

15:30 18th January 2026

MINUTES – AGM

PETERBOROUGH BRANCH

OF THE PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS

Location: Village Hall, Fotheringhay, Peterborough.

Attended by:

Sarah Bence, Deborah Bray, Steve Brown, Julian Burton, Andrew Christie, Gillie Christie, Bernie Clapp, Andrea Cully, Alex Dyer, Nick Elks, Yvette Halewood, Hilary Hardie, Marilyn Jenner, Sue Marsden, Caroline Mould, Clara Pedersen, Holly Pedersen, Les Ranford, John Riley, Jane Robinson, Alex Terry, Sylvia Upex, Clair Walton & Elaine Wilkinson

Guild Representative:

Jim Bence

1. WELCOME

Hilary Hardie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. VOTE OF THANKS

Julian Burton thanked Rev'd Annie for leading the service and James Parsons for playing the organ. Thanks were extended to Fotheringhay and the Warmington ringers for hosting, the branch committee for their organisation, Elaine Wilkinson for coordinating the ringing, and to everyone else for their attendance. Thanks to Elaine and Jane who are standing down from their positions this year and who organised a full year of ringing events.

3. APOLOGIES

Kate Ager, David Banks, Chris Burgess, Jill Cowcill, Derek Jones, Sue Jones, Judith Rogers, Robin Rogers, Anne Russell, David Teall, Pat Teall, Stuart Weston & Mark Willis.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2025 AGM – 18TH JANUARY 2025

Proposed by Sue Marsden and seconded by Julian Burton. Approved by all as true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

None.

6. OFFICERS REPORTS

The Ringing Masters Report is attached to these minutes.

Hilary Hardie provided an update on the Young Ringers initiative, which has been successful, with four meetings held in 2025 and positive feedback from participants. Further sessions are to be planned for later this year.

Elaine Wilkinson announced that she and Jane Robinson will be stepping down from their positions. Hilary Hardie expressed her thanks for everything they have organised over the past year, acknowledging their valuable input and hard work

Steward's Report: Nick Elks noted that there have been very few requests for help. He reported that as with last year despite his efforts to remain proactive, he has been unable to undertake many tower inspections this year and therefore has nothing further to report. He also confirmed that he had hoped to step down last year and now intends to do so this year.

The Treasurer's accounts have already been posted on the branch website. Steve Brown thanked Julian Burton for auditing accounts.

Hilary Hardie thanked officers for the reports.

7. ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2024

Proposed by Elaine Wilkinson and seconded by Andrew Christie. Adopted by the meeting.

8. REPORT ON CASTOR RINGING SCHOOL

Attached to these minutes.

9. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The following people listed below were nominated and accepted as new members to the Peterborough branch:

Kate Ager (S)	Castor
Louis Moon (S)	Castor
Alice Moon (S)	Castor

Ivo Ellershaw-Clarke (S)	Castor
Sunny Pedersen(S)	Castor
Les Ranford	Nassington
Andrea Culley	Nassington
Trudie Raftey	Wittering
Christine Redding	Peterborough, St Mary's
Marilyn Brown	Peterborough, Cathedral
Keith Brown	Peterborough, Cathedral
Rob Lane	Peterborough, Cathedral

New members were proposed by Andrew Christie (Peterborough, St Marys), Hilary Hardie (Cathedral, Nassington & Wittering), Julian Burton (Castor) and seconded by Sue Marsden. Welcome packs will be handed to the new members at an appropriate practice session.

10. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

Elaine Wilkinson reported the following first quarter peals for Kate Ager, Nikki Wilmot and Kevin Winter. The certificates to be presented at an appropriate practice.

11. ELECTION OF BRANCH OFFICERS FOR 2024

Hilary Hardie expressed gratitude to all for their dedicated service and contributions throughout the year.

POSITION	NOMINATION	PROPOSED BY	SECONDED BY
Chair	H. Hardie	E.Wilkinson	S.Marsden
Ringing Master	Vacant		
Assistant to Ringing Master	S.Marsden	J.Burton	H.Hardie
Secretary	D. Bray	H.Hardie	J.Robinson
Treasurer	S. Brown	A.Christie	E.Wilkinson
Steward	Vacant		
Press officer and newsletter editor	Vacant H.H newsletter		
Branch Committee Members (3)	A. Christie A.Cully C. Mould	H.Hardie	J.Riley
100 Club Representative	H. Hardie		
Examiner of Accounts	J. Burton	H.Hardie	E.Wilkinson

The above were all elected, unopposed.

There was discussion regarding the vacant Ringing Master position. Jim Bence suggested following the approach adopted by another branch, whereby several volunteers share responsibility for organising events rather than placing the full burden on the Ringing Master and Assistant Ringing Master.

The Steward's position also remains unfilled. Hilary Hardie proposed creating a co-ordinator role to liaise with stewards in active towers, enabling the pooling of experience and resources to support towers requiring assistance and lacking a dedicated steward.

The committee will consider these proposals in the coming weeks and report back to members.

12. DISCUSSION/NOMINATION OF BRANCH EVENTS & PROGRAMME FOR 2026 INCLUDING THE GUILD EVENTS

Branch 8-Bell Practice & Social Events: The current alternating schedule between St Kyneburgha, Castor (Fridays) and St Marys, Peterborough (Sundays) was discussed. Hilary Hardie reminded members that practices had previously been paused due to low attendance, and this low attendance has been the case again this year. Elaine Wilkinson noted that the programme has been particularly full, with both 8-bell and branch social event each month and suggested that these should be alternated. This view was generally supported by those present, and the committee will consider the matter further to find a solution. It was agreed that social events have been well received, though they should not be scheduled too closely together.

Junior Ringers: Hilary Hardie will be confirming some dates, and these will be posted on Petnet calendar for any young ringers interested.

13. ADDRESS BY VISITING GUILD OFFICER

Jim Bence reported that the Guild has produced bell handling posters for use in towers with ringers. He would like each tower to have a set and will be leaving copies for distribution.

He outlined changes to the Guild's practice schedule for next year. Attendance at the 10-bell practices has been variable, so the Guild intends to alternate these with 8-bell practices, running them in the odd numbered months. The next 10-bell practice will

be in March. He explained the difficulty of finding a central venue due to the geographical spread of the Guild, noting that any host tower must have ground floor ringing & toilet facilities. Additionally, tea, coffee, and biscuits will be provided. The first 8-bell practice will be held at Weedon Bec, and further details to be published on the website.

Jim encouraged members to enter the 6-bell striking competition and explained that both method ringing and rounds & call changes which will be held in the Rutland Branch at Braunston. Updated rules will be available on the website and to be circulated to branch chairs and secretaries to share with members.

He also raised a concern regarding branch finances. While it is not inherently problematic, branch funds continue to grow, and very little is being spent. This is occurring across all branches and may attract scrutiny from the Charity Commission. Branches are encouraged to make appropriate use of their bell funds; for example, by applying for bell ropes. If funds remain unused, the Guild Treasurer may request that they be transferred to the Guild's central account.

Hilary Hardie noted that the branch does have a grants scheme, though there has been no recent demand for it. She also raised the question of how much a branch reasonably needs to retain for operational costs, which will require further discussion.

Sue Marsden asked whether any upcoming Guild restoration projects might place increased demand on the Guild bellringing fund, as this could influence future consideration of transferring some of the branch surplus to the Guild fund [revised 24/01/2026]. Jim Bence advised that this should be checked with John Beresford.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Hilary Hardie gave a gentle reminder that the annual subscriptions are due.

Sue Marsden reported that Oundle has several new learners, who are currently being taught at Cotterstock. She also noted that a number of ringers have recently moved into the Oundle area, which should support increased ringing at the Oundle tower. Additionally, as the existing ropes are in poor condition, it is likely that a rope-grant application will be submitted.

Hilary Hardie thanked everyone for attending.

16.13 MEETING CLOSED

RINGING MASTERS 2025 REPORT – ELAINE WILKINSON

Socials & Training Events

Jane and I have continued to run a full schedule of events during 2025 that have included the 8-bell practice, socials and training. These have included:

- Grandsire & Stedman practice
- Surprise minor socials
- A surprise major social
- Visit's to both St John the Baptist in Cathedral Sq in May and the Cathedral in Nov. We would like to thank Helena and the Dean for the invite to the Cathedral and Paul Reed for accommodating the ringing at St John's.
- A striking workshop with thanks to James Thorpe for leading this, and the many helpers for attending.

The ring for your tea was once again a great success and kindly arranged by and with thanks to Diana Street.

A huge thank you everyone who contributes to making these sessions a success and especially to those of you who donate your time to help others progress. It really keeps bell ringing alive in this branch and my thanks especially to Jane Robinson, my assistant without whom the program for 2025 would have been impossible.

Stats

Our congratulations go to:

First QP: Kathryn Ager, Nikki Wilmot & Kevin Winter

Our top QP ringers: Andrew Christie, David Banks, Stuart Weston & Diana Street

Our top Peal ringers: James Thorpe & Helena Thorpe

Young Ringers - Hilary provided an update see minutes of meeting.

Thank you to Hilary, ringing teachers and ringing parents for supporting the sessions.

2026

Sadly, Jane and I have both felt that it is time to step back from our Ringing Master positions for family, work and personal reasons. I hope that the objectives and vision of the Peterborough Branch encourage you to volunteer to take over our roles. We will both be available to help if it is needed.

The program for 2026 is open to suggestion to the new Ringing Masters.

Deaths this year, June Pitcher, Roy Hibbard & Trevor Vercoe.

CASTOR RINGING SCHOOL 2025 REPORT – HILARY HARDIE



Castor Ringing School

Report to the Peterborough Branch AGM

It has been another busy year at the Ringing School. We continue with the progression from handling through to rounds and plain hunt to various methods.

In the year, a number of new ringers from various towers started to learn. Some tried it for one or two sessions, and then decided it wasn't for them. Wittering tower recruited a number of potential ringers, so in January we ran additional handling sessions for them after the main session. Unfortunately, only one of those has continued learning.

Many of the ringers who started ringing last year have progressed, and we now have a cohort ringing Plain Hunt on a regular basis, and they will move onto trebling and methods in time. It always surprises me that as one group progresses, another group of new learners arrive! Having learnt to handle a bell safely, a number of ringers have returned to their towers to learn methods.

At the 2024 AGM, it was suggested that the helpers could benefit from a session making sure that they are on top of all the methods that might be called. Two sessions on Saturday afternoons were held over the past year. They have been fun, and an enjoyable learning experience for us all. We will continue with these every 3-4 months over the next year.

Thank you to all those experienced ringers who give up their Saturday mornings to support us. It is much appreciated by the learners. A special thank you to Stuart Weston for calling most of the methods and keeping both the learners and helpers straight ably assisted by David Banks and others. Also, a thank you to a number of people who manage the sessions, either when I am away or teaching handling.

A particular thank you to Terry Wright who as School Administrator has organised the helpers through out the year, despite being unable to join us.

Attendance record

This year we have had 7 new ringers that are learning nicely, plus 5 or 6 persons who came and tried, but decided that ringing wasn't for them.

Total number of sessions, 45.

- Total number of pupils attending, 322. This equates to 38 fewer pupils than last year.
- Highest attendance of pupils attending an individual session, 11
- Lowest attendance of pupils attending an individual session, 4.
- Average attendance of pupils attending an individual session over 45 sessions, 6.

Total number of Tutors/Helpers attending, 328 - 6 more than in 2024.

- Highest attendance of Tutors/Helpers attending an individual session, 10.
- Lowest attendance of Tutors/Helpers attending an individual session, 5.

- Average attendance of Tutors/Helpers attending an individual session over 45 sessions, 8.2.

Over the last 12 months there has been a healthy number of Learning the Ropes achievements. The table below shows the number of passes made from Levels 1 to 5. Well done everybody and a big thank you to all teachers and helpers.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
7	6	1	1	2

At level 4, we had 1 graduation from pupil to helper. Congratulations to mother and daughter, Clara and Holly Pedersen, for passing level 5.

Safeguarding

In the year the Peterborough Guild of Bell Ringers produced new safeguarding guidance for bell ringers, following discussions with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. I reviewed the guidance and the School complies with the latest requirements, eg we have been keeping an attendance register for a number of years.

All those who teach at the School are DBS checked, many of them from other churches and roles across the Diocese. An additional column has been included in the register to identify these ringers.

I have encouraged all our pupils to undertake the relevant safeguarding training. Both Julian Burton and I have undertaken the Safeguarding Leadership Course in 2025.

Finances

The School continues to be in a good financial position, with reserves of £1,394. The main costs are the contribution to Castor Tower for heating, lighting etc. of £240pa, the ART annual donation, booklets for pupils and the provision of new stays.

The AGM agreed a minimum level of reserves set at around 18 months costs of £600. On that basis the £1 contribution from pupils continues, but helpers no longer need to contribute.

Hilary Hardie, Head Tutor
December 2025