

Annual General Meeting of The Guild of Suffolk Ringers

Saturday 26th April 2025

held at The United Reformed Church, Debenham

1. Welcome, thanks and apologies

The meeting started at 5.00pm with 62 members attending.

- a. Mark Ogden, as Chairman, welcomed all those present to the Guild's AGM. He started by thanking all those who have organised the day, those in the NE Team, the caterers and those who served drinks at Dove House, also and the Vicar, The Rev'd Susan Taylor for allowing us to use Mary Mary's Church for the Service and to The Rev'd Keith Rengert for leading it and to Tim Hart for playing the organ.
- b. MO welcomed all new members to the Guild and said that 20% of our membership have joined in the last 5 years. This is great and is a very positive sign for the Guild. One challenge he urged us all to work to improve in the next year and beyond is our moving people on from basic ringing to more method ringing, to ringing quarter peals and peals and also to calling and conducting. These are areas where we need to see development going forward.
- c. Apologies were received from 37 members and have been recorded in the Attendance Book.

2. Absent Friends

The names of the following members who have passed away since the 2024 AGM were read out and remembered.

John Uden, Southwold (died just before the 2024 AGM); Helen Brookes, Hacheson (died just before the 2024 AGM); Alastair McArthur, Woolpit; Bob Foster, Badingham; Peter Ernst, Bredfield; David McLean, NRLM from Lowestoft; Valerie Eagle-Bott, Wissett; Evelyn Reeve, Bures; Michael J Tyler, Woodbridge; Raymond J Banks, Kersey; John Garratt, Brandeston; Brian Beecroft, Palgrave; Marion Turner, Mildenhall; Carol A Girling, Stowmarket.

Members observed a period of silence in remembrance of these absent friends.

3. Election of New Members

- a. Application Forms had been received from 3 prospective members. Their Subscriptions have been paid.

Name	Tower	Proposer	Seconder
Rev'd Keith Rengert	Debenham	Jenny Scase	Robert Scase
Julie Richardson	Reydon	Philip Gorrod	Erika Clarke
Peter Richardson	Reydon	Philip Gorrod	Erika Clarke

All members were in favour of their election with no abstentions.

b. Two proposals were made for Honorary Life Members

Ruth Young – Ruth has been Treasurer for the NW District for 29 years! Indeed she was also in the same role for the NE District for some years before that and NW District Secretary for some time too. All of the roles she has undertaken with distinction. She has been a Guild member continuously since 1966. This proposal was made by Neal Dodge and endorsed by the MW District Committee. The motion was approved nem.con. The Chairman thanked Ruth for her decades of dedicated service to the Guild.

The second proposal was for Christine Knight and this was made by the SW District. Christine has been a dedicated and valued member of the Guild for more than 50 years. Her most significant contribution has been as Peal Secretary, a role she held for 20 years. She is currently SW District Secretary. She is a constant source of guidance and encouragement in both the District and the Guild. Nigel Gale and Katharine Salter both spoke in favour of this proposal. All voted in favour of the motion. Christine spoke thanking people for the honour of being made a life member.

4. Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The Minutes of last year's AGM had been distributed before the meeting. They were proposed by the Secretary, David Everett, and seconded by Kate Gill. They were unanimously accepted. There were no matters arising other than those already on the Agenda.

5. Trustee Report

There were no questions.

6. Officers Reports

The Chairman invited questions about the Officer Reports in turn. There were no questions about any of the reports. The meeting voted unanimously to accept all the Reports.

7. Annual Report

MO thanked Josh Watkins for taking on the role of preparing and editing the Annual Report this year. All his work is much appreciated.

8. Central Council Report

MO reported on the work of the Central Council and then raised the subject of Fees paid to the Central Council. The Fees for this year have been raised from 20p per member to 40p and will be raised to £1 per member from 2026. He explained what the Central Council does on behalf of the guilds and that the number of demands on them is ever increasing. As most of this work is undertaken by volunteers, the Council has decided that they will need to employ some help to enable the work to be done in a timely way, hence the need for an increase in subscriptions. However, MO said that this represented good value for money when we look at what the Council does. The Guild will pay these increased Fees without increasing the fees members make to the Guild.

9. Subscriptions and Peal Fees for 2026

Tim Hart, our Guild Treasurer, said that there would be no increase in these Fees in 2026.

10. Election of Officers

The following people were proposed for the Guild posts.

Post	Standing	Proposer	Seconder
Chairman	Mark Ogden	Mike Whitby	Chris Garner
Ringing Master	Julian Colman	Katharine Salter	Tim Hart
Secretary	David Everett	Neal Dodge	Clare Free
Treasurer	Tim Hart	Rowan Wilson	Brian Whiting
Chair of the BAC	Chris Davies	Mark Steggles	Nigel Gale
Technical Advisor	Jed Flatters	Chris Davies	Mark Steggles
PRO	Neal Dodge	Mark Steggles	Serena Steggles
Report Editor	Josh Watkins	Mark Ogden	David Everett
Librarian	Abby Antrobus	Katharine Salter	David Stanford
Peal Secretary	(no nominations)		
Handbell Trustee	Brian Whiting	Mary Dunbavin	Diana Pipe
Mini Ring Trustee	Brian Whiting	Mary Dunbavin	Diana Pipe

All these people were duly elected unanimously to their respective posts.

Central Council Reps

Standing	Proposer	Seconder
Mark Ogden	Richard Munnings	Tim Hart
Neal Dodge	Mark Steggles	Serena Steggles
Cath Colman	Tim Hart	Julian Colman
David Everett	Mark Ogden	Katharine Salter

Members voted for their election en bloc with all in favour and no abstentions.

Election of Trustees

MO proposed that the usual practice of appointing the Guild's Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Ringing Master as the Trustees and this was agreed, Therefore, Mark Ogden, David Everett, Tim Hart & Julian Colman were elected as Trustees unanimously.

11. St Edmunds Clapper

Tim Hart said that the only significant fund-raising event in the last year was the NW District Open Day organised by Josh Watkins. It raised £2,032. Tim proposed that Josh be awarded the St Edmunds Clapper for his excellent work in organising this event.

MO asked if there were any other suggestions as to how this award could be made in future years. There were none proposed at the meeting but he asked for further consideration to be given to the question and any suggestions made to him.

12. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Tim Hart proposed that Andrew Rutherford of Bas Accountants, now trading as RNH Accountants, be appointed as Independent Examiner for the coming year. This was agreed unanimously.

13. Guild Events 2025/6

The Striking Competitions will be held on 17th May at Yoxford (6-bell) and Aldeburgh (8-bell)
Drinkstone Bells dedication 11th May at 3pm
Fornham St Martin Bells dedication 18th May at 4.30pm
Veterans Day will be on 9th July at Debenham starting at 2pm
Next year's AGM will be on 11th April 2026 in the SW District

14. Any other Business

Tim Hart spoke about the legacy from Adrian Knights.

The Suffolk Guild is very fortunate to have been left a significant sum of money in the will of a late ringer, Adrian Knights. The terms of the will specify that the money should be spent *'for the purpose of augmenting existing rings of bells to eight or more'*.

It is critical that the Guild can demonstrate appropriate due diligence is in place surrounding the decisions made around the spending of the money.

The GMC will have ultimate sign-off on any decisions and spend.

The GMC have empowered a working group to start reviewing options. The working group consists of representatives from the Trustees, the Bell Advisory Committee, each of the districts, as well as the executor of the will.

Approach to selecting initial candidates

We will take a 3 fold approach:

1. Contact all PCCs via Diocese
2. Email members, or contact via District reps
3. Centrally create a list of potential candidates, after review of the CoE risk of closure data

Assuming timely approval of the approach, the deadline for responses will be 30 September 2025.

There being no other items of business the meeting finished at 6pm