

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Branch of the LDGCBR

01 FEBRUARY 2025 / 01:30 pm / Butterwick Village Hall

Attendees at the ringing sessions and / or the business meeting

Jackie Harris, Lynda Hankin, Keith Butter (Guild Master), Phil Ford, Sue Stevenson, Andrew Cooke, Tony Barker, Isabel Barker, Ruth Smith, Tess Rowland, Colin Simpson, Anita Collin, Jo Pearson, Caitlin Meyer, Robert Ingamells, Don Hare, Steve Palmer, Teresa Croft, Sylvia Bird, Alan Bird, Christine Higginson, Antony Wakefield, Louis Watson, Val Wild, Janice Elley, Chris Turner, Diana Povah, Michael Evans, Graham Ridgway, Sandra Taylor, Sue Wilcox Ridgway, and David Bennett,

Welcome and Apologies:

In the absence at the meeting of the Branch President, the Guild Ringing Master, Keith Butter was invited to chair the meeting. This proposal was agreed by those present. He welcomed all attendees with thanks for attending.

Apologies had been received from Isabel and Tony Barker who were unable to make the start of the meeting but arrived part way through, Paul Solari, Sally Sivil, Ronnie Crighton, Richard Willoughby, Russell Green, Barbara Rand, Tony Ladds and Andy Douglas.

Obituaries and presentation:

The loss during the past year of Mick Day (Louth), Bob Shaw (Halton Holegate) and Bill Young (Old Leake) was marked in the usual way with a minute's silent contemplation.

Minutes of the 2024 AGM:

Minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated by email prior to the meeting and hard copies were available in the room. These were accepted by the meeting as a true record of the previous meeting. (Proposed by Andrew Higginson and seconded by Jo Pearson) The file copy was signed by the acting chair. There were no matters arising from the minutes which weren't covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Nomination of new or returning Guild Members:

The following were proposed and accepted to become returning members of LDGCBR:

Steve Palmer and Karen Johnston (Mablethorpe - N. Caitlin Meyer, 2nd Phil Ford), John Marshall, Kirsty Grantham, Maddie Turner (Spilsby - N. Colin Simpson, 2nd Tess Rowland) Nigel Lusby (Horncastle - N. Don Hare, 2nd Andrew Cooke) Graham Ridgway (Coningsby & Tattershall - N. Tess Rowland, 2nd Colin Simpson) Ian Evans (Willoughby - N. Caitlin Meyer, 2nd Phil Ford)

Branch President's report:

This had been circulated by email prior to the meeting and hard copies were available in the room.

Branch Ringing Master's report:

Hard copies were available in the room and the RM presented the report to the meeting. This report was accepted, (Proposed by Caitlin Meyer, 2nd Phil Ford)

Branch Secretary's report:

This had been distributed prior to the meeting by email and hard copies were available in the room. The Branch Secretary presented the report to the meeting. This report was accepted with one correction regarding the venue of the previous AGM, (Proposed by Jo Pearson, 2nd Sue Stevenson) This report is to be included in the Guild Annual Report.

Branch Treasurer's report:

The report and financial balance sheets had been distributed prior to the meeting by email and hard copies were available in the room. The treasurer's report had been audited independently by Mr. Mark Hibbard (Previous Tower Captain at Coningsby) and was accepted at the meeting, (Proposed by Andrew Cooke and 2nd by Anita Collin) One query arose with regard to a small BRF claim made by Sutterton which didn't appear in the accounts. The treasurer confirmed that no such grant had been paid and the matter would be subsequently investigated.

Bell Repair Fund / Training grants

These were as itemised in the Treasurer's report and balance sheets for the past year. The grant by the Eastern Branch for work at Halton Hlegate had previously been set up to a maximum of £1100 based on initial estimates of the cost. This award had been paid. The actual cost of the work had exceeded the estimate and based on the 10% branch contribution guideline, a further £94.78 had been paid. In addition, a subsidy of £275.30 had been paid to Halton Hlegate for new ropes.

Similarly, a payment of £558 had been paid for new ropes at Friskney.

Repairs at Kirton had been completed and a sum of £341.50 paid.

A contribution of £192.50 has been proposed for new rope top ends at Alford was approved.

Proposed by Caitlin Meyer, 2nd Jo Pearson.

Guild Master:

Keith Butter, the Guild Master, addressed the meeting and recalled the previous branch meeting at Old Bolingbroke, noting that it was there in 1940 that the Rev. Grant Colvin Graham had been arrested and imprisoned for ringing church bells contrary to an order banning this activity during the war. After some considerable support from the readers of Ringing World, the vicar was released as the order hadn't been in effect at the time of the offence. He had, however, been incarcerated for 12 days by the time of his release.

Keith welcomed those attending who were from other branches on behalf of the Eastern Branch.

He then presented Jo Pearson and Caitlin Meyer (Branch RM and deputy RM) with a 1913 brass plaque inscribed with the name of one Alfred Barber of Freiston, who had at one time been the Eastern Area Treasurer from 1895.

Keith congratulated the branch on its fundraising successes and on putting monies raised to good use on the various restoration and maintenance projects ensuring that many towers remain ringable.

He also reported on the Guild Dinner held at Woodhall Spa commemorating the 125th Anniversary of the Guild, noting in particular the tremendous tiered cake made from cheeses which Caitlin had provided for the occasion.

Keith invited members to put themselves forward for vacant positions in the Guild, including Guild Training Officer, Guild Secretary, Public Relations Officer, Web Master, and Bell Restoration Fund administrator.

Election of Branch Officers:

All current branch officers have been approached and are willing to carry on in their current roles with the exception of the Branch Safeguarding Officer. Nominations were sought from others who may wish to be considered for these roles. There were no new nominations. It was proposed to adopt the existing officers en bloc. This was proposed by Ruth Smith, 2nd by Anita Collin and unanimously carried.

Caitlin Meyer proposed that Christine Higginson be nominated as the new branch safeguarding officer. Christine agreed to take this on. 2nd Jo Pearson and carried unanimously.

The officers are: Branch President Tony Barker, Branch Ringing Master Jo Pearson. Deputy RM Caitlin Meyer. Branch Secretary Colin Simpson. Branch Treasurer Tess Rowland. Branch Safeguarding Officer Christine Higginson. Website Editor and Guild Fundraising Phil Ford. Maintenance Team Leader Tony Barker.

Proposals for monthly meetings, branch outings and targeted training:

A calendar of proposed events for the year has been put together and hard copies made available. Many of these events are subject to confirmation. In addition, there is to be a joint Northern Branch / Eastern Branch ringing meeting on 20th July at Louth. In a departure from the norm, the May branch meeting will be in and around Hereford, where Bruce Talmage now resides and rings, having previously been a ringer at Old Bolingbroke. Members are invited to travel down on the Friday and ring at the five towers on the Saturday. They may also like to stay Saturday night and join local towers for service ringing on Sunday morning.

Striking Competition(s):

It was suggested that the Ringing Master and Deputy Ringing Master should decide on proposals for a branch 6 bell competition but that there was an appetite for such a competition in order for new ringers to gain the experience.

Any Other Business:

Sue Stevenson proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of the membership to all those who facilitated ringing within the branch.

Phil Ford announced that proceeds from the sale of Calendars and Christmas Cards had this year totalled around £350. He thanked the other guild members who had assisted with the sale of these items.

The chair thanked the Butterwick ringing team, clergy and PCC for the use of their bells as well as the catering staff for the lunch provided.

Chris Turner gave an update on proposals to reinstate the bells as Bennington. An estimate for the refurbishment is in the order of £6000. An inspection by Blyth & Co. had been made, but until such time as funding is available there is unlikely to be further progress with this project.

Having by now arrived to join the meeting, Tony Barker proposed that Shaunagh Bliss, Amy Edwards and Thomas Robinson be elected as Guild Members, these all being ringers at Friskney. Colin Simpson seconded the proposal, and the three were unanimously accepted.

The meeting closed at 2:30 pm.

The next Branch AGM is to be held at Ingoldmells on 7th February 2026.