slevin.

Branch Representatives Ed Houghton proposed by Hal Drysdale, seconded by Heather Dobson. Heather Dobson proposed by Andrzej Puchalski, seconded by Richard Goldson.

Independent Examiner Kate Edgar proposed by Phil Roberts, seconded by Jane Vowles. The Chairman thanked Kate for carrying out this task.

Training Officer The Chairman wished to revive this post and indicated that whoever was appointed would work with the Ringling Master to develop the training of ringers and help with practices. Hal Drysdale was proposed by Diana Slevin and seconded by Peter Betts.

Mike Dodd proposed a vote of thanks to Andrzej Puchalski for succeeding in finding people willing to fill all the officers posts this year after the difficulties in doing so last year when Linslade tower was leaving the Branch.

6. Branch ringling programme

Ed Houghton reported that the 6 bell striking competition in June 2009 had been moved from Twyford to North Marston. The difficulties of the bells at North Marston was discussed which might discourage some teams from entering, but it was noted that Whites of Appleton were due to carry out some work on them before June. They are also a ground floor ring and lacked good facilities to host the tea etc which were not ideal. In view of all this it was decided to consider moving the competition to Great Horwood.

7. Branch outing

Jan Robinson had agreed to arrange the outing in September and was proposing visiting Suffolk towers. This was a long distance to travel and Jan therefore needed members/towers to indicate very soon whether they would support it in sufficient numbers to make hiring a coach viable in view of the expense and need to book it well in advance, or whether enough people would be willing to drive if it became a car outing. Jan would put details in the next newsletter and urged everyone to respond so that she could then make the arrangements.

8. Orchard Cup

The Chairman congratulated Mike Dodd and Aylesbury in winning the Orchard Cup for the Branch last year, after Chiltern Branch winning it for a number of years. CBB will be hosting the competition in 2009. Ed Houghton had booked Wotton Underwood for October but it may not have the facilities for the tea and toilets so Ed will consider changing the venue.

9. Branch dinner

A very enjoyable dinner had been held last month at The Swan in Great Horwood, which was extremely reasonable at £12 per head for a substantial two course meal even though the service was rather slow for some of the party. The Chairman thanked Heather Dobson for making all the arrangements. A dinner would be held this year (or early in 2010), possibly at Great Horwood again unless any member could suggest an alternative.

10. AGM

Discussion took place over the location for the 2010 AGM. Winslow was suggested but Diana Slevin said that the St Lawrence Hall was going to be refurbished and may not be available. Aylesbury was also suggested but Mike Dodd reported that the professional catering arrangements at the church made it difficult for the Branch to make its own arrangements at lower cost. Stewkley was also suggested but was going to host the Guild AGM this year so would not want to put on another big event so soon. It was agreed to use Wing again next year and find a different venue for 2011.

11. Any other business

11.1 Guild AGM

16 May 2009 being hosted by CBB and held at Stewkley. Bunt Scott (Stewkley TC) has booked the village hall for the tea. The Branch will need to assist in supplying food and serving the tea, catering for 90-100 people expected. Hilary

Rogers (Guild Secretary) said that donations for tea can be used to cover some of the costs involved unless Branch members wish to donate food and the tea monies could then be donated to Guild funds. Diana Slevin suggested using a catering business in Winslow to do the food if the Branch could not organise it, but it would probably cost more than members making the arrangements. Ed Houghton will arrange CBB towers on routes to Stewkley. The Committee will have a special meeting shortly to finalise all the arrangements for the meeting.

11.2 Branch website

Heather Dobson reported that the initial cost of creating the Branch website (around £50), which had been done by Luke Pedley, had been paid for by Anne Pedley. Hal Drysdale is currently maintaining the website at no cost to the Branch. Hal spoke about the possibility of moving the site over to be hosted via the Guild website server as this would be free, make it easier to maintain and also extend the services available on the Branch site (eg easy for a tower to create its own page). Proposed by Diana Slevin, seconded by Kate Edgar and unanimously agreed that the site be transferred to the Guild server; Hal will ask Luke to make the transfer. The Chairman thanked Luke and Anne Pedley for all that they have done with the website.

11.3 Branch newsletter

Jan Robinson reported that, to save costs, towers now only get 5 printed copies of the newsletter unless they have asked for more; The newsletter will also be made available on the branch website in future, in an easily printable format. Once the newsletter is on the web, if towers need less than 5 copies they should inform Jan so that she can save printing too many copies.

11.4 Area youth event – Winslow 25 April

Diana Slevin reported that a day of various activities for young people from a wide area of CBB, organised by Buckingham South East Neighbourhood Group, is to be held in Winslow on 25 April 2009. A stall has been booked, aiming to raise the profile of ringing and attract new learners to ringing at local towers. Help is needed to man the stall and for members to suggest things to display or activities for those attending to attempt. The Guild has various displays that can be borrowed.

Diana has provisionally booked the Charnborough mini ring for the event, cost around £225, and asked the Branch if they would be prepared to fund part of this cost. Terry Wagstaff proposed, seconded by Peter Betts, that the Branch pays £50 towards the cost. After considerable discussion about whether it was appropriate for the Branch funds to be used towards such an event and about the level of the sum being proposed, the proposal was carried with 2 votes against it.

11.5 North Bucks Branch

Richard Stanworth, Chairman of North Bucks Branch, addressed the meeting. NBB is facing poor attendances at their Branch practices, declining membership and a lack of new learners. NBB has concluded that recent changes to parish benefices and deanery boundaries in both Central Bucks and North Bucks mean that some towers in both Branches are now miss-aligned with the Branch areas. As a means to solving their membership problems NBB are proposing that 2 towers in each Branch are swapped to re-align the Branch areas with the diocesan ones.

NBB have suggested the following happens as quickly as possible, with the agreement of the towers, both Branches and the Guild:

Newton Longville moves to CBB as all the other parishes in its benefice are already in CBB.

All the towers of the Brickhills and Stoke Hammond benefice transfer to CBB, the only active tower in the benefice is Great Brickhill.

Padbury and Hillesden move from CBB to NBB.

A lengthy discussion ensued and Richard Stanworth proposed that the CBB committee decide on the proposal, taking due account of members' views and the wishes of the respective towers. Robert Newton (Guild Master) reminded the meeting that a Branch committee cannot decide the issue as it would need to be put to a Branch AGM or a special meeting of the Branch called with due notice to all members and then go up to the Guild for a final vote at a Guild AGM or special meeting. Moving towers from Branches takes time and in any case may not be the best means to resolve the problems NBB are facing. Diana Slevin suggested that for the time being the quickest and easiest way CBB can help NBB is for both branches to co-operate and hold some joint practices and training events. The Chairman agreed that the Branch committee would give the NBB proposal some further consideration and bring the matter back to a full Branch meeting in due course.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm