

HEREFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF BELLRINGERS
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2025 and Special General Meeting
Held at St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye
Saturday 10th May 2025 at 14:25

78 members present

1. Welcome & Prayers

The meeting was immediately preceded by a café -style church service during which Rev. Nicky Seabright asked for a blessing on our meeting, and we remembered members who had died since our last meeting:

Reg Maund, Clun	Vic Chamberlain, Stoke Prior
David Waring, Bishops Frome	Chris Kippin, Cleobury Mortimer
Fred Jones, retired member Condover	Norman Mattingley, Freeman, Hereford District
Clive Daw, retired member Mathon	Greg Harris, Bosbury
Mike Jefferis, Holmer	Ena Plant, Broseley
Bob Leeson, retired member Llangarron	Jerry Cummins, retired member Whitbourne
Gerald Hodnett, Honorary Life Member Much Wenlock	Cherry Hughes, Bridgnorth
John Powter, retired member Clun	Andrew Barnfield, retired member Kings Cagle

The Master then welcomed all to the meeting and was pleased that so many members were present. The Master reminded those present that full details of the matters to be discussed during the meeting had been distributed well in advance of the meeting via the District Secretaries, and on the Guild website, but paper copies of the information were also available for those that needed it.

2. Apologies

We had received apologies from 48 members:

Neil Pirie; Alan Reade; Chris Jones; Margaret Oakley; Yvonne Prestidge; Andria Lewis; Abi Pugh; Rob Prestidge; Nick Cooper-Tomkins; Ian Johnson; Ginette Pardoe; Martin Elcock; Jan Greatrex; Tony Greatrex; Cathy Fuller; Linda Taylor; Sarah Parkinson; Andrew Talbot-Ponsonby; Rick Shallcross; Sue Rees; Sue Hack; Ian Thornewell; Margaid Nickalls; Sylvia Bland; Neil Bragg; John Macleod; Mike Williams; Ian Tait; Gill Tait; Jenny Lawrence; Catriona Lambeth; Tina Reddick; Mark Pugh; Rhiannon Pugh; Brian R Jones; Clare McFarlane; Jane Mason; Mary Organ; Ken Hollett; Rev. Mandy Welch; Andrew Burdett; Liz Donovan; Robert Hodges; Richard Bracher; Debbie Bramley; Anthony Ellis; Peter Hallowell and Ashley Fortey.

3. Minutes of the previous AGM

The adoption of the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting was proposed by Andrew Watkins, seconded by Colin Ward, and accepted by the meeting as a true record. The minutes were signed by the Master.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the 2024 minutes.

5. Correspondence

The Secretary told the meeting that we had been contacted by the Central Council as they are creating a new national recruitment portal and need us to provide names and contact details of those willing to be contacted to

teach and positively welcome new recruits at an appropriate tower. As the deadline to provide initial contact details was 16th May, we will initially provide Guild and District officers detail, but we would like to hear from any towers willing to teach and recruit.

6. Long Service Awards

The Master read the list of, and congratulated, the following members who had achieved long service awards:

25 years of Service:

Neil Bragg, Coalbrookdale	Dorothy Chamberlain, Stoke Prior
Rachel Coates, Tarrington	Stuart Edinborough, Burghill
Martin Elcock, Claverley	Jan Greatrex, Ludlow
Tony Greatrex, Ludlow	Rachel Hamer, Welshpool
Peter L Johnston, Clungunford	Heather Kennard, Wellington
Margaret Oakley, Ludlow	Susan Rees, Stoke St Milborough
Cherelyn Sell, Ludlow	Martin Speight, Diddlebury
Deborah M Talbott, Ross-on-Wye	Cecilia Walters, Eastnor
Ray Wilson, Cleobury Mortimer	

50 years of Service:

Brian R Jones of Leominster.

Each recipient of an award had been contacted by email and invited to attend the AGM, some had sent their apologies, but the Master invited those members who were present to come to the front for a presentation of the certificates immediately after the end of the meeting.

As Brian Jones had achieved 50 years membership he was entitled to be elected a Life Member, this was proposed by Sarah Chedzoy and seconded by Andrew Watkins, all present were in favour.

All recipients were congratulated by a round of applause.

7. Election of New Members

We had received nominations for the following new members –

Peter Clark and Tina Reddick from Goodrich, proposed by Sally Townsend and

Kirsty Davis, Jackie Hill, Meghan Hughes, Ricky Hughes, Antony Newton, Jamie Newton (junior member), Laura Warren and Will Whittaker-Brown all proposed by Reg Preece via Pat Key (District Secretary).

Kris Perruzza seconded both sets of new members, and all were in favour of electing the new members.

8. Officers Reports

The officers' reports had been distributed prior to the meeting (appendix B), however it was necessary to formally adopt the accounts. Nick Cronin proposed, and Jason Walker seconded that the accounts and reports be adopted, and the motion was carried.

9. Election of Guild Freeman

There were currently two vacancies for Freeman of the Guild and two nominations had been received by the Management Committee. Written proposals had been distributed prior to the meeting (appendix C), but the Master invited both proposers to speak in support of their nominations. Andy Wilson spoke regarding his proposal of Paul Lewis, and Andrew Watkins spoke in support of his proposal of Ann Bennett.

Paul and Ann both indicated that they were willing to accept their nominations as Freeman. The meeting was in favour of the nominations and Paul and Ann were welcomed and congratulated on their appointment as Freeman of the Guild.

10. Election of Executive Officers

A table showing all nominations for Guild posts received by the Management Committee had been distributed prior to the meeting (appendix D):

Executive Officer roles:

Secretary – Fran Watkins

Treasurer – Mark Aston

Peal Recorder – Andrew Watkins

Report Secretary – Neil Bragg

Education Officer – Kris Perruzza

Barney Bell proposed the nominations en bloc, Tyler Edwards seconded, and the meeting was in favour.

11. Election of Non-Executive Officers

A table showing all nominations for Guild posts received by the Management Committee had been distributed prior to the meeting:

Non-Executive Officer roles:

Master Elect – Kris Perruzza

Public Engagement Officer – Nicky Aubrey

Belfries Officer – Ashley Fortey

Tower Stewardship Advisor – Alan Reade

Webmaster – Nick Chapman

Barbara Fox proposed the nominations en bloc, Nick Cronin seconded, with all in favour.

12. Election of Clerical Representatives

A table showing all nominations for Guild posts received by the Management Committee had been distributed prior to the meeting:

Clerical Representatives – Anthony Ellis, Barney Bell & Nicky Seabright

All were proposed by Kris Perruzza and seconded by Nick Cronin – all in favour.

13. Election of Central Council Representatives

A table showing all nominations for Guild posts received by the Management Committee had been distributed prior to the meeting, however since the list had been sent out one of our current reps, Abi Pugh, had indicated that she no longer wished to stand.

The Master asked whether any person was willing to stand as a Central Council Rep, and Andrew Watkins indicated that he was willing. The other nominees previously notified to the membership were

Anthony Ellis, Tyler Edwards and Kris Perruzza.

Martin Harrison proposed, and Ann Bennett seconded that Anthony Ellis, Tyler Edwards, Kris Perruzza and Andrew Watkins be elected, the meeting was all in favour.

14. Appointment of a Safeguarding Lead.

The membership had recently been notified that, following changes to the Church of England's safeguarding framework, the Guild has appointed a safeguarding lead. The Master said that we were very lucky to have a member who has relevant external experience of such a role and also has qualifications and personal attributes to make him an ideal candidate, and she welcomed Jason Walker and invited him to say a few words.

Jason told the meeting that he had contacted the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Carl Steventon, and they had met to discuss how best we can make members aware of the training the need to undertake. Jason will be putting together information for the membership over the next few months. Jason reminded the meeting that for any individual tower it is each PCC that would be responsible for safeguarding training and matters, but that on a District or Guild level Jason would be the first point of contact. Jason advised the meeting that Carl has given permission for Jason to deliver the foundation course to our members in person, so if there are members who do not use computers, he can arrange to deliver training in person. Carl has also agreed to hold some Leadership training sessions for guild-members only, so they will be putting together some dates when this can be delivered.

Jason will send out information in due course, and said he would be happy to receive any questions that members might have.

15. Approval of nomination for the Independent Examiner.

Ruth D'Avanzo had indicated that she was willing to continue in the role, and the meeting was in favour.

16. Rule Changes

16a Change to Rule 20(b)

Full details of this rule change had been circulated through two management committee meetings, the district AGMs, via the District Secretaries and on the website (appendix E). The proposed revision would change the notice required from 'by 30th September in the preceding year' to 'not less than 90 days prior to the Annual General Meeting'.

Jason Walker proposed, and Adam Crocker seconded that the rule be changed, a vote was taken with a large majority of at least two-thirds of the members present were in favour and none against.

16b

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The Master explained that as we had 78 members present at the meeting, we were able to hold the Special General Meeting that had been called and advertised via the District Secretaries, the Guild website and newsletter and in the Ringing World (Appendix F). The required quorum for a special general meeting is 50 members.

The current rules had required us to hold a special general meeting to vote on proposals that had been submitted to the management committee meeting from the District AGMs.

Two districts (Ross and Church Stretton) had proposed that online payments of subscriptions be enabled, traditional methods of payment will still be available. Hereford District had proposed that the requirement of payment of one year's arrears for returning lapsed members be scrapped.

Changes to rules 16 (b), 13 (c), 13 (d), 13 (e) and 14 (g) had been drafted in response to these proposals and widely circulated amongst the membership (Appendix F).

Jason Walker proposed, and Nicky Aubrey seconded that all rule changes above be adopted, a vote by a show of hands indicated that at least two-thirds of the members present were in favour.

This vote concluded the Special General Meeting and the AGM resumed.

17. Agree Donation from the Guild to the Bell Restoration Fund

The Master explained that considering the Guild's plans to increase recruitment and celebrate our 140th Anniversary next year, the Management Committee had agreed a reduced donation to the Bell Restoration Fund for 2025. The Treasurer confirmed that the proposed amount would be £400.00. Richard Clements, the BRF Treasurer replied that the Bell Restoration Fund was extremely grateful for the donation and that there was no obligation on the Guild to give any particular sum, as we need to consider our own activities and obligations. The Master reminded the meeting that our members would still be able to contribute to the BRF in many other ways including the 600 Club.

Kris Perruzza proposed, and Adam Crocker seconded that the Guild donates £400.00 to the BRF, this was agreed by a majority show of hands.

18. Awarding of the Centenary Shield

The Master told the meeting that she was privileged to be able to award the Centenary Shield this year to Pencombe tower. Since moving to Bromyard, she had initially heard that Pencombe were quite hard to ring and was also told at one stage they were unringable. However, as Tower Captain of Bromyard, she was approached by a group of people wanting to learn to ring, because they wanted to be able to ring the bells at their village church, and that village was Pencombe. The band has been taught at Bromyard. Since then, Simon Wells with Rachel Lewis, the new tower captain, with others, have sought help and funding and undertaken a lot of work to get the bells ringable again. The Master invited Simon to receive the shield on behalf of Pencombe ringers. Members showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

19. Awarding of the George Cousins Cup

This item did not proceed as the Bell Restoration Fund has yet to hold an AGM for 2025 and so do not have any nominations for the award.

20. Invitation for the 2026 AGM 9th May

Nicky Aubrey, Secretary of the Hereford District, invited the Guild to Hereford District for the 2026 AGM.

21. Any Other Business

Richard Clements spoke to pay tribute to our outgoing Peal Recorder, **Neil Bennett**, and to propose a vote of thanks for his huge contribution to the Guild. Richard told the meeting that he had first met Neil in 1974 and shortly afterwards Neil and Ann had moved to Welshpool. Since joining the Guild Neil has been active in the Church Stretton district and has done a meticulous job as Peal Recorder for many years. Richard told the meeting how he had worked alongside Neil in the Bell Restoration Fund, Neil was in the role of Treasurer until recently. Richard told the meeting that we should not underestimate what an accomplished ringer Neil is, he has rung over 2000 peals and rang in the first extent of major, 40320 changes in 1963. He conducted a notable peal of 105 spliced surprise maximus and closer to home he has led the Church Stretton district to win the Thomas Cooper trophy more than any other district. He asked the meeting to recognise Neil's years of outstanding service and support the vote of thanks. This was met with a round of applause.

The Master read out a message from Nick Cooper-Tomkins who could not attend the meeting but wished to convey his thanks to all those towers who had hosted the **Hereford Ringing Course** this year.

The Master told the meeting that the Guild had entered a team in the **Tewkesbury Shield** this year, and thanked Richard Bracher for organising the team, and all those who took part. We had been placed 7th, and hope to enter a team again next year.

Next year will be our **140th anniversary** and we have ambitions to celebrate, and would love to recruit 140 new members, so we will be planning and encouraging everyone to recruit and teach new ringers.

Kris Perruzza thanked everyone who had attended the meeting and proposed a vote of thanks to our hosts, Ross District & St Mary's Church; to everyone who had contributed to the day whether by stewarding or bringing/running activities; and a massive thanks to the caterers. This was met with a round of applause.

On a personal note Kris said that the day would not have happened without the hard work of Sally Townsend and Greg White, this received another round of applause.

Stuart Edinborough said he would like to speak on behalf of those receiving long-service certificates, he said he had learned to ring twenty-five years ago and had been delighted to find what a friendly, helpful, welcoming and happy group ringers are, and how lucky we are that we will receive the same welcome and enthusiasm from ringers anywhere else in the country. He thanked his fellow ringers for their community.

Kris Perruzza invited all those in the meeting to take part in the activities available after the meeting, there was the wombell, handbell method ringing, handbell tune ringing, an ART stand, a BRF stand, History & archive stand, bookstall, guild merchandise, raffle and further ringing at St Marys.

Frank Seabright spoke to thank the Guild Officers, saying that this year there have been a tremendous number of extra things going on, and he thanked the officers for their work.

The Master declared the meeting closed at 14:59.

Immediately after the meeting the Master presented the long service awards to those present.

Appendix B – Officer's Reports

Guild Master's Report

It is so hard to comprehend that as I compose this report, I am already nearly a year into my three-year tenure of being the Guild Master. I hope it has been a very happy year so far for all the HDGB members and that all are enjoying a very busy bellringing calendar. Thank you to everyone who has given myself and my fellow guild officers their encouragement and support, it is much appreciated.

Following on from the learner's sessions which have been well attended and enjoyed by helpers and learners alike & in direct response to requests from members, we have started guild practice sessions for those at the next stage of their ringing journey. Well attended sessions have been enjoyed at Kingsland & Stoke St Milborough, providing an opportunity to ring Grandsire Triples, Plain Bob Triples and Plain Bob Major. We had a great response from those willing to help so a big thank you to everyone who supported the events and helped to make them such a positive experience. As we arrange more sessions and encourage the districts to schedule similar practices we can look to the next level. As always, we are open to ideas so please let us know what you would like us to put in place and we will do our best to deliver.

I would like to take this opportunity to update the membership on our progress in the areas the trustees are working on:

- Policies: Safeguarding – simple guidance documents for training & DBS requirements at a tower, district & Guild level have been developed and will be available on the website. This will include the implementation of appropriate Risk Assessment documents for events at all levels – to ensure any event aligns with the aims of the guild & is complicit with the safeguarding and health & safety requirements. Guild Finance – planning the spending to meet our charities aims.
- Guild insurance provision – thanks to hard work by Fran Watkins (Guild Secretary) we have switched provider & made a significant saving.
- Introduction of a membership management tool – this initiative is currently in progress with many of you having already registered your membership already using the online form – thank you! Anyone having difficulties please let your district secretary know.
- We have set up a project team to look at how the Guild manages church closures in relation to the future of the bells and the bell ringing community affected. We aim to issue progress reports as we journey through the project.
- As we progress through all the above changes, we will review any Guild rule affected by any of the above points and propose amendments as required.

2026 will see the 140th anniversary of the Guild and we would like to celebrate the occasion with several events and activities. One target we would very much like to achieve in our 140th year is to recruit 140 new members; we appreciate such an ambition will require preparation to ensure we have sufficient teaching capacity and a well-orchestrated publicity campaign. We'd love as many members as possible to get involved with the campaign to recruit and the celebratory events.

Master Elect Report

I would like to thank everyone for their support since becoming Master Elect in May. Meeting with ringers from all over the Guild has been a huge privilege. There are many new ringers, not just those who have moved into the area, but those who have recently been recruited and taught and seeing how welcoming, enthusiastic and committed our Guild members are fills me with confidence for the future.

At the heart of everything I do is the Guild Objectives, and I will continue to deliver these in supporting, co-ordinating and facilitating our members to achieve their personal goals. I have taken on organising the Guild practice sessions from Sue and I hope they are a valuable experience for all who attend. Thank you to everyone who supports us in delivering these sessions, we would not be able to do this without you. The sessions are an opportunity to bring people together throughout the Guild, sharing knowledge, experiences, and ringing together for the benefit of all. There are a lot of good things happening around the Guild, and I am confident that if we come together, we can continue to make a Guild that is fit for purpose in this fast-paced world, while preserving the history and values that make the Guild what it is.

Kris Perruzza

Guild Secretary's Report

Firstly, I would like to thank the outgoing secretary, Mark Pugh, for all his positive support and an efficient handover. Mark has been a Guild officer in many roles over the years, and in taking up the role of secretary I can see just how much hard work, devotion and commitment he has given to the Guild over many years, he deserves our grateful thanks.

I would also like to thank all of those who have taken the time to correspond with me or have made me so welcome at the meetings and practices I have managed to attend. I can see a lot of energy and enthusiasm within the Guild, and I hope we can continue to work together and share ideas and experiences so that we can recruit and train more ringers to keep the art of bellringing alive.

The end of 2024 saw the introduction of the new online membership system – membermojo. Thank you to everyone who has registered, I recognise that this has been a considerable change and not everyone will feel confident in the new system straightaway, but I hope in time we will be able to see the benefits, not least the reduction in of the administrative burden for our district secretaries and treasurers, allowing them to concentrate more on ringing and supporting our members.

We have reintroduced a Guild newsletter, which we hope to publish quarterly. I hope that you have all had a chance to read this, if you have any comments or suggestions, news or articles please send them to me or email news@hdgb.org. The newsletter is an excellent way for us to keep in touch with one another.

There is no doubt we will face challenges in the future, but we have a lot to be positive about too. I'm looking forward to celebrating the 140th anniversary of the Guild with you all in 2026, please let us know if you have any ideas of how we can mark this significant anniversary together

Fran Watkins

Belfries Officer's Report

This year I have had the chance to inspect a number of rings of bells within the guild. Firstly, in March I inspected the likely broken gudgeon on the tenor bell at Bishops Frome. Quick assessment ascertained that in fact a gudgeon was clearly broken, and professional bell hangers would need to carry out the work to repair the break. I am pleased to report this has been done.

Chris Jones asked for the assistance for an inspection of Coddington bells as part of a greater initiative to inspect all the deemed necessary rings of bells in the Ledbury district. I was impressed with the proactive nature of the officers of the Ledbury district and though Coddington is a very pleasant and easy-going ring of bells, we did find some minor issues that needed addressing. This highlights a greater point of having a regular steeple keeper, as keeping on top of new or older installations do require visiting the belfry often. Whether a clapper slightly comes loose, or a slider runner needs cleaning, keeping on top of these issues reduces the need for more major work.

I have also inspected the belfries of Colwall and Withington and carried out some maintenance while doing the inspections. I also replaced a hasting stay at Stoke Prior with the help of Mark Aston. Other inspections in 2024 have been carried out at Bosbury, Pencombe, Cradley (where an assessment is to be carried out in spring 2025 to try to improve the swing times etc), Chelmarsh where work was carried out to make the bells ringable and Kings Cagle (early 2025). Also, assistance was carried out at Lyonshall and Eardisley for fitting the new ropes on the bells.

Kings Cagle and Cradley, Hampton Bishop will be my focus for this spring 2025 with work/inspections being carried out shortly.

On Saturday 15th of June at Wellington Church I was invited to conduct a belfry maintenance day organized by the officers of the Hereford district. We spent a morning and an afternoon going through the basics of belfry maintenance as then a demonstration of the David Bagley Oddstruckness meter. This proved to be beneficial to the six students with various degrees of knowledge. This course was followed up with another course in October at Fownhope where another six ringers helped work on improving the bells there. We did sort out some oddstruckness on some of the bells and the locals were happy to report they found the bells easier than before. I am happy to do this course again as it is important we as a guild promote the care of the bells we are so often blessed to ring. Thank you to Jason Walker and Kris Perruzza for conducting the arrangements for these two courses. The Guild has purchased some ear defenders for when such maintenance courses are conducted and will be provided on the day of the course.

I have been approached to give advice of a few towers but no formal invitation to come and without that it is not my remit to come to a tower uninvited. I am here to advise and carry out inspections when ringers and church officials need support.

It is my intention to build a larger base of people who are comfortable to help with practical maintenance of bells. The more steeple keepers the guild train the better the bells will be to ring, and this is a massive positive we the guild should promote to the wider church community as we are custodians of the bells we are entrusted to look after.

Thank you to all those who came and assist me with the job of Belfries Officer over the past year, it valuable to have support when undertaking the inspections and/or repairs.

Ashley Fortey Hereford DG Belfries Officer

Tower Stewardship Advisor's Report

In the light (among other things) of revised Church of England 2025 safeguarding training requirements, a review of the Guild's own approach to safeguarding is being undertaken the results of which, following approval by the Trustees and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, will be published and communicated to Guild members via District secretaries in due course.

Meanwhile, Guild members should continue to refer to the Parish Safeguarding Handbook (available to download from the CofE website) for guidance on all safeguarding issues.

Guild members who lead a ringing event where children or vulnerable adults are present on or off church premises are reminded that they must be DBS checked, must have certificated up-to-date on-line safeguarding training via the CofE and must comply with the Guild's insurance policy conditions.

As authorised church volunteers, bell ringers are required to abide by the Church of England's own safeguarding policies and procedures along with any local variations of individual churches. Where ringing outside of this environment, say as a Guild member on a tower open day or as an itinerant ringer at churches with no local bands of ringers, CCCBR and ART guidance must have been followed for the Guild's insurance to apply.

Events involving children must include the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians and the Parish Safeguarding Officer if on church premises.

Where Guild events are held at premises which are not churches affiliated to the Guild (see list of towers on the Guild website), special arrangements are likely to be necessary

The safeguarding policies and guidance of the Guild, the Hereford Diocese and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers are available on-line.

Alan Reade T 01746 710593 M 07779 604012 E areade@readeburay.co.uk

Webmaster's report

The Guild website at hdgb.org contains up to date details of every district and tower in the Guild, together with a lot of other useful information about the Guild, the Bell Restoration Fund and helpful links to other websites.

Please make use of our website and help keep it accurate and up to date for everyone by letting webmaster Nick Chapman know of any corrections, interesting news items and maybe even suggestions for improvements. You can email Nick at webmaster@hdgb.org

Nick Chapman, webmaster@hdgb.org

Education Officer's report

The past year as the Education Officer for the Guild has been positive, there has been good effort within the Guild to recruit and educate new ringers. The greatest increase has been achieved by Nicky Aubrey, which is fantastic as the new young ringers will hopefully be able to compete in the Ringing World young ringers competition. This will be very good for the Guild.

I have been in contact with many different ringing groups on ways to encourage more ringers into their towers and how to help such groups to process within the learning aspect of bellringing. I have been trying to keep in contact with all the towers to help and support in the best way possible towards the education side of bellringing.

I have given a great deal of thought to the idea of an education package without simply regurgitating material that is already out there. We all have access to the excellent ART material, many of us have attended one or more of the courses so for me, we need to possibly look beyond that to add any value.

Through reflective processes over past efforts, I believe we should have some type of 'pop-up' for the Guild. This is where we can have different station for different education for bellringing, such as handling, theory, methods, quarter peal ringing and peal ringing. I feel as this would help existing ringers to develop their ringing and to help to bring more ringers to the Guild.

Jessica Pugh

Public Engagement Officer's Report

In March, the Guild purchased a flag and roller banner to be used at events throughout the Guild to help with publicity and recruitment in bell ringing. They have been used several times across the Guild in the last year, at different events, the first being at the Guild Competition Day at Kington, other events included Cathedrals at Night, Ludlow's Winter Fair, as well as several open tower events that have place alongside art fares, fetes etc. If you are planning a recruitment event, please get in contact if you wish to borrow either. We also had some leaflets printed which have been distributed around churches in the Guild as well as being available at events.

New Guild members are now receiving a welcome pack which includes information about what's happening in the Guild, upcoming events, who's who, as well as an annual report and badge. These have been distributed at District AGMs and meetings and have been well received.

In July we welcomed Hereford City Life to the Cathedral on a practice night who put together a short film about the bells and ringing at the Cathedral, this was shared across social media.

We had several events throughout the year that encouraged engagement from our members, including the Guild Competition Day where all levels of ringing took place, a Guild wide Quarter Peal festival for two weeks in the summer, where 117 Guild members joined in, including those ringing their first quarter. In October we welcomed ringers from around the country to the Guild for our Tower Open Day, which was very enjoyable and a huge thank you to everyone who helped out to make the day possible.

We have several things coming up to get involved with over the next year, as always, if you have ideas, would like to get involved in events, either to participate or help organise, please get in contact. Thank you to all who have helped over the past year and I hope everyone enjoys what we have planned for the next.

Nicky

Treasurer's report

Taking over the role of treasurer and getting access to the bank accounts was made so much easier by the hard work, advice and encouragement I received from Chris Kippin without whom it would have been a mammoth task. His input to the guild and will be sorely missed.

We have had a very successful financial year and despite continually increasing costs and some additional spending we have posted a surplus of £568 taking into account some income we have still to receive, we are having difficulties accessing HMRC system to claim gift aid and allowing for the return of district funds from Bridgnorth district, this is in fact closer to a £750 surplus for the year.

This surplus is due to two main factors, first being the continued growth in subscriptions year on year (but still below the pre pandemic level) and secondly to the absolute sterling work put in by the Guild Secretary into our insurance policies and costs saving us in excess of £1600. This saving alone has funded the new membership system membermojo for 9 years at the current rates.

Costs will continue to rise and 2025 sees a change in the way the CCCBR charge us from a flat rate to a per member rate that will substantially eat into the increase in subscription rates agreed at the AGM in May. The increase to our full number of CCCBR reps will also lead to an increase in officer expenses next year.

The evolution of banking services has now started to impact us with the main stream banks making a monthly charge on the district bank accounts for what was historically a free service, whilst £5 a month doesn't sound much it equates to £480 across the guild. We need to consider how to deal with this going forward and consider the most efficient way collect subscriptions and operate district finances.

Thank you to all of you that have helped me over the past year particularly the district treasurers and for the independent examiner for making sense of my accounts.

Mark Aston

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Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers - Accounts 2024

Income	Note	2024	2023
Subscriptions	1	£5,391.00	£5,032.00
Tax relief	A		£411.50
Peal fees		£160.00	£172.50
Report adverts	B		£132.50
Interest Received		£72.76	£30.10
Donation		£100.00	
Book Shop Sales		£121.20	
2025 Subs paid early		£180.00	
District Funds Repaid	2	£350.00	
Total income		£6,374.96	£5,778.60

Expenditure	Note	2024	2023
Grants to districts	2	£670.00	£470.00
Annual Report		£1,518.73	£1,422.00
Web site		£260.76	£144.00
Insurance	C	£229.62	£1,842.82
Officers' expenses	3	£369.65	£309.18
CCBR subscriptions		£160.00	£160.00
BRF donation		£1,400.00	£1,200.00
Other expenditure	4	£199.94	£116.25
Meetings		£111.64	
Publicity Costs	5	£357.54	
Bookshop Stock		£354.07	
Member Mojo Fee		£175.00	
Total expenditure		£5,806.95	£5,664.25

Surplus/loss	2024	2023
Total income	£6,374.96	£5,778.60
Total expenditure	£5,806.95	5,664.25
	£568.01	£114.35

Represented by	Close	Open	Surplus
Lloyds current account	£3,610.39	3,115.14	£495.25
Virgin Money account	£5,433.30	5,360.54	£72.76
Total	£9,043.69	8,475.68	£568.01

Note A

Gift Aid still to be claimed, having problems accessing HMRC account expected to be about £450

Note B

Report Adverts still to be invoiced £107

Note C

New Insurance Provider giving equivalent cover hence large saving

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Note 1 - subscriptions	2024	2023
Bridgnorth	£1,350.00	880.00
Bromyard	£306.00	258.00
Church Stretton	£1,117.00	1,146.00
Clifford & Kington	£639.00	516.00
Hereford	£1,135.00	1,112.00
Ledbury	£498.00	474.00
Leominster	£288.00	232.00
Ross-on-Wye	£408.00	414.00
Total	£5,741.00	5,032.00
Non-resident life members		
Total	£5,741.00	5,032.00

Note 2 - Grants to Districts	2024	2023
Bridgnorth	-£350.00	
Bromyard	£0.00	
Church Stretton	£0.00	
Clifford & Kington	£120.00	£120.00
Hereford	£400.00	£300.00
Ledbury	£0.00	
Leominster	£100.00	
Ross on Wye	£50.00	£50.00
Total	£320.00	£470.00

Bridgnorth District Closed Bank account due to fees and returned surplus to Guild

Note 3 - Officers Expenses	2024	2023
Master	£0.00	£0.00
Secretary	£0.00	£99.38
Treasurer	£0.00	£0.00
Report Secretary	£82.40	£87.40
Belfries' officer	£0.00	£122.40
CCBR	£287.25	£0.00
Total	£369.65	£309.18

Note 4 - Other Expenditure	2024	2023
Friends of CCCBR library	£10.00	£10.00
Alec Osbaldiston Trophy	£54.00	
Tewksbury Shield Fee	£20.00	
Ear Defenders	£65.94	
Striking Comp Donation	£50.00	
Total	£199.94	£10.00

Note 5 Publicity	2024	2023
Ringing World adverts	£11.60	
Promotional Material	£345.94	
Total	£357.54	

Appendix C Nominations for Freeman (2 vacancies)

Paul J Lewis – Pontesbury

Paul has been an active member of the Guild for nearly 50 years. He has attended hundreds of district meetings including many years as district ringing master.

It is in the field of education and training that Paul has contributed most. He was district education officer for many years and ran and organised many training courses from beginner to deep into method ringing and even when he stood down he was always available to help run courses for those who followed as education officer. Paul has been running training events in the district for at least 30 years.

At Guild level Paul was Guild education officer for 11 years and ran and organised training throughout the Guild. During this time he was also an active member of the management committee.

Recently Paul has been a key person in bringing association of ringing teachers (ART) methodology to the Guild and has run courses at various towers throughout the Guild and has helped to establish bands at previously quiet towers.

To summarize Paul has helped with recruitment and retention of ringers throughout the Guild for many years.

Ann Bennett – Welshpool

Ann joined the Guild in 1976 and has, along with her husband Neil, been a proactive member of the Hereford Guild ever since.

Ann and Neil had a young family in the 1970s, but Ann took on the role of Report Secretary from 1979 to 1987. This was a hard task in those days, getting all the reports and district information typed up, and 'cut and paste' of all the information such as the peals literally meant scissors and glue! She introduced many of the report features we expect to see today, and was appropriately firm with those District Secretaries who failed to submit their information in a timely manner and in accordance with the rules.

In the Church Stretton district Ann has served as Treasurer from 1984 to 1990, and as Secretary from 2019-2023.

Ann was Master Elect in 2004 and served as Guild Master from 2005-2007.

In more recent years, most of us will appreciate the huge support that Ann has given to Neil to allow him to continue as peal recorder during periods of serious ill health. Ann has driven Neil to many Guild events and management committee meetings, and sat through hours of discussion whilst remaining respectfully silent, as she was only there to facilitate Neil.

Ann is an extremely capable ringer, and would always strive for the highest standards, yet she is also encouraging to learners, to receive praise from Ann would mean something.

So, for continuous service, with active roles for six consecutive decades, as well as probably hundreds of district teas, Ann deserves recognition as a Freeman of the Guild.

Appendix D – Nominations Received for Guild Officers

Post	Current	Nominations new candidates in bold	proposal received from District/MCM
Master	Sue Robinson (3 year term)	n/a 3 years post	Hereford/MCM
Secretary	Fran Watkins	Fran Watkins	Hereford/MCM
Treasurer	Mark Aston	Mark Aston	Hereford/MCM
Peal Recorder	Neil Bennett retired Acting Andrew Watkins	Andrew Watkins	Church Stretton & Hereford/MCM
Report Secretary	Neil Bragg	Neil Bragg	MCM
Education Officer	Jessica Pugh	Kris Perruzza	Hereford/MCM
Master Elect	Kris Perruzza	Kris Perruzza	Hereford/MCM
Public Engagement Officer	Nicky Aubrey	Nicky Aubrey	Hereford/MCM
Belfries Officer	Ashley Fortey	Ashley Fortey	Hereford/MCM
Tower Stewardship Advisor	Alan Reade	Alan Reade	Hereford/MCM
Webmaster	Nick Chapman	Nick Chapman	Hereford/MCM
Independent Examiner	Ruth D'Avanzo	Ruth D'Avanzo	MCM
Central Council Rep	Anthony Ellis	Anthony Ellis	MCM
Central Council Rep	Abigail Pugh	VACANT	MCM
Central Council Rep	vacant	Kris Perruzza	Hereford/MCM
Central Council Rep	vacant	Tyler Edwards	Hereford/MCM
Events Team 'coordinator'	Richard Bracher	Richard Bracher	MCM
Clerical Representative	Anthony Ellis	Anthony Ellis	MCM
Clerical Representative	Barney Bell	Barney Bell	MCM
Clerical Representative	Nicky Seabright	Nicky Seabright	MCM
Clerical Representative	vacant	vacant	
Events Team members	Tim Hollinghurst, Nicky Aubrey, Fran Watkins	Tim Hollinghurst, Nicky Aubrey	MCM MCM

Appendix E – Rule Change 20 (b)

Amendment to Rule 20b - The trustees recommended an amendment to Rule 20 (b) which was agreed by the Management Committee at the October 2024 meeting.

Rule 20 (a) states: No alteration, deletion or addition to these Rules shall be made except at an Annual or Special General Meeting.

Rule 20 (b) goes on to state: Any such proposal for consideration at an Annual General Meeting shall be made either by a District or by the Management Committee and shall be received by the Guild Secretary not later than 30th September in the preceding year.

This in effect prevents implementation of initiatives that would have a beneficial effect for an excessive period.

For example:

- A new proposal is made at a management committee held in Oct (year 0)
- It cannot be accepted for consideration at an AGM until it has been submitted in writing by the Secretary not later than 30th September of the following year (year 1).
- It would then need to be considered again at the management Committee in October of that year (1), to be then presented to the districts at their respective AGMs (years 1 & 2),
- Finally, to be voted on at the Guild AGM in Year 2.

Rule 20 (b) should be amended to allow for a shorter consideration and implementation timescale.

Draft rule change: [proposed change in blue](#)

20 (b) Any such proposal for consideration at an Annual General Meeting shall be made either by a District or by the Management Committee and shall be received by the Guild Secretary not later than 30th September in the preceding year.

20 (b) [Any such proposal for consideration at an Annual General Meeting shall be made either by a district or by the Management committee and shall be received by the Guild Secretary not less than 90 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.](#)

Sue Robinson – Guild Master. On behalf of the Guild Trustees.

19.09.24

Agenda for the Special General Meeting to be held during the Annual General Meeting at St Mary's Church Ross on Wye 10th May 2025

Item – proposed changes to rules regarding payment of subscriptions and return from lapsed membership.

PROPOSALS RECEIVED FROM DISTRICT AGMs

- Ross District proposed that the collection of subscriptions be moved to membermojo
- Church Stretton District proposed that payment of subscriptions be enabled on membermojo
- Hereford District proposed that Rule 16 (b) be amended to remove the requirement for payment of one year's arrears for returning lapsed members

Reason for proposed amendments:

- Collection of subscriptions should be updated to include the ability to make online payments whilst retaining the ability for members to pay subscriptions via their district. Membermojo will be used to process online payments. Proposals requesting this change were received from Ross and Church Stretton Districts.
- Without the formal structure provided by a membership management tool such as Membermojo, historically there has been confusion for some members as to their actual membership status. Some members were acting on the mistaken belief that their tower had been paying their subs whilst others had no clear pathway to ensure their membership was up to date. Returning members have been either levied the arrears or have in fact opted for re-election to avoid the arrears, some have taken the decision not to rejoin the Guild as they felt penalised. A proposal that the payment of arrears be reconsidered was received from the Hereford District.

The following proposals were discussed at the Management Committee Meeting on 16th March 2025.

- a) Introduce online payment of subscriptions to run alongside existing methods
- b) Remove the requirement for a lapsed member to pay one year's arrears

The meeting was in agreement and the changes were proposed by Greg White, seconded by Jason Walker. The vote was in favour with no objections.

The Secretary explained that under existing rules we would need to hold a Special General Meeting to make the changes in time for 2026 subscriptions, the meeting agreed that the Treasurer would work in consultation with the Trustees and District Treasurers to draft the appropriate rule changes.

Nick Cronin further proposed that we hold an SGM to coincide with the AGM, this was seconded by Neil Bragg and carried by the meeting.

Proposed rule changes following consultation:

Current Rule	Proposed New Rule
<p>16 Suspension and Lapse of Membership.</p> <p>(b) Members who have not paid their subscription by the 31st December of the current year shall automatically, and without notice, cease to be members with effect from the previous 1st January; they may be re-admitted without election at any time on payment of one year's arrears together with the then current annual subscription.</p>	<p>16 (b) Members who have not paid their subscription by the 31st December of the current year shall automatically, and without notice, cease to be members with effect from the 1st January of that year; they may be re-admitted without election at any time on payment of one year's current annual subscription.</p>
<p>13(c) Guild membership subscriptions shall be collected by the districts.</p>	<p>13(c) The methods of payment and collection of subscriptions shall be agreed by the Executive Committee and be appropriate to the type of membership, affiliation and processes available for collection at the time.</p>
<p>13(d) Subscriptions become due for payment on 1st January and shall be forwarded by the District Treasurers to the Guild Treasurer in accordance with Rule 14(g).</p>	<p>13(d) Subscriptions become due for payment on 1st January.</p>
<p>13(e) On receipt of subscriptions from the Districts the Guild Treasurer shall disburse to each District a sum of money towards its running costs. The amount allocated to each District shall be determined by the Trustees after considering the financial situation of the Guild and each District's accounts and budgeted expenditure for the coming year.</p>	<p>13(e) In support of any application for funding from the Guild, the districts should submit a budgeted expenditure plan. Funding applications will be reviewed by the Trustees who will take into account the financial situation and charitable aims of the Guild.</p>
<p>14 (g) The District Treasurer shall be responsible for sending to the Guild Treasurer not later than 28th February a Statement of the District's accounts for the previous year, duly approved by a District meeting, a budgeted expenditure plan for the current year, together with a list of current paid-up members and the subscription money collected from them.</p>	<p>14 (g) The District Treasurer must send the Guild Treasurer a statement of the previous year's District accounts, approved by a District meeting, by February 28th, together with a list of any members who have paid the District Treasurer for the current year and the subscription money collected.</p>