SUFFOLK GUILD OF RINGERS – SOUTH WEST DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD AT BOXFORD
22nd November 2025

Present: Pauline Brown (Chairman); Richard Knight (Ringing Master); Christine Knight (Secretary); Nigel Gale (Treasurer).
Members from: Bildeston, Boxford, Cavendish, Clare, Drinkstone, Kersey, Little Cornard, Polstead, Poslingford and St Gregory, Sudbury.
We also welcomed visitors from: Blaxhall (NE) and Sproughton (SE).
Total attendance: 22

Thanks
The Chairman thanked Maggie Cogan for taking the service, Christopher Moore, the organist, as well as Richard Gates and Sue and Steve Tye for making all the local arrangements.

Apologies for Absence
These were received from: Alan and Mary Baker, Kate Banks, Rosemary Bullen, Julian Colman (Guild Ringing Master), James and Jenny Croft, Rodney Downer, Gary and Lyn Edwards, Jenny Filby, Ray Filby, Richard Finch, Sue Finch, Tim Forsey, Sue Freeman, Avril Gardiner, Linda Goodban, David Walters and Neville Whittell.

Tributes and Silence for Departed Members
Christine Knight read out a tribute she had written of Ray Banks of Kersey. Ray was an Associate Member, who was a great support to his wife Kate and to the Kersey band. We remember him fondly as he indulged his passion for photography in churchyards at District practices. Another passion was poetry. The Guild website archive contains his poetic tribute to District stalwarts Charlie Ablitt and Rolie Whiting.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting
Acceptance **proposed**: Tony Baker, **seconded**: Richard Knight.

Matters Arising from the Minutes
Richard Knight asked if any progress had been made towards the aim of ringing all ten bells at Sudbury Arts Centre. Gerald Bird reported that there has been little change in the overall situation. Some disruption had been caused by the change in control from the Bridge Project to the Churches Conversation Trust. A brief meeting had been held with the Architect, but there were still substantial issues preventing the ringing of all ten bells from the balcony. The need for sound control is still an important issue.

Election of New Members
None.

Ratification of Belfry Elections

None.

District Officers' Reports

Ringing Master/Chairman/Secretary

SW DISTRICT REPORT 2025

District practices have been well attended again this year. We visited Edwardstone, Kersey, Polstead, Sudbury, St Gregory, Nayland and the lovely new six at Drinkstone. It was encouraging to see several members taking early steps in change ringing on eight during the year. All our practices have been very sociable occasions and thanks go to the host towers for refreshments provided.

The District Striking Competition in July was hosted wonderfully by Gerald Bird and the whole Little Cornard band. Seven teams entered the Call Change Competition, which was won by Sudbury, St Gregory, with a very creditable piece of ringing. It was good to see the return of the Method Competition. Hadleigh emerged as winners out of the 4 entries. The event was judged by Claire Free and Neal Dodge from the NW District.

The Secretary arranged a very enjoyable outing for 4th October to the Maldon area, which was attended by 26 people. We visited Danbury, Maldon, All Saints, Goldhanger, Tollesbury and Great Totham. Three eights and a ten provided opportunities for members to experience ringing on higher numbers and we were grateful for the support from experienced visitors from the SE and NW Districts. Some rang on ten for the first time.

Christine Knight organised another Quarter Peal Month in August. Previous events had taken place in 2018, 2019 and 2024 and it is very pleasing to see the progress individual members have made over this period, from first quarters to 'first inside', 'first of Minor' and beyond. Grateful thanks go to Alan Mayle, who has conducted many of the quarters, and to the experienced ringers (several from the NW District) who have taken part. Extended ringing with a strong band is an excellent learning opportunity. Eleven quarters were rung this year. Congratulations go to Sue Tye, Tony Baker and Gary Edwards on their first quarter peals, Tim Forsey on his first of Grandsire as conductor and to Pauline Brown on her 100th quarter peal. This was at Polstead on 14th August and was rung as a farewell compliment to David and Lynda Lee of Bures, thanking them for their huge contribution to the SW District over many years.

In September/October, the District collaborated with Guild Ringing Master, Julian Colman, to organise a Training Event. This was held on 25th October. The Secretary had secured Rattlesden, Woolpit and Tostock as venues and we were delighted by the tremendous support from 17 District members, who volunteered to be helpers. There were 23 helpers in all and fifteen students were divided into three groups for an 'Advanced Bob Doubles' course at Rattlesden, focusing on touches, and two 'Starting Bob Doubles' courses, at Woolpit and Tostock. We are very grateful to Julian and Cath Colman and Jenny and James Croft for acting as tutors, for which great appreciation was expressed. The event was planned as a pilot project. Constructive feedback was received, which will enable Julian to fine-tune the content before rolling out to other districts.

Once again, great enthusiasm has been shown at SW District events and the officers appreciate this level of support.

Pauline Brown, SW District Chairman
Richard Knight, SW District Ringing Master
Christine Knight, SW District Secretary

Treasurer

Nigel Gale presented his final report as District Treasurer. He encouraged members to pay subscriptions by bank transfer if at all possible, in order to minimise the work of the Guild Treasurer.

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

SW District Treasurer's Summary Report for 2025 ADM at Boxford

		2025 (@11/11/25)	2024 (@ 31/12/24)
Towers	**Ringable Towers**	40	39
	Unringable Towers	17	18
	Total	57	57
	Towers with Members	29	29
	Towers without Members	18	18
Members	**Adult**	75	78
	>70 years	47	46
	>80 years	11	9
	FTE	6	8
	Life	0	0
	Associate	2	3
	TOTAL	141 (-3)	144

Note:
1. New members who joined in Q4 2024 do not pay any additional subs for 2025.
2. Subscriptions totalling £2315 have been paid into the Guild bank account so far this year.

SG Subscriptions 2025

Rates and age bands as agreed at the Guild AGM in April 2024 are as follows:

Ringing Member (Adult)	£20
Ringing Member > 70 years	£15
Ringing Member > 80 years	£5
Ringing Member in full time education	£10
Non-resident Life Member	£10

Life	Free
Associate Member	£10

Petty Cash 2025

DATE	ITEM	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS	BALANCE
(30/12/2024)	*Year-end total*			*197.01*
(31/12/2024)	*Transferred to Guild General Fund*		*97.01*	*100.00*
01-Jan	Bought Forward from 2024			100.00
25-Jan	Edwardstone meeting	15.00		212.01
22-Feb	Kersey meeting	26.30		238.31
	Secretary's expenses		15.00	223.31
22-Mar	Polstead meeting	16.00		239.31
24-May	Sudbury St Gregory meeting	8.50		247.81
28-Jun	Nayland meeting	9.00		256.81
26-July	Polstead Striking Competition	17.00		273.81
	Judges vouchers		20.00	253.81
4-Oct	District outing	19.00		272.81
25-Oct	Training Day: Tutors vouchers		30.00	242.81
	Training Day: tower donations	12.00		
	Totals	122.80	162.01	157.80

Nigel Gale (SW District Treasurer 12/11/2025)

Election of District Officers

Chairman: Pauline Brown was re-elected, **proposed** Nigel Gale, **seconded,** Christopher Moore.

Ringing Master: Richard Knight was re-elected, **proposed** Eleanor Waller, **seconded,** Tony Baker.

Secretary: Christine Knight was re-elected, **proposed** Jill Apter, **seconded,** Astrid Gale.

Treasurer: Nigel Gale had indicated that he wished to stand down and was thanked for his dedicated service.
David Walters was elected, **proposed** Christine Knight, **seconded,** Nigel Gale.

District Representatives on the GMC: Pauline Brown, Richard Knight and Eleanor Waller were re-elected en bloc, **proposed** Nigel Gale, **seconded,** Christopher Moore.

Recruitment and Training Committee Representatives: Richard Knight and Pauline Brown were re-elected, **proposed** Tony Baker, **seconded,** Sheila Baker.

Deanery Contacts: Christine Knight (Clare) wished to step down. Desmond Crone was elected to replace her. Richard Gates (Hadleigh), Martin Weaver (Lavenham) and Jill Apter (Sudbury) were re-elected. **Proposed** Christine Knight, **seconded** Richard Knight.

Guild AGM 2026 in SW District

This will be at Drinkstone, by kind invitation of Nigel and Astrid Gale. Nigel had booked the village hall and the new rector to take the service. He outlined timings for the whole event. The need to arrange feed-in towers was discussed and the Secretary offered to do this.

Proposed Ringing Programme for 2026

No towers had been confirmed, but the Secretary outlined a proposed programme and invited comments. 'Focus' methods, augmented practices and length of practices were discussed. Jill Apter suggested extending all District practices to two hours and this was agreed.

Any Other Business

Richard Knight and Nigel Gale gave an update of the progress of applications for funding from the Adrian Knights' legacy for augmentations. Three SW District towers, Drinkstone, Haverhill and Long Melford are involved.

Date of next year's ADM: Saturday 28th November 2026.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.45pm.