Minutes of the North East District Annual Meeting
held at Horham Community Centre, The Street, Horham IP21 5DY
on 8 November 2025 commencing at 5.30pm

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair, Dave Goldstone (**DG**), welcomed the Guild Chairman, the Guild Ringing Master and 17 other District members to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from 8 members of the District.

2. **Approval of the minutes of the previous ADM held on 9 November 2024**

DG reminded members that the draft minutes of the ADM held on 9 November 2024 at Southwold had been circulated with the agenda and asked whether anyone present wished to propose any corrections. None were proposed and the meeting approved the minutes as a true record of the business transacted at the previous ADM.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous ADM.

4. **Absent friends**

DG announced the sad loss of Tess Blower, a ringer at Beccles, whose funeral was to be held at North Cove on 13 November 2025. He described Tess as a lovely lady who remained positive throughout her long illness and who will be much missed by the band at Beccles. She was also responsible for the ringing at Barsham and Ringsfield. The District Ringing Master, Philip Gorrod (**PJG**), commented that she was a much better ringer than she thought she was. She rang 23 Quarter Peals with the last being on 11 July 2024.

Also to be remembered was Joan Johnceline of Wenhaston, a longtime member of the Guild. She was described as being a reliable ringer with a good sense of humour and a maker of wonderful meringues for many ringing teas. She rang primarily at Rumburgh, Halesworth and Wenhaston.

5. **District Ringing Master's Report** *(copy attached at the end of these minutes)*

PJG referred to his written report previously circulated with the agenda. He added that a band from the District had won the 8-bell trophy at the Guild striking competition earlier in the year and thanked all those who took part. No questions were raised or comments made on the report.

6. **District Committee Report** *(copy attached at the end of these minutes)*

A report from the District Committee (incorporating reports on the Guild's GMC, R&T committee and BAC) had been previously circulated with the agenda. Richard Rapior (**RTLR**), in his capacity as tower captain at Aldeburgh, commented that the work replacing the pulley blocks was complete and the fifth was now easier to ring.

The Guild Ringing Master, Julian Colman (**JC**), explained his plans for Surprise method practices, referring to the regular practices in the South East District and others that can be found on the Guild website under "*Whats On*".

7. Election of new Members

A membership application was received from Andrea Gomery whose home tower is Theberton. Her election to membership was proposed by RTLR and seconded by the District Treasurer, Julie Rapior (**JJR**) and it was confirmed her membership subscription had been paid. The meeting voted in favour of Andrea's election.

8. Election of District Officers

DG explained that, as he was not seeking re-election as District Chairman, he would continue to chair the meeting including the following item of business. It was noted that all appointments approved and any consequent changes in the composition of the Committee would take effect at the end of the meeting.

a) District Chairman

Nominations for this role were invited. RTLR's election as Chairman was proposed by PJG and seconded by Veronica Downing (**VAMD**). No other nominations were received and RTLR was duly elected as District Chairman.

b) District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary

DG reminded the meeting that, given the workload of the role of District Secretary, a decision had been taken two years ago to divide the duties between a District Secretary and an Assistant District Secretary. Marie Owen (**MO**) said she was willing to continue in post as District Secretary and Erika Clarke (**EMC**) confirmed she was willing to continue in the role of Assistant District Secretary. DG invited other nominations for the respective roles of District Secretary and Assistant District Secretary but none were received. DG proposed and Kate Gill seconded the proposal that MO be re-elected as District Secretary and that EMC be re-elected as Assistant District Secretary. The meeting voted in favour of MO's and EMC's re-elections to the respective roles en bloc.

c) District Treasurer

DG reported that JJR was willing to continue in office as District Treasurer and invited other nominations. No other nominations were received. JJR's re-election as District Treasurer was proposed by EMC and seconded by Chrissie Pickup and the meeting voted in favour of JJR's re-election.

d) District Ringing Master (**DRM**)

DG reported that PJG was willing to continue as DRM and invited other nominations. No other nominations were received. PJG's re-election as DRM was proposed by VAMD and seconded by Lizzie Wood (**LW**) and the meeting voted in favour of PJG's re-election.

e) Guild Management Committee representatives (5 places)

DG reported that the District is entitled to elect five representatives to sit on the GMC and that four of the current four representatives namely, PJG, Sarah Plummer (**SP**), Tom Grady (**TG**) and EMC were willing to stand for re-election. After a brief explanation of the role, no nominations were received for the fifth place available. DG proposed and LW seconded each of PJG, SP, TG and EMC for re-election as the District's representatives on the GMC and the meeting voted in favour of their re-election en bloc.

f) Recruitment and Training Committee Representatives (2 places)

DG reported that the District is entitled to elect two representatives to sit on the Guild's Recruitment and Training Committee (**R&T**) and that the two current representatives, PJG and Sue Child (**SC**), were willing to stand for re-election. PJG's and SC's re-election as the District's representatives on the R&T was proposed by

EMC and seconded by DG and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc. VAMD expressed her willingness also to be involved with recruitment and training and JC said he would contact VAMD.

g) Other District Committee members

DG explained that others can be elected to serve on the District Committee. He reported that he and KG were happy to continue as District Committee members. A nomination was also received for the election of Julie Richardson (**JR**) who, together with her husband Peter, had recently moved to Suffolk from Kent. The re-election of DG, KG and election of JR to the District Committee was proposed by PJG and seconded by EMC and the meeting voted in favour of their election en bloc.

9. Programme for 2026

DG invited input from the meeting into the District's draft programme for 2026 as circulated. He explained that all Quarterly Meetings would be brief and would only deal with election of new members and GMC news/issues, save for the District striking competition which had a particular agenda.

CPP confirmed she would organise another outing with a meal to follow as part of the planned Summer events. It was noted that the event at Southwold in February would be held in the morning. The Guild Ringing Master commented that the NW District's morning meetings tend to be popular.

10. Safeguarding

DG reinforced the importance of Safeguarding and undertaking the necessary training. It was there to help protect children, vulnerable adults and all of us. He encouraged members to consider what they had learnt and be aware of their duties so that we are all safe.

The Guild Chairman commented that the new Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is Head of Safeguarding for the Church at the national level and is aware that there are inconsistencies in approach and application in this field. Tower Captains are expected to have undertaken Leadership training but this is not the case in all areas of the country. There was a need for greater consistency and for the rules to work for ringers and across different churches. It was now recognised that vulnerable adults can include those undergoing periods of stress, such as bereavement or difficult life events. He added that he believed that the Basic module had improved. In-person courses tend to be less religious in content and there is now a bellringer's option in the module. He suggested that if ringers followed the Guild's Ringers' Code of Conduct then, generally, they would be compliant.

11. Any Other Business

DG invited members to raise any other items of business.

JR requested that payment of Guild subscriptions can be made direct but she will need to be notified by members when payment is made.

The Guild Chairman gave a brief update on the position of grant applications received for funding new augmentations from the Adrian Knights' Legacy Fund.

The Guild Ringing Master explained he was trying to attend all ADMs and as many practices as feasible. He had visited Aldeburgh and one of Beccles 10-bell practices. He thanked the District for hosting the Guild striking competitions earlier in the year which were well organised. He was aiming to see more training opportunities for ringers and explore how best to complement those activities already being undertaken in the Districts. He referenced Simon Linford's comments about the "red zone" between ringing Cambridge Minor to Bristol Maximus and stated his ambition for the Guild to look at more training for the "red zone". He was also hoping for a better outcome for the team taking part in the Ridgman Trophy (which will be hosted by Stowmarket) and announced that the National 12-bell Contest will be hosted by Bury St Edmunds in 2027.

The Guild Chairman mentioned that each District was to have a Youth Coordinator who would liaise with him to increase ringing opportunities and concentrate on events for young ringers. He explained that the National Young Ringers Striking Competition (age range up to 19 years old and some University students) was well worth young ringers attending and there was Guild funding available to support transport and sweatshirts etc.

The Guild Chairman also explained that the CCCBR has a major "Ringing 2030" initiative aimed to ensure there are enough ringers and towers by that date. Its work includes the development of lesson plans for schools with ringing-related themes.

DG ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending, Faith Darch for conducting the service, Jason Busby for playing the organ and Sue Child for reading the lesson. He also thanked MO for the organisation of the event.

MO then presented DG with a gift on behalf of the District by way of thanks for all his work as District Chairman.

The meeting closed at 6.15pm.

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Chair

ATTACHMENTS:

NE DISTRICT RINGING MASTER'S REPORT TO ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING 2025

Progress over the last year has been patchy. The Sole Bay Hub at Reydon continues to help new ringers to develop, but it all takes time, and up and coming learners need to be encouraged by tower captains and mentors to make the most of opportunities available, which are often not in their home tower. A squad of more experienced ringers has been attempting quarter peals in some of the more difficult Surprise Minor methods, with mixed results, but advanced eight or ten bell ringing has been hard to come by, despite dedicated monthly 8-bell and bi-monthly 10-bell practices at Halesworth and Beccles respectively.

Attendance at District practices/meetings has been variable. Each year the District Committee proposes a series of events: each year you, the members, say what a good job they have done, but then do not actually support those events. If they are not what you would like to do then say so: tell us what you would find helpful, and a programme can be devised accordingly.

Slightly more quarter peals were rung in the last year by District bands than in the previous year, and the numbers were boosted by 28 more rung in our towers by visitors. The first peal on the restored and augmented bells at Laxfield was rung in May with District members making up half the band.

Nine teams entered the District Striking Competition which was judged by Ann and David Webb from Loddon. Aldeburgh won the Trevor Hughes Trophy, Reydon the Call Change Trophy, and Rumburgh the Harry Archer Trophy: congratulations to all three.

Chrissie Pickup organised a very enjoyable summer afternoon outing in the Bury area with some nice towers and a good meal afterwards. This was much appreciated by those who came, but I was surprised how few members did come. Your loss!

PJG
November 2025

NE DISTRICT COMMITTEE REPORT TO ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING 2025

The NE District Committee met four times over the course of 2025 in order to plan and deliver eight District events, including the District's striking competition, a District outing and a Quarter Peal Day. Its members also managed the delivery of the Guild's 6-bell and 8-bell striking competitions which were hosted by the NE District at Yoxford and Aldeburgh this year.

Those Committee members who are District representatives on various Guild committees also attended meetings of the Guild Management Committee and Recruitment and Training Committee. Individual reports on the main matters arising from those committees and from the Guild's Belfry Advisory Committee appear below.

REPORT TO NE DISTRICT ADM 2025
ON GUILD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Guild Management Committee (GMC) comprises the senior officers and up to five representatives from each District. The NE District has been represented by Erika Clarke, Philip Gorrod, Tom Grady, Sarah Plummer and Joanna Wilkinson. Joanna resigned during the year. The other four representatives attended all three meetings of the Committee.

The GMC's purpose is to deal with all management and financial issues which most ringers do not wish to be bothered with, and to advise the Trustees on important matters. Most of the meetings are taken up by receiving reports from officers and committees.

The major matters discussed during the last year were:

1. Adrian (Arnie) Knights left a legacy in excess of £200,000 to the Guild to be used to augment existing rings to 8 bells or more. A Working Party has been set up to consider how this money should be spent. The Working Party includes one of the representatives from each District, in our case Erika Clarke.

2. Safeguarding is an important issue to be kept constantly under review, but the process by which vulnerable ringers are to be kept safe often appears to be unnecessarily unwieldy. Some ringers have given up ringing rather than complete the "training" which they feel, with some justification, is irrelevant to them. The Guild's Safeguarding Officer, Liz Christian, tries to maintain good relations with the Diocesan safeguarding team, and the latest version of the foundation course (for tower captains and teachers) contains a bespoke bellringing module which, being more relevant, is a step in the right direction.

3. Small grants have been approved for the work carried out at Blythburgh, and for the proposed new 5th bell at Aldeburgh.

The Committee has approved, in principle, a change in the way that Districts organise their programmes. From 2027 the NE District's events will take place mostly on the fourth weekend of each month rather than the second weekend as at present. This means that we shall be using the same weekend as the SW District, instead of the NW, so we shall be more easily able to attend events in our adjacent District without it clashing with our own events.

PJG
November 2025

REPORT TO NE DISTRICT ADM 2025

ON GUILD RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Recruitment and Training Committee is made up of the Guild Master and two representatives from each District (one usually, but not necessarily, being the District Ringing Master). Sue Child and Philip Gorrod have been the NE representatives over the last year, during which the Committee has met several times (by Zoom), ostensibly to discuss matters relating to recruitment and training, but the most useful aspect is the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Recruitment, we have learned from experience, is something best done at a local level. We do organise the occasional larger event but these tend to be more of a PR than a recruiting exercise. As for training, this is usually best done by providing focused practices based on individual needs, as seldom are two ringers at exactly the same stage in their learning. However, training in more advanced topics such as Surprise Major or conducting can benefit from a wider field and the new Guild Master has plans to develop this over the next year or two.

PJG
November 2025

REPORT TO NE DISTRICT ADM 2025
ON BELFRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The District's current representatives on the Guild's Belfry Advisory Committee are Jonathan Stevens and Pete Lock. The BAC advises on, and assists with, bell maintenance and restorations and assists the Guild's Trustees in the exercise of their grant-making decisions.

Over the last 12 months two towers in the NE District have received particular support from the BAC, namely Holy Trinity, Blythburgh and SS Peter and Paul, Aldeburgh.

Blythburgh

Work at Blythburgh involved restoration of the bells as part of a project to install a kitchen in the existing ground floor ringing chamber with the ringing chamber being moved to a new first floor. The Diocesan adviser attended a site meeting with the project architect and advised that the initial plans required modification (as the proposed location of stairwells and ladders impinged on the first floor ringing circle). The bell restoration, supported by a grant from the Guild, is now complete. It involved the refurbishment of bearings, new pulley blocks, all six clappers being re-bushed and repainting of the frame. Members of the BAC and other volunteers assisted with the work. The installation of the first floor ringing chamber will require the present rope guides to be raised up the tower. The next stage will see the installation of a new toilet. No date has yet been given for completion of the building works.

Aldeburgh

Aldeburgh's bells are rung weekly for services and support a regular band comprising 11 Guild members and weekly practices. In the most recent Guild Report, they were the most pealed bells in Suffolk.

In 1961 Aldeburgh's bells were rehung in a new steel, 8-bell frame, with five bells being recast and two new trebles added to make the new octave. The bells are a good musical set but are considered to be spoiled by the 1622 William and John II Brend fifth bell, which was retained by the parish at that time. Subject to a successful faculty application, the PCC now plans to have the existing fifth bell replaced with a new bell while retaining the old fifth as a clock bell. Following a recent inspection by and advice from the Guild's technical adviser the PCC has decided to also refurbish all pulley blocks as part of the project. The work will be supported by a grant from the Guild and will be overseen by the Guild's technical adviser and carried out by local helpers and members of the BAC.

TG/EMC
November 2025