

MINUTES of the Branch Committee Meeting held on Zoom on Sunday, 11th October 2020 at 7.30pm.

1. ATTENDEES

Rob Nickless (Chairman), Richard Loyd (Joint Ringing Master), Stuart Gibson (Treasurer), Gill Loyd (Secretary), Josie Irving (Branch Representative), Dick Peters (Vice Chairman & Branch Representative), Catherine Lane (Guild Master), John Dowling, Mary Friskney, Tim Pett, Daphne Pollard, Colin Turner and Michelle X

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Philip Roberts (Joint Ringing Master), Janette Roberts (Branch Representative) and Dave Trotman

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23rd February 2020

Circulated and read, after amending 'pain' to 'paint' twice in item 9, Richard Loyd signed the minutes on behalf of the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

AGM: The AGM was postponed from 21st March 2020 due to the Covid-19 situation. It will most likely take place in November as a Zoom meeting.

6-bell striking competition: This was cancelled and will hopefully take place next year.

Branch membership: There have been no new members elected since February. Sadly we have lost three members: Elizabeth Gill of Harwell, Brian Hunnisett of Blewbury and Denis Parfoot, formerly of West Hanney.

Practices: Only one practice has taken place since the last Committee Meeting, which was the afternoon practice at Cholsey in February. All other practices have been cancelled until further notice.

Events: All branch events were cancelled, including the April mini outing, the branch outing and barbecue. The autumn social, which was to have been a barn dance in Harwell Village Hall, has been rescheduled for next year.

Guild AGM 2020: This was to be held in Blewbury, however it was cancelled and held by Zoom meeting.

6. JOINT RINGING MASTERS' REPORT

The Covid Lockdown brought about an abrupt cessation of normal ringing activity for everyone. Although some very limited ringing for special services or occasions has taken place recently in some towers across the branch, it is unlikely that branch ringing as we remember it, will not return for some time to come. It goes without saying that any ringing must adhere strictly to the current Central Council Guidelines applicable at the time: <https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/> and with the permission of the local incumbent. It was pleasing to see that some towers made efforts to briefly ring at least a few bells to mark the 75th anniversary of VJ Day.

All ONB events apart from a virtual AGM are cancelled until such time as the situation improves, and of course we will all hopefully return with gusto when that day arrives. In particular there will be a need to focus on recruitment and training ringers of all abilities in our towers as and when conditions permit.

In the meantime, many towers have been maintaining social contact through Zoom and other platforms which is extremely beneficial to maintaining some form of sanity during the crisis, whilst keeping ringing bands connected with each other as the bells remain silent.

Phillip and I had both discussed standing down as joint Masters at the 2021 AGM but with 2020 being such a 'non year', we might be persuaded to continue for one more year to help ensure a smooth transition to two new masters in 2022.

Thanks to everyone for your continued support.

7. TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

ONB Branch Ringing School

Sadly, no ringing training has taken place since March 2020 when we went into lockdown.

Young Ringers

As with all ringing, no events have been run since the outing to Newbury (three towers and refreshments) on Wednesday 19 February, attended by 14 young ringers (6 from our branch) and 13 adults.

Two of the masters (Adam Jenkins and Oliver Lomax) at Abingdon School have run an after-school ringing club since 2011 in collaboration with various Abingdon ringers. It has been run at St Helen's, Abingdon once a week during term time. In March, eight boys were attending each week, some of whom had been ringing with the club for around six years. Since lockdown in March, the school has continued to run a full timetable online with the boys participating from home. Adam and Oliver have continued to run the club, but online using Zoom and Ringing Room. When we are allowed to ring again, it will be interesting to see whether the experience of ringing plain hunt on Ringing Room helps the boys to ring better plain hunt in the tower.

Future prospects

We will think about how to restart ringing training when ringing itself has settled down and we know how things stand.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT

To date 216 members have paid full subscriptions bring the branch membership to 227 with 6 honorary, 1 life and 4 members who pay their subscriptions via another branch. This is currently 50 less than last year. However five towers have and not paid any membership fees (Childrey, Didcot, East Hagbourne, Long Wittenham or Sutton Courtenay). All but one tower of those that have paid subscriptions did so by the due date of the 31st March.

There is one grant for Long Wittenham still outstanding.

All subscriptions paid so far this year have included the voluntary £2 restoration fund contribution.

Income this year has only been subscriptions and one young ringers' event.

Expenses have been mainly subscriptions to the Guild, with the grant to Letcombe Bassett (£500) being paid at the end of March and a deposit for Barn Dance in November (£50).

The branch has funds totalling £7,013 of which £5,894 is held at Lloyds and £1,118 at the CCLA.

The Treasurer reported that Long Wittenham have now paid their annual subscriptions, and that East and West Hendred had paid again and so this would be allocated towards 2021.

9. UPDATE ON PROJECTS

Abingdon, St Nicolas: Tim Pett advised that a contractor had now been selected to complete the work but will not start until around Christmas.

Appleford: Colin Turner said that there was nothing further to report at present.

Long Wittenham: The Faculty has not yet been obtained. This had been submitted in writing and had been 'lost' in the Diocesan office. There had been a question about retuning the two maiden bells, but this has now been resolved and the bells can all be tuned. Whites are ready to start work once the Faculty has been granted.

10. BRANCH AGM 2020

- This was postponed from March 2020 and will now be held by Zoom on Saturday, 14th November, at 4.00pm. Rob Nickless will host the meeting and will set up the polling function so that votes can be counted.
- All officers present indicated that they would be happy to continue in their roles until the 2021 AGM. The Secretary will check with those who were not present. She will then email tower correspondents to advise the date of the meeting, say which officers are happy to continue until 2021 and ask for any nominations.

11. BRANCH PROGRAMME FOR 2021

- The AGM will take place by Zoom at 4.00pm on Saturday, 20th March.
- It is highly unlikely that we will hold a striking competition.

12. SOCIAL EVENTS

- **Barn Dance and supper in Harwell Village Hall on Saturday, 13^h November 2021:** This event was postponed from 2020 and Jigworks Ceilidh Band will be present. We have already paid a £50 deposit to them.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Richard Loyd asked if there was any news about the legal action being taken against St. Helen, Abingdon. Tim Pett said that he believed that the case had been dropped.
- Katie Lane encouraged everyone to ring whenever possible and 'make a noise' She said that the Guild website was going to be reorganised to make it more user friendly.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This will be held by Zoom on Sunday, 28th February 2021 at 7.30pm.

After the Chairman had expressed thanks to everyone for attending, the meeting closed at 8.02pm.

Signed..... Date.....