

Minutes of the Guild Week Meeting held in the Marquis of Granby, Sleaford on Monday 19th August 2019

Members Present

President: Richard A Smith

Minute taker: Melissa Nash

Peter Hill	John Hutchinson	Jonathan Shanklin	Christine Hill
Andrew Carlotti	Ken Darvill	Chris Rogers	Eric Roberts
John Harrison	Nicholas T Smith	Clarke Walters	Alan Griffin
Alan Winter	Richard Underwood	Vivian Nutton	Ian Vincent
Brian Meads	Christine Nutton	Nicholas Small	Barbara Le Gallez

The President was in the chair and the meeting opened at 20:43.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

David Richards	James Ellison	James Dann	Elizabeth Hopper
Martin Press	Naomi Laredo	Jon Reed	Claire Barlow
Richard Youdale	Tom Hooley		

2. Minutes of the Guild Week Meeting 2018

There were no comments on the accuracy of the minutes. The minutes were proposed as a true account by Melissa Nash and seconded by Jonathan Shanklin. The minutes were accepted by the meeting unopposed.

3. Matters arising from the Guild Week Meeting 2018

The plan to organise a peal weekend, reported in the diary dates of the Guild Week Meeting 2018, did not come to fruition because there was not a date found that suited enough people. Richard Smith said he would like another peal weekend organised, similar to that which happened a couple of years ago, in the spring/early summer of 2020. Brian Meads expressed his view that experienced ringers would be attracted by the prospect of a Guild peal and that ringing something 'fancy' was not necessary in order to attract them. Chris Rogers suggested that a Guild peal he was planning to organise at Guildford Cathedral around April/May/June time could form the basis for a peal weekend since there are other good towers in the area. This could be organised once Chris Rogers has received the peal dates for Guildford Cathedral.

4. Matters arising from the AGM

The President reported to the meeting that the Guild library was going to be moved to the ringing chamber of OLEM. Some bookcases have been installed in the ringing chamber but nothing has yet been moved. Hopefully most, if not all, of the library will have been moved by Christmas.

Chris Rogers asked for an update on the sale of books and transfer of books to other libraries that had been mentioned in previous communications about the library. The President responded that after a meeting last year agreed to sell a substantial part of the library, lots of members expressed that they were against this. He received the suggestion that the library could be stored in OLEM. A key to the tower will be given to the librarian (a key to the church will not be given but the church is open most of the day). Storing the library in the ringing chamber at OLEM has the advantages that it is a central, large, secured room and has no damp. The proposal at the Lent term meeting was that the library would be stored at OLEM, rather than sold, only if sufficient funds were donated to buy the necessary bookcases. Donations to buy bookcases have not been needed because bookcases have been donated.

In answer to questions from Brian Meads and Andrew Carlotti, the President reported that the bookcases are a mixture of both open cases and glass-fronted, lockable cases. Valuable books will be kept in locked cases. There are several empty cases ready in the ringing chamber and now moving of books needs to be scheduled, with hopefully a large number moved before the start of term. The Church authorities, particularly the Rector, are supportive of having the library stored in OLEM.

Chris Rogers thanked Richard Smith for his update on the library and said that it seemed a satisfactory solution. Others in the meeting murmured their agreement.

Andrew Carlotti asked if there is any plan to make a recommended books list, to which Jonathan Shanklin responded that the 'useful' books are in the working library at Bene't's. The books in the main library are mainly history books.

Richard Underwood asked if there was any insurance for the library. Richard Smith replied that the library has never had any insurance, despite being worth around £10,000. Peter Hill suggested the cost of insuring against fire could be investigated. Richard Smith agreed this was a good suggestion and that research on this could be reported back to a future meeting. Vivian Nutton pointed out that the church insurance policy might cover the library and Chris Rogers reported that this was the case for the Guildford library.

5. Future Guild Weeks

The President thanks Jonathan Shanklin for organising a very enjoyable Guild week and there is a round of applause from the meeting.

Richard Smith begins discussion on future Guild weeks by stating that there have been about five new format Guild weeks (accommodation in a pub/hotel and a hall floor for students). His sense from discussion with both students who are and aren't present, is that students prefer the new format. Andrew Carlotti agrees with this, feeling that not having to deal with tents and potential rain is logistically easier and more comfortable. A hall floor is good because cost would be off-putting if it were higher. John Hutchinson agrees he also prefers a hall floor to camping.

Richard Smith reminds the meeting that the possibility of combining a hall floor and other accommodation in one facility or building was discussed at length last year. However, this is unlikely

to be found. Andrew Carlotti comments a communal space is good but it doesn't have to be in the same building, just nearby. Richard Smith says that an agricultural college or boarding school near a hall floor is a possibility but a challenging one, although someone is welcome to try if they wish. Peter Hill comments that the timescale for this is wrong and that to do this we would need to be looking at 2021. Chris Rogers says that a hotel should not be ruled out. Melissa Nash comments that it was convenient from the student perspective having a supermarket nearby this year.

Clarke Walters points out that the problem with the college/school format is that it needs lots of people to agree to go early on and that falling numbers have made this unviable. He feels that it is better for accommodation to not be so in advance and to have somewhere where individuals can book a room.

Richard Smith sums up that a similar format to this year should be pursued for 2020 and that if anyone wants to investigate the school/college format this should be for 2021. He goes on to say that we should be thinking about who might organise the next two Guild weeks and that whoever is organising can choose where they might like to go (provided the location hasn't been visited within about the last decade). Some potential places that haven't been visited so recently include North Yorkshire, South Lancashire and Dorset. Nicholas Small adds Sussex as a suggestion. The President asks that people consider if they might be willing to organise, know someone who might or have any other ideas.

John Harrison queries whether we know if numbers are still decreasing. Nicholas Small says he could supply some numbers from his transport data. The President thanks him and says that this would be much appreciated.

Jonathan Shanklin highlights that in order to organise quarter peals and peals, numbers need to be known in advance. The Doodle poll he used this year helped with this but there were still some last minute and unannounced additions. Richard Smith adds that it is important though that people can still drop in unplanned. Christine Hill states that people should recognise that they can't have ultimate flexibility and expect peals to be organised for them.

Christine Hill raises a concern that single women are being put off by the new format; that particularly with a big city, such as Bristol, not staying with others/being alone late at night can feel unsafe. She points out that there are no females staying alone present at this Guild week (the only single females present have been students and therefore staying with the group of students). The President thanks Christine for raising this concern. It is one that many at the meeting express that they had not considered.

Peter Hill suggests that a WhatsApp group, webpage or similar could be helpful in future years for publishing transport arrangements and finding the pub that others are at. Richard Smith states that transport is harder to organise when everyone isn't in one location and thanks Nicholas Small for his work in organising transport at Guild weeks. Peter Hill comments that with no central location there have been less handbells recently and Andrew Carlotti agrees more handbells would be nice. Brian Meads opinions being able to take his pint with him to where handbells are being rung is important. Peter Hill suggests that maybe the scout hut could be used as a place for the whole Guild to meet up one evening; with a takeaway ordered, beer brought from a supermarket and handbells being rung.

Brian Meads feels Christine Hill's point about single females was very serious and returns the meeting to this, asking what could be done. Christine elaborates that under the old format people could go back to the accommodation/the pub with others or go to the communal room, whereas in

the new format single women may end up sitting alone in their room or driving back and forth lots. This concern may also apply to some men. Richard Smith suggests perhaps a large hotel should be chosen so everyone can stay together if they choose. Brian Meads is concerned that this could be too expensive or too far out. Richard Smith feels a large hotel can be found that isn't too exorbitant and that perhaps cost isn't the biggest worry for most. Chris Rogers cites experience of staying more cheaply in a hotel aimed at business people on a bank holiday and that perhaps August could be similar.

Jonathan Shanklin comments meeting all the constraints, such as a station and scout hut nearby, is challenging. Andrew Carlotti suggests perhaps if a suitable hall floor can't be found, students could be subsidised. Peter Hill responds he doesn't see why there shouldn't be a student rate and Richard Smith adds the hall floor has always been capped at £10 per night. Jonathan Shanklin points out that in something like an agricultural college, food would probably also need to be included in the subsidy.

Nicholas Smith adds he'd be happy subsidising students and then goes on to point out that there's a distinct age gap in the middle amongst those present. Richard Underwood suggests this could be due to having families. Richard Smith opines that's not the only reason and that perhaps people partly don't go because they're not in the habit of doing so. It's stated that several of those present didn't come themselves for many years. Nicholas Smith says that he came back to Guild week due to fond memories of it as an undergrad and that it's therefore important to help encourage students to come.

6. Diary Dates

- 23rd November 2019 (TBC) – London Outing
- 14th March 2019 – Annual Dinner at Magdalene
- Friday 21st August to Wednesday 26th August (nominally, organiser can suggest alternative) – Guild Week 2020

Alan Winter brought up that the date of the next Ridgman contest was the 13th June 2020 and that experienced non-residents ringing in the Guild band could help. He suggested that anyone interested should let the Master know as it is hard for the Master to know who to ask.

Clarke Walters asked that an email was sent containing the dates mentioned and this was agreed to be a good idea.

7. Any Other Business

Nicholas Small thanked all those who have kept Guild week going over the past 50 years; he had enjoyed them all.

A toast was made to Chris Johnson.

The President declared the meeting closed at 21:59.