



Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers
Management Committee Meeting – Saturday 11th October 2025
Held in Ledbury Church, 3.10pm

Those present:

<i>Guild Master</i>	Sue Robinson	<i>Clerical Rep</i>	Anthony Ellis
<i>Guild Secretary</i>	Fran Watkins	<i>Bromyard Rep.</i>	Nick Cronin
<i>Guild Treasurer</i>	Mark Aston	<i>Church Stretton Rep.</i>	Andy Wilson
<i>Peal Recorder</i>	Andrew Watkins	<i>Ledbury Sec.</i>	Chris Jones
<i>Report Secretary</i>	Neil Bragg	<i>Ledbury Rep.</i>	Chris Roberts
<i>Tower Stewardship Advisor</i>	Alan Reade	<i>Ross Sec.</i>	Sally Townsend
<i>Webmaster</i>	Nick Chapman		

Also present – Anne Hone

Apologies were received from:

<i>Master Elect/Educ. Officer</i>	Kris Perruzza	<i>Public Eng. Officer/Hfd Dist Sec.</i>	Nicky Aubrey
<i>Hfd Dist Rep./Safeguarding Lead</i>	Jason Walker	<i>Clerical Rep.</i>	Rev Barney Bell
<i>Clerical Rep.</i>	Rev Nicky Seabright	<i>Ross District Rep.</i>	Greg White
<i>Church Stretton Sec.</i>	Neil Pirie	<i>Clifford & Kington Sec.</i>	Pat Key

Not in attendance, no apologies received:

<i>Belfries Officer</i>	Ashley Fortey	<i>Bromyard Sec.</i>	Clare Bellis
<i>CC rep</i>	Tyler Edwards	<i>Clifford & Kington Rep.</i>	Ian Price
<i>Bridgnorth Sec.</i>	Darren Swancott	<i>Leominster Sec.</i>	Abigail Pugh
<i>Bridgnorth Rep.</i>	post vacant	<i>Leominster Rep.</i>	Alice Pugh

1. Welcome and opening prayers:

The Guild Master welcomed everyone to the meeting, then opening prayers were led by Rev. Anthony Ellis and remembered those who have died since our last meeting in March 2025:

Rev Peter Newing (past member Eastnor), David Elliott (Cardington), Roy Mills (Ledbury), Andrea Moore (Leintwardine), Agnes Bowen (Honorary Life Member, Lyonshall), Malcolm Johns (Non-Resident Life Member, Brecon).

2. Apologies for absence: were formally received from those members listed above.

3. Minutes of the March 2025 MCM: the minutes had been distributed to all committee members prior to the meeting. Nick Cronin proposed, and Sally Townsend seconded that they be signed by the Master as a correct record, this was agreed by the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising:** there were no matters arising.
5. **Correspondence:** The secretary confirmed that no communication had been received that has not already been shared with the membership as necessary.
6. **Officer's Reports:** Written reports had been received and distributed prior to the meeting from the Guild Master, Master Elect/Education Officer, Safeguarding Lead, Guild Secretary, Report Secretary, Peal Recorder and Tower Stewardship Advisor (appendix 1).

The Treasurer distributed a report showing monies held by the Guild at 11/10/2025 (appendix 2). He explained that the increase in Guild funds was due to a return of monies to the Guild accounts by some districts, a reduced donation to the BRF and a substantial saving on previous insurance costs. Nick Cronin asked how much money has been received back from the districts. The Treasurer did not have the exact figure to hand but believed it to be in the region of £700.00. The Treasurer also highlighted that in October 2024 the Guild had paid for the establishment of a Guild bookshop (held by the PEO), but that this was now up and running. The Treasurer advised that whilst we are in a more stable position currently, in 2026 our affiliation fee to the Central Council will rise to £1 per member (currently 40p per member).

The Master told the meeting that the Guild has benefitted from the introduction of two online fundraising schemes. The Secretary reported that the more popular of the two schemes has raised a balance of £287.25 so far. There is a clearing period before the payments are made to the Guild but at the next 'payout date' £53.73 is due to be paid to the Guild with £233.52 still pending. The Master encouraged members to join the scheme. Chris Roberts asked how members can access the two schemes. The Secretary advised that sign up information had been sent out via the newsletter and Facebook, the sign-up links are not yet on the website, but they will be added shortly.

There were no other questions regarding the officers' reports, and they were accepted by the meeting.

7. **Insurance:** A document outlining the Guild insurance renewal had been distributed prior to the meeting (Appendix 3). The Master explained that after the insurance had been taken out in October 2024, the Trustees had agreed a change to the policy to include All Risks cover for **the Wombel** which was used at the AGM.

The Master advised that whilst we have not been able to make frequent use of the Wombel during 2025, it could be a very useful tool for recruitment throughout the Guild, especially during our 140th anniversary year.



The Secretary told the meeting that Frank Seabright had offered to hold training for any districts/members who wanted to learn how to use the Wombel, and that two members of Ross District had attended the training which had facilitated the Wombel going to the AGM. Sally Townsend pointed out that putting the Wombel up in a public place does need a considerable amount of time and room, and there was a degree of risk involved in lifting the heavy pieces. The Secretary confirmed that at a Guild or District event, members are covered for any public liability claim in using the Wombel under the main section of the policy. The additional premium payable is to cover 'All Risks' for the Wombel itself. For the purposes of the insurance quote, we have estimated a value of £4000 for the cost of replacing the Wombel and laptop. The Wombel is not otherwise insured for risks whilst in storage or use.

Sally asked who owned the Wombel. The Secretary advised that the Ledbury District were custodians of the Wombel as it was the Ledbury District who had undertaken the fundraising and driven the purchase of the Wombel. Chris Jones said that, although held by the Ledbury District, the District agreed that the Wombel belonged to the Guild.

The Secretary felt that, if a decision was made to continue to insure the Wombel, we need to make a concerted effort to work with the Ledbury District to ensure there were enough people available to transport and use the Wombel, and that we should not expect the Ledbury District to undertake all the work.

Nick Cronin pointed out that as a registered charity we have a duty to take care of our assets. If we are using and transporting an item with a value of £4000, we could be considered negligent if we did not insure the Wombel. Nick felt that we had no option but to continue the insurance.

The Master suggested that we renew the insurance for the forthcoming year but review how much we make use of the Wombel over the next 12 months. Alan Reade proposed, and Nick Cronin seconded that we renew the policy at £319.21, and this was agreed by the meeting.

8. Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

The Master gave a summary of the safeguarding policy and safer recruitment requirements. With the District AGMs approaching, we need members to be aware that if they stand for election to a Guild or District role they will be required to undertake some safeguarding training as required by the Church of England.

The Guild Safeguarding Policy outlines the requirements, and this will be updated to include the safer recruitment requirements for Guild and District officers (Appendix 4). The Master explained that most training can be done online, although if required, our Safeguarding Lead can now also deliver training in person. The Leadership training required for some roles can only currently be delivered in person by the Diocese, we are continuing to work with the Diocese and will keep members informed of training opportunities and dates.

There was some discussion about training for ringers in general, and whether training was portable between different dioceses and roles.



The Secretary advised that our safer recruitment requirements relate to **Guild and District roles only**, the responsibility for ensuring training of tower captains and general ringers continues to lie with the individual church PCC. Whilst we can make ringers aware of the training required, offer advice and encourage them to undertake it, we do not assume any responsibility for local church training.

Sally Townsend mentioned that getting onto a course is difficult as they are held during working hours. She will have to travel from Ross to Ludlow on a day off as she could not be given time off work to attend a course that was happening within 100 yards of her workplace. The Secretary agreed that this was a problem, and that she had received an email from another officer unable to book a course due to work commitments. We will continue to communicate with the Diocese to try to make the courses more accessible.

Nick Cronin asked whether the Leadership training would be transferrable between dioceses, the Secretary replied that she would need to re-read the CofE Framework to check on this, but that it might be simplest to check with the Hereford Diocese on a case-by-case basis. There was further general discussion on the requirements, and how professional training or DBS checks, would not be accepted by the church for people in a voluntary role.

Alan Reade told the meeting that he had attended a Leadership course in which he was the only attendee who was not a member of the clergy, he said it gave him an insight into the problems and issues they face. The Secretary agreed that whilst we often might be reluctant to undertake training, there is always something to learn, and having some time to think about the issues will always be worthwhile.

The Master concluded the discussion by reiterating that we certainly do not want to discourage volunteers, but members must be made aware of the requirements and responsibilities of the office.

9. Payment of subscriptions for 2026

An explanation of how the new online payment system will work had been sent out prior to the meeting (Appendix 5).

The Secretary explained that because membermojo is our member database we will need each member to sign in to confirm their data remains correct, and their willingness to remain a member for 2026.

This applies for all members - even those who no longer need to pay; or will pay their District Treasurer; or if their tower or another third-party pays for their subscription.

At the end of the renewal form is a checkout with payment options – an orange button confirming your preferred method must be clicked, otherwise the form will not save, and the membership will not be renewed.



The online payment system is now up and running, and although there is a charge for this, the Treasurer and Secretary had calculated that the costs of online payments are substantially lower than the cost of each district maintaining a bank account with charges to collect subscriptions once annually.

Chris Roberts asked how a member could make payment for other members online, the Secretary explained that at the bottom of the checkout page there is a button to visit the online store. Members can click on this and then have the option to pay for additional members or to donate to guild funds. Any donations will also attract Gift Aid where a member had indicated eligibility. The Secretary said that she had tried to outline the process into the document already distributed but was hoping to create an even simpler version which can be sent to members and added to the website, she also hoped to visit as many AGMs as possible to offer help where needed.

Andy Wilson asked whether it would be possible to make donations to the BRF or pay for 600 club tickets online. The Secretary replied that as the BRF was an entirely separate charity with different bank accounts, it has not been added to the store. Membermojo currently only has our financial details. If the BRF were to approach us, we could investigate whether it might be possible to facilitate this. The Master explained that the BRF was a totally separate charity with its own aims and rules. The Treasurer said that at present we want to keep things simple.

The Secretary explained that if the Guild had ambitions to raise funds to help recruit and publicise ringing, the online store can be used for our own fundraising efforts. Currently the Store is being used for members to book places (free of charge) on Guild Training Sessions, and it could be used to sell tickets to the proposed Dinner to mark the Guild's anniversary. We would like to encourage all members to login to membermojo and use the store. The Secretary also explained that it is possible to add items to the store for only certain members to see – for instance, the Ledbury District has a Bell Repair Fund, we could add an item for donations to that fund, which could be made visible only to Ledbury District members, or any other District could have booking for places at an event restricted to that District's members. Booking Names for Tea at events can also be added (free or otherwise), please contact the Secretary if you want to know more.

Nick Cronin told the meeting that he had distributed the 'How to Renew' document to all the Bromyard District members and had asked for feedback. None of the district members had raised any queries, so Nick felt that the document was already simple enough.

The Treasurer said that we have tried to keep things simple, and the Master reminded the meeting that payments can still be made to the District Treasurers. The Secretary emphasised that when a district no longer has a bank account and collects cash, a receipt must be issued for all transactions.

Sally Townsend wondered whether members of Ross tower which is currently out of action will want to renew this year if they are not actively ringing, the Master confirmed each member will receive a renewal email, and they can make a personal decision.



The Treasurer and Secretary will shortly schedule an online meeting for District Treasurers and Secretaries to run through the new arrangements and ensure that they are happy and able to answer any questions from members

10. 140th Anniversary

The Master explained that, as next year is the 140th Anniversary, a small committee has been formed based on the events team with at least one representative member from each District. They will be holding an online meeting on 6th November to discuss a program of activities and events. Suggested so far is the Guild Dinner; marking the date itself with a peal; a tower open day; trying to achieve 140 'firsts' of any kind throughout the year; recruitment opportunities, and social occasions. The Master said that we would very much appreciate feedback from the meeting on what format any socials should take – there was no enthusiasm for socials or suggestions for events forthcoming from the meeting. However, general discussion followed, and it was agreed that a **recruitment event in each district** would be a good ambition.

Anthony Ellis asked whether people made use of the resources available on the Central Council website for recruitment, several of those present had accessed the resources.

The Secretary said that whilst the Guild officers cannot recruit and train 140 new ringers by themselves what the Guild can, and perhaps should, do is offer support by sharing information and resources with our members and towers to help and enable them to hold successful events. The Treasurer agreed that the Guild should use its resources in such a way to promote bellringing. The Master told the meeting that following a survey to try to find members who are interested in teaching ringing, the Guild hopes to host and partially fund an ART course in early January, as well as hosting a workshop for keen teachers who do not want to go down the ART route. In view of this we would like each district to consider what it can do to encourage recruitment in its area at their AGM.

Anthony Ellis asked whether there were any plans for the Guild to begin a **Young Ringers Group**, evidence from The Central Council and the Ringing World Youth Striking Competitions show that these can be extremely popular. The Master responded that this is something that the Trustees have been discussing, and it is certainly something worth pursuing. We are aware that there has been an initiative to hold Young Ringers practices in Hereford itself, but any group organised at a Guild level would need to be restricted to ringers under 18 years only, with clear guidance and safeguarding plans, and a willing, identified, group leader. Any suggestions for suitable group leaders would be welcomed.

The Master is willing to head up and launch such an initiative but does not have the time available to commit to running it after initial set-up. Currently the Guild only has 14 members under the age of 18 spread throughout the Diocese, we would need to contact the young people to find out what they would want from such a group.

Suggestions were made as to potential groups we could approach to recruit young ringers – schools, Young Farmers or Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Sally Townsend told the meeting that she and Jo Beavan have tried to recruit young ringers from the school where they both teach but have found that it is difficult to get a lasting commitment from the young people. The Treasurer said that the Duke of Edinburgh scheme requires a longer commitment from young people, which is an advantage.

Discussion followed as to whether having more frequent meetings would allow us to make more progress on projects, as six-monthly meetings give us very little opportunity to follow through on



projects. All at the meeting were in favour of holding more frequent meetings to discuss topics, rather than holding a full-blown management committee meeting, these could be online meetings initially. It was agreed that we should try to hold some interim meetings to try to maximise the opportunity that the 140th Anniversary gives us.

Nick Cronin suggested that extra online meetings would also maximise the committee members' opportunity to contribute, as we only had approximately one third of available members present at the meeting, he wondered whether the issue was that members could not be bothered to attend, or if the large distances they would need to travel was a major factor.

The Master asked how members felt about hybrid meetings, the feeling of the room was that they did not work well, so it was agreed that initially March and October meetings would remain in person with interim meetings online (unless otherwise agreed by the participants).

11. Guild Report

The Master explained that we would like to set up a small sub-committee to review the annual report. The committee should consider what is and what is not necessary to be printed.

The Master asked whether there would be any volunteers to join the committee, otherwise we can approach individuals from the districts. Anthony Ellis felt that a review was good idea as print newspapers, and publications such as the Ringing World are facing similar decisions.

The Report Secretary responded saying we are at a crossroads where most people now regularly rely on electronic communication, and the question is what do our members want to see in an annual report. The Report Secretary mentioned that, for instance, we currently include a large amount of information regarding the Bell Restoration Fund which is an entirely separate charity that does not contribute to the report in anyway other than providing the information. He questioned whether we continue to do this? There is also a large amount of information that is already available on the website, and peal data which could be published elsewhere.

Andy Wilson asked whether, as a registered charity, there was any legal requirement for us to publish a printed report. The Treasurer felt it was right for us to publish some form of document, for historical purposes as well. Nick Cronin said that the issue of the report had been discussed at some length during his time as Master, and it had been suggested that it is possible to use an online self-publisher who will print hard copies of the document when ordered by members.

Nick felt that another issue is having the current rules in the report. As the report is for 2024, the rules published in it are now out of date, therefore arguably some information is better on the website.

The Secretary explained that the changes to membermojo will make compiling the membership information much easier as we can simply download the information.

The Master asked for volunteers to join the Report Secretary on a committee - Nick Chapman, Mark Aston, Andrew Watkins, Sally Townsend, Nick Cronin and Chris Roberts all agreed to join. The Secretary will ask members for their views, or more volunteers in the next Guild Newsletter.

The Report Secretary asked volunteers to start considering what information is necessary for the report.

12. Forthcoming District AGMs

A list of AGMs was included and the Master encouraged members to attend.

13. Any other Business

Guild Property – The Secretary had asked all districts for a list of their Guild Property. Only Clifford & Kington and Church Stretton have responded with lists and photographs. The Master explained



Photographs are important as in another Association an item has gone missing, and with no photographs, they are unable to replicate the item.

Anthony Ellis felt that it is very important that we consider putting items into an archive, potentially at the record office. The Secretary agreed, as the Clifford & Kington District were still holding records from the long defunct Presteigne District, whereas other districts do not seem to know where their past records are. It may be that some have now been lost due to members dying or not passing the records on to their successors.

It was suggested that records of the old Clun District may be held by John Croxton. Nick Cronin suggested that the Secretary write to ask for records of specific items.

The Secretary suggested that an archive could form part of our 140th Anniversary project.

The Next Meeting will be held on Saturday 7th March in the afternoon, venue to be confirmed. The Master said that as this will be the actual week of the anniversary, we may try to organise some special ringing.

Guild (hdgb.org) emails

The Webmaster advised that he is looking to move the guild emails to another email provider, once a provider is identified he will write to all email holders to advise that they will need to save any important information as it will no longer be available after the change date.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 16:46pm.

Guild Masters Report for the Oct 2025 MCM

With the support of the trustees, the MCM representatives and the wider membership we have been very successful in taking several initiatives through to completion.

- ▶ Membermojo is now firmly established as the GDPR compliant member database, and we are delighted that we have not lost members because of its implementation.
- ▶ A more favourable insurance premium was located saving the Guild a significant sum.
- ▶ Rule changes have been implemented which allow proposals to be put before the membership in a timelier fashion, allowing us to move forwards much faster.
- ▶ The Guild has appointed a safeguarding officer who will be the link between us and the requirements of the diocese
- ▶ A guidance document has been developed as a point of reference should a church within our Diocese be threatened with closure or change of use. This will be posted on the website.
- ▶ We have welcomed two new trustees (Kris Perruzza – Education Officer & Andrew Watkins – Peal Recorder)
- ▶ The Guild enjoyed a well-attended AGM in Ross on Wye
- ▶ We have made a reduced donation to the BRF to be able to fund recruitment & training events.

As we go into 2026, conscious that next year is the 140th Anniversary of the Guild we would like our collective efforts to be focussed on making this a year of celebratory events to mark this special occasion. We have set up a 140th Anniversary team, currently comprising of the existing Events Committee and a representative from each district. Please feel free to join us if you would like to get involved, here are some of the ideas so far:

Guild Dinner

Anniversary Peal, 140 recorded rings (QP's, Peals General ringing)

140 new recruits

140 "firsts"

Tower open day

AGM (Hereford)

The project to recruit and teach 140 ringers is underway and those who volunteered to be part of this journey will be contacted soon. An ART training course has been booked for those who expressed interest & for others a workshop will be scheduled for a knowledge sharing opportunity. This initiative will need all our support, even those who don't want to be involved in teaching bell handling can play a part when the new recruits are at the stage of learning to ring rounds and beyond. More people in our community of bellringers makes for a richer ringing experience for all of us.

Despite the excitement of the pending anniversary other essential activities must continue. We continue to work on our policies, including the financial planning element & safer recruitment.

A working party has been set up to review all our communication channels because without communication that is reaching the membership in a format that is wanted, we are missing the opportunity to engage our members. The first meeting of this small team has already taken place.

Learners and intermediate practices have been well attended, these will continue to be scheduled, and we look forward to your support at such events.

Sue Robinson 23/09/25



Interim report – Master Elect/ Education Officer/ Central Council Rep

I have combined my reports, as, before being elected Guild Education Officer at the 2025 AGM I had been focusing on training and development of our members in my role as Master Elect.

It was a pleasure during the winter months to travel the Guild to attend 4 out of 8 district AGM's and to meet with new friends and see and hear all the wonderful things taking place around the Guild. I hope to be able to attend as many, if not more this year, if I can. It was wonderful to hear all the positive things that are happening within Districts and I hope that we are getting better at celebrating what we do and sharing ideas across the Guild and will continue to do so.

We have held several Guild sessions across the Guild: Learners' sessions at Cradley; St Nicholas, Hereford; Clunbury; Tenbury and hopefully another in the Ross district in November. We have held a Triples/Major practice at Stoke St Milborough and another is planned at Eardisland in November.

I hoped that the district officers would have taken ownership of these sessions, enabling us to be able to deliver more sessions across the whole Guild, ensuring we start to add further sessions to cater for all members, at all levels. Unfortunately, this has not been achieved. Luckily, there has been a small group of experienced ringers who have supported and made the sessions a success regardless of where in the Guild they have taken place (even though those people who have supported these sessions have all been working full time, as well as doing other work within their own towers and throughout the Guild). I must take this opportunity to thank those people, as without them, these sessions would not be able to happen. Thank you for your support.

The feedback from the sessions has been positive, that they are useful and more are needed. We have had a few issues where "extra" ringers who have not signed up have turned up, we also had a small glitch with the booking system, which has since been rectified. We reluctantly limit these sessions, because we want to ensure that everyone who attends gets something out of each session.

If each district organised and delivered 1 session each, that would be 8 additional opportunities for our members. They do not need to be learners' sessions.

It was my pleasure to support the recruitment event held outside Hereford Cathedral. It was a long, but wonderful day. We were able to give over 250 people of all ages and physical abilities a glimpse of what bellringing is. I spent my time engaging with people from Herefordshire and beyond, giving them an opportunity to have a go at ringing a bell and chatting about all things relating to bell ringing. I especially enjoyed spending time with the children, who could chime one of the mini-ring's bells and people with physical and mental abilities who would not be able to access a traditional tower. This is something the Guild needs to consider doing regularly.

I am pleased to have been accredited in both my ART, M1 and M2 this year. This is something I have done, not only for me, but for me to see how ART can benefit our Guild and its members. If you are sceptical of ART, I ask you to speak to someone who has gone through the process – not just attended a day course, but gone through the whole process and got accredited. It is amazing what you can learn, and how it improves the outcomes for you, and your learners. The learners really do appreciate the structure that it gives and gives them achievable targets. It is a great place to start your teaching journey.

Attending my first Central Council meeting as a representative of the Guild was quite eye-opening. It was informative and inspiring, and our Guild is facing the same issues as others. Falling membership, aging membership and a lack of willing volunteers to come forward to do things. Anthony Ellis has agreed to write the report for the Guild on the meeting.



I am extremely proud of the Guild AGM we produced in Ross, and working with the Ross District was a pleasure. The “bumper” attendance was evidence that our members wanted something different. We need to build on the success of the event and look to recreate and improve the next one.

We held the Guild Coffee morning/Theory session at Cleobury Mortimer on the morning of what would have been the Guild Striking Competition I am really pleased we went ahead with this. Over 30 people from across the Guild attended and from the feedback I received, it was worthwhile and enjoyable for all those who attended.

I am pleased to say that someone has come forward to assist me in developing a training plan for 2026, if anyone else would like to get involved, please contact me. I have taken the difficult decision, not to go to all districts next year, but to have 2 locations (1 in the top half of the Guild/ 1 in the bottom half) for regular sessions to take place. This decision has been made, as I need to consider the travel time and organisation time it takes for me, personally. If any district would like to host an event, please do get in touch and I will be happy to assist you in organising a session for your district members

Kris Perruzza

Secretary's Report

The ringing year seems to be passing very quickly and soon we will be into AGM season when I hope to be able to visit as many districts as possible. I very much enjoyed the visiting the AGMs last year, and I think it is very important that Guild Officers attend to maintain links and communications with our members. This year will be our first year of renewals and accepting payments on Membermojo, I will be more than willing to offer help wherever I can and will draft a 'how to' guide which I hope will help people through the process.

One of the most important aspects of our AGMs is the election of officers, this year has seen changes to the CofE safeguarding framework which means **that anyone standing for office must be willing to undertake the training now required**. I have been ringing long enough to remember when there were fairly frequent contested elections for roles, I think there should be more of this – if someone would like to try a job please encourage them to stand! Far too often I hear people saying semi-begrudgingly *'I'll do it because no-one else will'*, but in reality, other people do not put their name forward to stand for fearing of offending the current post holder. Having an unwilling or reluctant person in post helps no-one. Let's not be afraid of leaving posts vacant for a year – every position other than the Guild Master is for 1 year only.

Communication

Members - I've continued with the Guild Newsletter on a quarterly basis, I hope our members have found this useful. I have made an effort to include news from each of the districts in the newsletter though this has not always been easy, and have asked for contributions, please can you encourage members to send items to me for publication.

The Church - The Master, Rev. Anthony Ellis and I met with Sarah Girling from the Diocesan Board of Finance on 18th June to discuss how we can keep bells ringing in churches that may be facing reduced services or closure in one form or another. Whilst we may not have been able to formulate an immediate plan that gives us access as and when we want, we did have a very positive discussion in which the role that ringers can play to support a church was appreciated by Sarah. We should continue to work to foster good relationships with our churches. In the modern world we should no longer assume continued free access rights as bellringers without some effort on our part to support the church and comply with its administrative requirements.



GDPR – Our members have been amazing, and almost all have registered on Membermojo. I have set up contact groups so that District and other officials can contact their members without needing to retain personal information. I have also created district member directories which officers can use to view their member's details. In view of this, I will be proposing to the Trustees that, after the 2026 renewals have been completed, the Guild issues an edict that no officer retains personal information of Guild members.

This will mean that all official Guild or District communications must be sent using the membermojo contacts. If any officer needs an additional or specific contact group to be set up at any time, this can be done. Those officers holding personal information of our members for Guild purposes will be required to delete it. Should an officer hold contact information for fellow ringers on a personal basis, this can continue but Guild and District communications must not be sent in this way. Several Districts have already been successfully using the membermojo contact emails, I recommend that those who have not yet tried it do so as soon as possible.

Guild Property – I have updated the list of Guild property as far as possible and have asked Districts to provide me with an updated list of items they hold. Only one district has responded with a full list of items.

I have enjoyed getting out and about in the Guild throughout the year, supporting the Guild sessions and other events. It seems that members who do attend events really get something out of meeting up with ringers that may not see often, and the opportunity to progress in a positive, supportive environment. For me, one of the most rewarding events was the Mini-ring outside Hereford Cathedral where we were introduced the general public to bellringing. As well as gaining several new recruits, we were delighted that so many people showed huge interest in bellringing and positive sentiment towards what we do.

With our 140th anniversary approaching, we need to think how we can make every ringing event a recruitment opportunity, and how we can foster good relations between the public, our churches and ourselves. To help with this the Central Council has shared some of its design content with the Guild and we share this with districts and towers to help them create modern content with the new bellringing brand that is very eye-catching, please contact me for me information.

Fran Watkins

Safeguarding Lead Report – September 2025

No safeguarding concerns have been raised in the time I have been in post.

I have had a couple of tower captains, and a few Parish Safeguarding Officers contact me regarding what training tower captains/ringing masters require. I have fed back that all 3 online courses should be completed (Basic, Foundation, Domestic Abuse). Those running market town towers should complete leadership training as these towers are classed as prominent towers. I have provided a list of 'prominent' towers to the Diocese Safeguarding Team, so I expect they will make contact with the Parish Safeguarding Officers for those towers.

I now have the training slides for the basic and foundation courses so I can deliver these in person if there are a group of ringers wanting to do face-to-face training rather than online. Domestic Abuse is online only.

I have signed up to the 'Safeguarding Forum' on 'Ringing Forums' which is open to all safeguarding leads of CC-affiliated societies, as we all as the CC safeguarding team.

I have requested that the Diocesan safeguarding team put on specific bellringers leadership training, they have agreed to do this, but I have been unsuccessful in pinning them down for a date. I will continue to chase this.



The Diocese safeguarding team had sent out out-of-date advice to a local Parish Safeguarding Officer around what is required when having young people in the tower. This was advice providing as we came out of COVID and is now out of date. I have provided them with the most up-to-date guidance and have

said I am happy to help with advice on bellringing if they would like, which they have been grateful for. I have booked myself on to the 'Leadership Training' course on Monday 6th October in Hereford. There are 2 others planned for the rest of the year:

- 14/10/2025 – 09:30-12:30 – Church Stretton
- 28/10/2025 – 09:30-12:30 – Ludlow

Anyone that runs District or Guild events (district ringing masters, assistant/deputy ringing masters, education officers, secretaries) will need to complete the leadership training as they will be the responsible individuals at district/guild events. This training is mandatory not voluntary, so please get yourselves booked on to this and add your training on to Membermojo. Anyone not willing to complete this training, will not be able to take up the position or be able to continue in their role and will need to step down at the next District AGM. Everyone should be aware of their responsibilities and commitment to this training and will need to get themselves booked on if they haven't already done so.

Jason Walker

HDGB Report Secretaries management committee report- Autumn 2025

The annual report for 2024 was delivered 'just in time', thanks to Fran and Andrew stepping in to collect from the printers and take to the AGM. This last version was slightly longer in page numbers and therefore could not be stitched but had to have glued spine. This looked very good on the finished product. There was however a slight cost increase.

As we move towards the collection of data for the 2025 AR there are several questions and suggestions for the next AR.

- 1) Are we satisfied that the information carried in the existing report is what we feel is necessary? For example, we carry all the BRF info- but this is a separate charity, should we be providing the vehicle for the information? We carry a massive amount of data on peals and who and where they were rung. Would this info be better suited to the web-site?
- 2) Whilst the AR carries reports for the previous year- is it not also aimed to be a handbook- The Shropshire Association title their report as an annual report for the previous year and as a Handbook for the current year. What and how would you like our report to be titled and provide?
- 3) I'm aware that we have a batch of 3 and 4 bell towers in the guild area but which do not attract attention from us. My proposal is a simple spreadsheet over two pages in landscape which show something like:

No. of Bells	Tower	Ringing Status	Contact for access	What3words
3 bells				
4 bells				

- 4) Other AR's have an invited history of a church in a district. We could start with a history of a church hosting the AGM ring -or historic church in the district.
- 5) I'm pleased to say that the collection of info on each tower and current members will be made easier using the 'Members mojo' system. Fran has already outlined how this will work, so this will just then need some proof reading by local District Secretary.

Neil Bragg Sept 15th 2025



Peal Recorder's Report

Since the start of the year, there has been a fall in the number of peals rung. So far this year, there have been 21 peals up to 11th September.

We do have two first pealers so far this year, and congratulations must go to Chris Brackston (Hereford Cathedral), Sarah E King (Burghill), both ringing their first peal at Burghill.

Next year is the 140th Anniversary of the Guild, so next year we should expect more peals to be rung for the Guild's Anniversary. If you would like to ring a peal and are short of some ringers or a conductor, please ask any of the Guild officers for help.

Andrew Watkins

Tower Stewardship Advisor's Interim Report

With the appointment of a Guild Safeguarding Lead at the AGM, the Guild's approach to the subject of Safeguarding generally has been enhanced in line with the policies of the Church of England.

A detailed Safeguarding Policy has been posted on the Guild website for the benefit of members seeking advice where children and/or vulnerable adults are present, or anticipated in the ringing chamber, which will be updated regularly to reflect changes in the law or in CofE guidance. The Safeguarding Lead is available for guidance where required by members.

To reflect the fact that more ringing now takes place away from an organiser's home tower, stewardship guidance has been added to the Guild website for members in carrying out the necessary risk assessments for events at churches where there is no resident band or tower captain, or where local church leaders are unfamiliar with tower bell installations. The Tower Stewardship Advisor remains available for general guidance where required.

Alan Reade
HDGB Tower Stewardship Advisor
September 2025

HDGB Treasurers Report

October 2025

Monies held by the Guild

Balances 11/10/2025 05/10/2024

Lloyds	£6,995.68	£3,516.57
Virgin	£5,433.30	£5,361.00
	<u>£12,426.98</u>	<u>£8,877.57</u>

As you can see from the above figure the guild finances continue to improve year on year.

Some of this increase is due to a movement of funds from some districts to the central guild account to avoid paying fees now being charged by the high street banks.

Looking forward to 2026 a move to payment of annual subscriptions via membermojo would not only make it much easier for our members to pay but remove a large amount of administration across the guild and further reduce costs.

INSURANCE

We have received a renewal notice from Ecclesiastical Insurance, the policy expires on 16th October 2025.

Following a review in 2024, the Trustees recommend renewing with Ecclesiastical this year as they have shown a clear understanding of the risks involved with ringing, and the premium remains much lower than we have paid in years prior to 2024.

However, during the last year, Ledbury District asked whether All Risks cover for the Wombel could be added to the policy. The district had understood previously that the Guild insured the Wombel, however this was not the case. The additional premium due to add the Wombel from March to October was £51.55, the Trustees agreed to pay this amount as we wanted to use the Wombel at the AGM and hoped to use it again later in the year.

This year the renewal premium is **£319.21** including Insurance Premium Tax.

If we wished to renew without including the All Risks cover on the Wombel, the revised annual cost would be **£227.75**.

For comparison, last year's premium was £229.62.

SAFER RECRUITMENT – TRAINING REQUIRED FOR VOLUNTARY ROLES

The Guild needs to ensure that those who agree to stand for election to a Guild or District role understand the requirements for training that have been mandated on us by the Church of England.

Additionally, those standing for a Trustee role should be willing and able to fulfil the legal requirements.

The following table outlines the training and requirements that volunteers must adhere to:

Role	Minimum CofE training level (renewable every 3 years)	Other
District Master (or equivalent named role)	Leadership Domestic Abuse	
Assistant District Master	Leadership Domestic Abuse	
District Secretary	Leadership Domestic Abuse	
District Education Officer	Leadership Domestic Abuse	
District Treasurer	Basic Awareness Domestic Abuse	
District Management Committee Member	Basic Awareness Domestic Abuse	
Guild Master (Trustee)	Leadership Domestic Abuse	Requirements and liabilities as per www.gov.uk
Guild Secretary (Trustee)	Leadership Domestic Abuse	Requirements and liabilities as per www.gov.uk
Report Secretary (Trustee)	Basic Awareness Domestic Abuse	Requirements and liabilities as per www.gov.uk
Peal Recorder (Trustee)	Basic Awareness Domestic Abuse	Requirements and liabilities as per www.gov.uk
Guild Education Officer (Trustee)	Leadership Domestic Abuse	Requirements and liabilities as per www.gov.uk
Guild Treasurer (Trustee)	Basic Awareness Domestic Abuse	Requirements and liabilities as per www.gov.uk
Master Elect	Leadership Domestic Abuse	
All other roles	Basic Awareness Domestic Abuse	

If a current post holder or new candidate is not willing to undertake the required training, they will not be able to fulfil the role.

This document will be reviewed regularly, and as required when external requirements and Guild activities change.

How to renew for 2026

All registered members will need to log in to renew their membership through membermojo (even those whose membership is free – to ensure their information is still up to date and correct).

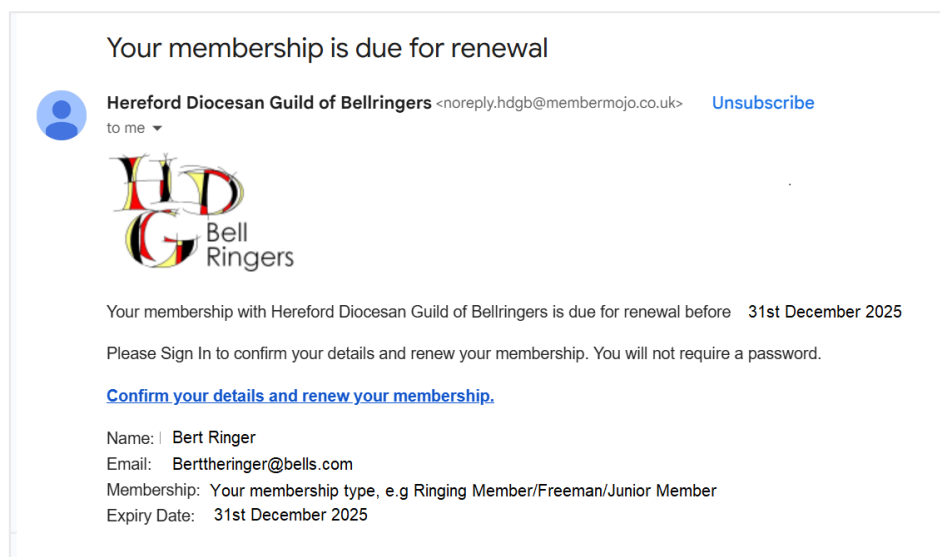
You can renew your online membership from 1st November onwards, but the system will also send out automated email reminders.

Access membermojo renewal page by:

Clicking the **renew** link in the mail sent to you and login OR

Go to <https://membermojo.co.uk/hdgb/signin> to login then go to **Your Membership** and click on **Renew**

Example of how the automated renewal email will look



Review and update your details, and communication preferences. Most information will be pre-filled, but some questions will need to be answered.

NB to make compiling the annual report easier, and because of the changes to the CoFE safeguarding framework this year, there will be some additional questions to answer.

The following questions are about any roles you may have as a ringer.

Such as, are you a Tower Captain or Correspondent, or do you have a Guild or District role?
This information will help us to keep contact information correct and make compiling the annual report much simpler.

*** Are you a Guild Officer, District Secretary or District Ringing Master (includes Assistant Ringing Masters or other named equivalent position)?**

-- select --

District Education Officers who may run practices on behalf of the Guild/District should answer YES
District Treasurers/Bell Restoration Fund Reps etc. (ie officers who will not organise or run a practice) should answer NO

*** Are you a Tower Captain (also known as a Tower Ringing Master) or appointed as a Responsible Individual for a Tower by a PCC?**

-- select --

The Tower Captain or Ringing Master will run the ringing at a tower.
Other people with responsibilities in the tower - eg Secretary/Treasurer or Steeple Keeper should answer NO to this question

*** Are you a Tower Correspondent?**

-- select --

If you have been appointed by a parish as correspondent for a tower please choose Yes



When you reach the bottom of the page click review

Next

your details then

Checkout

From the following screens you will have the option to add a donation to the Guild, or to pay for other members during the checkout process.

If a member wants to add extra items (donation or other subs), they must click on **VISIT STORE** at the bottom of the checkout page.

They can add items are required then click again to checkout – a revised basket will be shown e.g.

More Checkout Options

Start a new membership that shares your email.

New Membership

Checkout items from the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers store.

Visit Store

Checkout

Fran Watkins

Membership renewal: Ringing Member, 2025-11-01 to 2025-12-31

£10.00

Edit Remove

From the Store

Payment of 2026 membership subscription for additional ringing member(s) - Adult Ringing Member (x3)
paying for Sally Ringer, Bob Ringer and Fred Headstock of Bellminster tower

£30.00

Donation to Guild funds - £25 Donation

£25.00

Edit Remove

Total: £65.00

PAYMENT OPTIONS - Members can pay

- online with a Credit or debit card (processed by Stripe)
- by Paypal Account
- To your District Treasurer
- Or by selecting that your Tower will make payment for your 2026 subscription

Where a member chooses to pay **online** their membership record will be updated immediately.

Online payment can be made through the checkout (hosted by Stripe, by Apple Pay or by Paypal account

Checkout

Fran Watkins

Membership renewal: Ringing Member, 2025-11-01 to 2025-12-31 £10.00

Edit Remove

Total: £10.00

Payment

Pay with credit or debit card

Credit or debit card (processed by Stripe)

Card number: 1234 1234 1234 1234

Expiry date: MM / YY

CVC: CVC

Pay with Card

Apple Pay

Pay with your PayPal account

If a member chooses to pay to their Treasurer or confirms that their tower will pay, when the admins receive confirmation that payment has been made, an Administrator will mark the record as payment received/renewed manually.

Pay with Payment by CASH only to my District Treasurer or My 2026 subscription will be paid by my tower

Payment by CASH only to my District Treasurer

My 2026 subscription will be paid by my tower

In all cases the final **ORANGE BUTTON** must be clicked to confirm checkout

Pay with My 2026 subscription will be paid by my tower

Pay with Payment by CASH only to my District Treasurer

otherwise the process WILLNOT BE COMPLETE

When checkout has been completed the member will receive an email confirming their renewal option.

If any member needs help, please contact Fran Watkins. A 'How to' Guide will be added to the front page of the website and to membermojo.