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**The Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers**

**Southern Branch AGM 2024**

**Minutes**

1. **Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone present, including Keith Butter (Guild Master) and Rose and Bob Hancock from the Central Branch.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from: Chris Sharp (Guild Secretary), Barbara Rand (Guild Treasurer), Mick Allman, Janice Atkinson, Charlotte Beaver, David Braunton, Marilyn and Keith Brown, Brian Buttery, Tim Carter, Julie and Michael Coney, Mandy and Ian Dawson, Brenda and Alan Donaldson, Julian van Geersdaele, Andy Hallam, Geoff Haynes, Alison Ireland, Helen and John Macmenemy, Mark Mumby, Roger Osbourn, Alan, Joan and Matthew Payne, Pamela Pohling-Brown, Roger Stokoe, Cora Townson, Melissa Walton.

1. **Loss of Members**

The meeting stood in silence to remember Peter Emmingham, Elizabeth Payne and Frank Wyre. The Chairman then read out a tribute to each person.

1. **Minutes of 2023 AGM**

The Minutes were approved subject to one amendment: that mention be made of the discussion relating to the LDG Bell Repair Fund.

1. **Matters Arising**

a) The ‘Ring for the King’ initiative had been very successful within the Branch, involving many ringers and attracting new recruits.

b) Roger Stokoe is in good spirits and making great progress. He has been up the tower at Market Deeping.

c) Jonathan Clegg raised the discussion from the last Branch and Guild AGMs re using the Guild BRF to fund a ‘major project’ and wondered whether any further discussion had taken place at Guild Committee level. The Guild Master would reply to this later in the meeting.

1. **Ringing Master’s Report**

Barry Jones, Assistant Ringing Master, presented a report on the past year’s activities, which was adopted by those present on a show of hands.

Highlights of the year included:

Branch meeting at Corby Glen. 47 people attended, with 37 staying to lunch at the ‘Woodhouse Arms’

Bob Doubles Workshop at Harlaxton, led by Liz Carter and Shelagh Dunning

‘Lucky Dip’ Striking Competition at West Deeping, judged by Keith Butter (Guild Master)

Branch meeting at Billingborough where the LDG Young Ringers practised their test piece for the RWYSC. 29 members were present

Mini tower-tour along the A15, arranged by Jonathan Clegg

Ringing for Evensong at Lincoln Cathedral with the Eastern and Elloe Branches

Teams entering the Guild Striking Contests, with Bourne winning the John Freeman Cup at Tealby. The Branch hosted the Guild 8-bell competition at Billingborough.

Final meeting of the year at Greatford. 29 attendees, most staying for lunch at the ‘Hare and Hounds’

The winners of the ‘Lucky Dip’ Branch Striking Competition were each presented with a mounted photograph as a memento.

1. **Adoption of Accounts**

The Treasurer presented the Accounts.

At the year-end, the balance held with Virgin Money was as follows:

General Fund: £387.81

BRF: £3045.54

Branch membership is almost back to pre-Covid levels:

Seniors: 121 Young Ringers: 13 Associate: 1 Honorary: 3 Total: 138

Liz Carter was thanked for her inspection of the Accounts, which were then adopted by the members.

Proposed: Jim Benner Seconded: Terry Maddison

1. **Election and Ratification of New Members**

The elections during the year of the following members were ratified:

Seniors:

Brian Blackbourn Morton (Returning)

Becca Brett Thurlby

Emma Downing Harlaxton

William Enright W Deeping

Georgina Harwood Billingborough

Alison Ireland W Deeping

David James W Deeping

Melanie James W Deeping

John Jardine Kirkby Underwood

Lucy Knight Thurlby

Paul Meredith Sedgebrook/Harlaxton

Annie Newbiggin W Deeping

Brenda Potts W Deeping

Bonnie Smart Rippingale

Carol Toft Folkingham

Mike Trumble Thurlby

Melissa Walton Stamford All Ss

Brian Wooldridge Morton (Returning)

Young Ringers:

Robyn Baldock Rippingale

Harris Manson Harlaxton

Noah Mason Grantham

Ben Scoats W Deeping

Tom Thorpe Stamford Baron (Returning)

Six new members were elected:

Dan Back Stamford Baron

Proposed: Nick Faux Seconded: Diane Faux

Sian Jasinska Silk Willoughby

Proposed: Sylvia Bird Seconded: Alan Bird

Ros Nickols Stamford Baron

Proposed: Nick Faux Seconded: Diane Faux

Gillian Potter Thurlby

Proposed: Andy Hallam Seconded: Judy Daff

Adam Sufford Stamford Baron

Proposed: Nick Faux Seconded: Diane Faux

Clair Walton Grantham

Proposed: David Braunton Seconded: Sylvia Bird

Transfer to NRLM:

Will Carter Harlaxton

All approved by the meeting.

1. **Election of Officers**
2. **President: Judith Rogers**

Proposed: Lois Webb Seconded: Jonathan Clegg

1. **Secretary: Melissa Blanchard**

Proposed: Judith Rogers Seconded: Kevin Carter

Melissa is only willing to stand for **one year.**

1. **Treasurer: Geoff Haynes**

Proposed: Jim Benner Seconded: Liz Carter

Geoff can only take office from the beginning of April, so the current Treasurer will continue to the end of March.

It was agreed that there should be an interim examination of the Accounts on handover.

1. **Ringing Master: Sylvia Bird**

Proposed: Robin Rogers Seconded: Alison Everett

1. **Assistant Ringing Master: Shelagh Dunning**

Shelagh will remain in her current post.

Liz Carter did not wish to continue.

1. **Fundraising Rep: No candidate**

Joan Payne is willing to continue distributing the Guild Christmas cards and calendars but does not wish to join the Committee.

1. **Public Relations Officer: No candidate**

This is an important position.

Branch Committee to further discuss f) and g) at their next meeting.

1. **Committee Member : Julie Coney**

Proposed: Sylvia Bird Seconded: Shelagh Dunning

All appointments approved by the meeting.

**Safeguarding Representative: Kevin Carter**

Kevin is willing to continue.

 **10. Appointment of Accounts Examiner: Liz Carter**

Proposed: Alison Jones Seconded: Terry Maddison

All agreed.

 **11. BRF Grants**

There were no official applications for grants, so no call on the BRF for the moment.

However, there are suggestions of potential work at several towers:

Grantham- Work to clappers etc.

Hough on the Hill- Plan was for major refurbishment but no further news.

Haconby- Keen to get the 4 bells ringing again and perhaps augment. A local benefactor is prepared to match any funds raised. There is a ‘grand scheme’ to make the church into a Community Centre. No further news.

Market Deeping- Jonathan Clegg was able to report that there have been discussions between himself, Keith Brown and the Rector re seeking to have 10 bells. Nothing definite has been decided and discussions are ongoing. The ideal would be to add 2 bells to enable ringing on 10, to alter the circle to create a light 8 and to install sound control.

Thurlby- Hoping to install rope guides. This would require a Faculty.

 **12. Branch Programme for 2024/ AGM 2025**

Sylvia Bird reported that the next meeting will be held at Silk Willoughby on the morning of Saturday 24th February, followed by lunch at ‘The Horseshoes.’

The landlord is offering a 2-course meal for £10.95. Sylvia will also ask him to quote a price for a buffet.

Grantham will be approached to host the AGM in January 2025.

Saturday 9th November will be a joint meeting with the Central Branch. As there are 5 Saturdays in November next year, Barry Jones suggested holding an additional Branch meeting on the final weekend.

As last year’s mini-tour in July was a success, Jonathan Clegg suggested that the Ringing Master might like to add another tour to the programme this year. He offered to organise, covering a different part of the branch.

As the ‘Lucky Dip’ contest had been so successful, Liz Carter suggested that this be continued.

It was explained that the former link between winning a Branch striking contest and automatic entry into the Guild competition had been changed. Towers may enter a team independently.

It was noted that, unfortunately, at least 3 events proposed for the Guild 125 celebrations clash with Southern Branch meeting/event dates.

 **13. Guild Master- Keith Butter**

Keith had travelled down from the Northern Branch after attending their AGM earlier in the day- a round-trip of almost 200 miles.

He began by returning to the subject of the Guild BRF raised by Jonathan Clegg at the AGM last April: Would the Guild benefit from having a light ground-floor ring of 8?

This did not appear to have gone forward yet but the Guild Committee is in discussion about the BRF. There is a suggestion that the Guild BRF might increase its grant contribution to 30%, rather than the present 25%.

There is much to be positive about in our Branch:

The Southern Branch led the way with electing the most new members last year.

The Guild had a good showing in the Ridgman Trophy competition, with several SB members in the team. 2024 contest is at Biggleswade; 2025 LDG hosts at Boston.

The SB was well-represented in the RWNYSC. The contest will be in London next year. Sue Faull has handed the baton of working with the Young Ringers over to Melissa Blanchard and Shelagh Dunning from the S Branch.

SB teams entered both Guild striking competitions and won the 6-bell at Tealby. The 8-bell was hosted by Billingborough.

Keith commented on how quickly officer and committee positions were filled within the Branch. There will also be many Guild posts to be filled in April, if anyone is interested.

The Guild Committee is aware that the present website looks old and tired. There is a possibility that the Central Council will be providing a generic website template for guilds to access, though this may take some time.

Following suggestions from Barry Jones, the Guild will be looking again at their Striking Contest Rules, particularly regarding practice times and penalties.

**LDG 125 Celebrations** begin at the AGM in Lincoln on **April 27th**. There will be a slightly different format to make a shorter day.

Cathedral Service in the Ringers’ Chapel 10.45h/ Lunch in Bailgate Methodist Hall at 12.00h followed by Guild AGM at 14.00h.

Other events:

**Monday 29th April** is the date the Guild came into being, so ring your bells!

**May 12th**: Bell Sunday. Encourage your incumbent to include bells/bellringing in the Service.

**June 6th**: 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. Ringing across the country at 18.30h.

**June 29th**: Guild Festival based around Surfleet, with the Guild 6-bell contest, ringing for the Service and general ringing around the area. There will also be two peal attempts by separate Ladies’ and Gentlemens’ bands.

**September 28th**: Guild 8-bell contest at Ingoldmells in the Eastern Branch.

**October 26th**: LDG Dinner at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa. £45.00 per head. Dress code- smart casual. Two branches already have minibuses booked!

**125 Challenge**: Each branch to try and achieve 125 ‘firsts’ and register their events on a dedicated page on ‘Bellboard’.

We all need to be aware of the C of E ‘Time for Change’ initiative. Of 177 churches designated as ‘Festival Churches’, 90 have 1 or more bells hung for ringing. Some of these churches will close. The S Branch has a potential total of 88 bells in this situation. Sylvia Bird commented that Barry Jones is organising a monthly peal to raise funds at Heydour, a Festival Church.

Alison Everett (formerly a member of the Central Council) asked if any of the LDG Central Council reps are ladies. She also drew members’ attention to the Central Council website section on UNESCO ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage’. It is important that we get bellringing recognised as ‘intangible cultural heritage’. There are online meetings on 28th January and 11th February for anyone interested.

**14. AOB**

1. There is a Young Ringers’ practice at Potterhanworth next Sunday.

AJ will send out an email to the ‘Expired Members’ group.

1. On behalf of the Branch, Judith Rogers thanked Jim Benner for all his hard work over the past 3 years.
2. Jonathan Clegg wondered if there was any energy for trying to establish an easily-ringable ground-floor 8 within the Branch and asked the meeting and Committee whether they would consider taking this forward. After a lengthy and useful discussion, it was decided that Jonathan would be invited to a Branch committee meeting for further discussions, with a view to taking this to the Guild Committee for consideration.
3. Alison Everett had noticed the lack of a Guild Facebook page to facilitate discussion between members. This will be suggested to the Guild Committee.
4. **Vote of Thanks**

Anne Russell gave the vote of thanks to:

* Canon Mark Warrick for leading the Service
* St Martin’s PCC for hosting
* Nick Faux for the arrangements and Geoff Haynes for playing the organ (first time in 40 years!)
* Kate Riley and the catering team for the food and meeting venue
* All Saints’ PCC for use of the bells
* AJ for taking the minutes at short notice
1. **Guild 100 Club Draw**

The February numbers were drawn by Keith Butter, Guild Master.

1st: Barbara Rand (Messingham) 2nd: Alfie Hynes (Market Deeping)

The raffle was drawn and raised £75.00 for the Branch BRF.

The meeting concluded at 20.07h and was followed by ringing at All Saints.