



## Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers

### Annual General Meeting

14<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at Barton Seagrave

### Minutes

925. **Welcome:** The meeting began at 17:45 with a welcome to all by the President.
926. Dennis Thrift proposed the **Vote of Thanks** on behalf of the Thrapston branch. He thanked the incumbents for the use of the bells, Mark Lucas for taking the service, David Scallion for the musical accompaniment. He thanked the Master for running the ringing, Caroline Mitchell and her team of helpers for providing the tea and Barton Seagrave Parish for the use of the church house.
927. **Members who had passed** away since the last AGM were remembered during the service. They were: Hilary Brown, Raunds; David Couldwell, Rutland branch; Alan Cozens, Roade; Simon Dolan, Newnham; Maureen Easton, Desborough; Maurice Haynes, Barton Seagrave; Ann Houghton, Daventry; Peggy Jennings, Oakham; Hugh Johnson, Daventry; Pauline Mackenzie, Wootton; Jack Morris, Stanwick; Mike O'Brien, Earls Barton; Pamela Pohling Brown, Peterborough Cathedral; Derek Sibson, Barton Seagrave; Malcolm Taylor, Brackley; John Weaver, Kettering; Jim Wigfield, Brampton Ash and Frank Wilkes, Wilbarston
928. Members eligible for **50 years membership** were read out. They were: Janet Caunt (Braunston, Daventry). Her certificate was passed to the Daventry branch for onward presentation.
929. There were no proposal for **Honorary Life Membership**.
930. **The Minutes of the past meetings** had been provided to members in advance. There had been a few modifications notified, including omission of Jim & Gwynneth White from the list of those present and some grammatical errors. These were proposed for acceptance by Alistair Donaldson, seconded by Cathy Dixon and the meeting agreed the motion.
931. **Matters arising.** Nick Elks asked about the Guild's lack of involvement in the Ridgeman Trophy the last 2 years. Simon Dixon explained that in 2024 this clashed with the Guild AGM, when the intention had been to have something during the day, that was unfortunately made unworkable by the Northampton Carnival. In 2025 he admitted that health issues had seen this missed, although the location for the contest would have been a significant impediment to entry.
932. **The Guild Management report and Accounts** had been circulated to members in the annual report. Alistair Donaldson proposed that the Guild Management Report be received by the meeting, seconded by John Beresford, and the motion was carried. Chris FitzGerald gave a summary of the key points in the accounts before the accounts were proposed by Chris FitzGerald and seconded by Geoff Pullin, and the motion carried.
933. **Fees recommendations** on behalf of the Finance & General Purposes Committee were taken en bloc.
- Membership fees to remain at £10 for adults and £5 for junior members.
  - Peal fees remain at 0p per rope.
  - Central council fees for the next meeting, to be held in Sheffield in September, are up to £40 to cover return rail fare.
  - Reports to be made available to members free of charge provided that they request the report by end of February, £5 to all requests from members after that date or from non-members, to include p&p.

The proposal was made by Helen Allton, seconded by Nick Watts and the motion was carried.

- 934. Bell Fund:** There were no grant applications to be proposed at this meeting. John Beresford, as steward, proposed a sum of up to £2000 to be put aside for minor projects in the next year. This was seconded by Simon Dixon and carried.
- 935. Elections of Officers.** The following office holders had been proposed and seconded in advance of the meeting. The trustees were elected by the meeting, as were the nominated officers listed below.

	Post	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded
A	President	Alistair Donaldson	Andrew Gunstone	Anthea Hiams
B	Master	Richard Allton	Tim Samson	Mike Brown
		Jim Bence	Alistair Donaldson	Jane Marsh
	Richard Allton declined the nomination			
C	Secretary	Helen Allton	Sarah Bence	Anne Wood
D	Treasurer	Chris FitzGerald	Geoff Pullin	Gwynneth White
E	Steward	John Beresford	Tim Samson	Bob Dennis

The President thanked Simon for his service and presented a token of appreciation for his (and Cathy's) efforts.

	Post	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded
F	Peal Secretary	Paul Mason	Simon Dixon	Alistair Donaldson
G	Report Editor	Nick Watts	David Dainty	John Beresford
H	Newsletter Editor	Jonathan Stuart	Helen Allton	Cathy Dixon
I	Safeguarding	John Beresford	Alistair Donaldson	Janet Donaldson
J	PRO	Post vacant		
K	Youth Officer	Catherine Hemmington	Cathy Dixon	Andrew Gunstone
L	Webmaster	Richard Allton	Gwynneth White	Jim White
M	100 club	Cathy Dixon	Paul Bennett	Alison Buck
N	Recruitment & Training	Nich Wilson	Jim Bence	Richard Allton

The President wished to decline to accept the nomination for the Recruitment & Training Officer. This was not possible as a proposal and seconder for a nominee had been made. He wished to have this deferred, as it was his opinion that the post had not been sufficiently advertised. The post had been created at the GMC in May, the notice circulated last week, he believed that gave members insufficient time to come forward. There was much discussion, some of it heated. After some procedural discussion, the President proposed that the election of this post was deferred to the September meeting. This was seconded by Richard Johnson and put to the vote. There were 19 votes for, 13 against and 15 abstentions.

Jim Bence, as newly elected Master, spoke to make clear that he would not be organising training. Nick Elks spoke to express his dissatisfaction with what had just happened, that someone willing to stand had been rejected. There was much agreement from the floor.

Ted Buckby asked if there was a need to have a new rule indicating the minimum time a post had to be advertised. John Beresford responded that the rule had recently undergone a comprehensive review and that tinkering with them already would be done only with reluctance. Brenda Dixon spoke of an occasion where it was important to be able to put someone into a post that had fallen vacant very quickly and to put time limits in place for advertisements would be an impediment in the event of something untoward.

Jane Marsh proposed that the meeting should write to the person concerned about what had happened. That they should be apologised to for what had just happened, thanked for being prepared to take on the role and hoping that they would stand in September. She noted that she

felt very uncomfortable about what had just occurred. This was seconded by Nick Watts and was carried by the meeting.

Sue Marsden spoke to ask why it would not have been possible to have someone in post and then re-elect in September, such that there is someone to fulfil the role. Cathy Dixon said that there were training courses planned to the end of the year, in order to work through the waiting list that had built up. She would continue to arrange the helpers for that training. The Officers were elected without the post of Recruitment & Training Officer.

The meeting moved on to the following posts, all elected unopposed.

	Post	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded
O	CC Representatives	Nick Elks	Hilary Hardie	Alistair Donaldson
		Simon Dixon	Pam Bailey	Jenny Ball
		David Westerman	Richard Allton	John Beresford
		Alistair Donaldson	Nick Watts	Cathy Dixon
Appointment of Independent Examiner				
P	Independent Examiner	Stephen Hayward	Hilary Hardie	Simon Dixon

**936. The Guild Calendar** was listed

- a. Summer Festival 2025 – 13<sup>th</sup> September in Peterborough branch. Ringing at Yarwell & Wansford, contest & evening ringing at Castor.
- b. Spring Meeting 2026 – 11<sup>th</sup> April in Rutland branch
- c. AGM 2026 – 14<sup>th</sup> June in Wellingborough branch.
- d. Summer Festival 2026 – 13<sup>th</sup> September in Culworth branch.
- e. The 10 bells for the remainder of the year are 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in July (Higham Ferrers), September & November. 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in January 2026 will be at Rothwell. The Master will be reviewing the 10 bells, their purpose and intent.
- f. Based on the success of the social events in 2024, the Guild is initiating a Social event each year, and will start with a Quiz & supper on 14th February, 2026, at a location to be confirmed.

**937. John Beresford** gave an update on **Safeguarding** in the Guild. The Diocese's Diocesan Requirements for a Safer Church as applied to Bellringers should have been circulated by the diocese to parishes. It has been circulated by the Guild to ringers such that ringers are aware of the requirements that will be applied in the future. There was some discussion entered into.

The requirement for 2 DBS checked people is based on the Diocese's requirement that all church activities have 2 DBS checked people present. Note, the two do not both have to be ringers. The presents issues in towers as people who don't hold posts face difficulties in obtaining a DBS check through the parish. The ringers should let the Parish safeguarding officer know if they cannot meet this requirement and the parish SO should advise – the Guild cannot take on this role.

John Beresford reiterated that these guidelines are not the Guild's, they are being presented by the diocese; the Guild is communicating what the diocese has communicated. They are different from those in other dioceses, each diocese Safeguarding Officer can set the requirements in that diocese without reference to adjacent diocese. Nick Elks asked if feedback had been given to the diocese. John Beresford continues to try to work with the diocese Safeguarding Officer on the subject. If towers could keep in touch with their Parish Safeguarding Officers, it might be that they could also feedback to the diocese on areas that are causing problems.

**938. Any other business**

- a. Helen Allton reported that she was working to update the Guild's Logo, as it looked somewhat dated after the PDG100 logo. The aim would be for evolution, not

revolution, introducing some colour and adopting a more modern font. This will be introduced as of January 2026.

- b. Andrew Gunstone asked about Associated members and the manner in which they are listed in the report. Currently they are grouped at the end of each branch's membership listing. Andrew Gunstone would like to propose two associate members but would like them listed under the tower rather than listed as a group. Helen Allton reported that the rules made no specific mention of how these members should be listed and that the Guild could look at it in the production of the 2025 Annual report.
- c. Cathy Dixon spoke about Guild merchandise. There are a lot of mugs remaining from the centenary, available at £5 each. Badges and pendants are available for £5 and £4 respectively, these are from existing stock. Some branches give them to new members. There will be a clothing order placed shortly, using the existing logo, any members wanting clothing should get their order in soon.
- d. The 100 club was drawn, with 4 winners, 125, James Campbell, 15 Mick Fiander, 33, Andy Smith & 187 Martin Turner. Additional members are always welcome.
- e. During the election of officers, a thank you to Jim & Gwynneth White for their 11 years as report editors had been omitted. This was rectified, with Helen Allton presenting them with a small gift. Jim White, on behalf of both of them, thanked everyone who had supported them in their role over the years. They also said that they would support Nick Watts as he took the role on.

**939.** The meeting was closed at 18:49

Appendix

Top Table:

President – Alistair Donaldson, Secretary – Helen Allton, Treasurer – Chris FitzGerald, Steward – John Beresford

Members Present

Bill Adcock, Liz Adcock, Richard Allton, Pam Bailey, Paul Bailey, Jenny Ball, Jim Bence, Sarah Bence, Andy Bimson, Diane Buckby, Ted Buckby, Chris Bulleid, Margaret Bulleid, Alison Byrnes, Helen Churchman, Nick Churchman, David Clark, Mary Coleman, Murray Coleman, David Dainty, Brenda Dixon, Cathy Dixon, Simon Dixon, Nick Elks, James Grennan, Richard Johnson, Sarah Johnson, Jim Hedgcock, Sarah Hedgcock, Anthea Hiams, Nick Hiams, Alan Marks, Sue Marsden, Jane Marsh, Caroline Mitchell, John Mitchell, Carole Pullin, Geoff Pullin, Liz Reading, Judith Rogers, Robin Rogers, Debbie Sampson, Johnathan Seymour, Jonathan Stuart, Dennis Thrift, Nick Watts, David Westerman, Gwynneth White, Jim White, Anne Wood, Robert Wood,

Apologies for absence were received from:

Justin Baker, Janet Beresford, Elaine Greatrex, Louise Griffiths, Hilary Hardie, Liz Moore, Jane Rands, Sue Sutherland, Dorothy Westerman, Giles Willson, Alan Wordie.