

South-East District of Suffolk Guild of Ringers Annual District Meeting

Agenda Saturday 4th December 2021, 4.30pm - meeting via Zoom

1. Welcome

2. Apologies for absence

3. Remembrances

4. Minutes of the 2020 ADM (held 5th December via Zoom) –
[SeDistrictAmMinutes2020DRAFT1.pdf \(suffolkbells.org.uk\)](https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/SeDistrictAmMinutes2020DRAFT1.pdf)

5. Matters arising

6. New Members

7. Reports

- Chairman
- Ringing Master (pre-circulated)
- Treasurer
- Technical Advisor (pre-circulated)
- Ipswich Historic Churches
- Recruitment and Training
www.suffolkbells.org.uk/pdfs/RandT/MinutesRandT20210131DRAFT.pdf
- GMC [GMCMinutes20211024DRAFT.pdf \(suffolkbells.org.uk\)](https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/GMCMinutes20211024DRAFT.pdf)
- Updates from Area Reps (pre-circulated)

9. Election of Officers

- Ringing Master
- Chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Technical Advisor
- Area Reps
- Recruitment and Training (2)
- GMC (5)
- Magazine Rep

10. Christmas Ringing in Ipswich

12. Programme 2022 (including Jan 1st 2022)

13. A.O.B.

14. Next ADM – 3rd December 2021

SE District Ringing Master's Report 2021

The whole of 2021 has been lived within a global pandemic with regulations and restrictions continuing to dominate the decisions we make about how and when to ring.

The District has managed to hold an event of some sort on the first Saturday of each month this year. The first six meetings were held virtually and included quizzes, talks, general chat, an Easter hat competition and some Ringing Room sessions. Many thanks to those who led quizzes or entertained us with a variety of interesting talks. Ringing Room provided the closest activity to real ringing and gave many people the only opportunity to 'ring' for many months. It is sad that there are several members within our district who are not able to access virtual meetings. I hope members continue to keep in contact with these ringing friends.

In July we met up in person for a walk around Orford. No ringing but 16 members enjoyed the chance to meet and chat together at a district event for the first time since March 2020.

In August we held our first in person district practice. We were warmly welcomed at Falkenham. This ground floor ring was ideal for meeting safely under Covid restrictions. It was well ventilated with west and south doors open, face coverings were worn, hands were sanitised and socialising was outside. About 20 people attended with ringing from call changes to London Surprise. For some this was their first ring for 17 months. It felt good to be back.

In September, as we didn't feel ready to return to the quarter peal and meal in a pub as in previous years, we suggested towers/individuals arranged to ring their own quarter peals. I am aware of quarters being rung at Falkenham, Ashbocking and Pettistree.

October saw us meet for another district practice. This time held at Ashbocking, where we rang in face coverings with plenty of ventilation. Ringing again ranged from call change to Surprise. An attendance of 20 is a good number, I feel, in these early stages of resuming district practices.

The practice at Pettistree in November wasn't so well attended. Just 12 ringers. It was a much cooler day and ringing with a strong cool breeze may have deterred some. However it was an enjoyable practice with some good ringing. For a while yet we may have to continue to meet in well ventilated spaces so a few extra layers of clothing may become the norm.

Thank you to the ringers at Falkenham, Ashbocking and Pettistree who allowed us to meet at their towers and ensured Covid safety requirements were met.

It wasn't an easy decision to hold the December ADM via Zoom again this year. There were lots of reasons why it would have been lovely to have held a 'proper' ADM with ringing, service, tea and meeting. However with so much uncertainty about the weather at this time of year (it could be very cold sitting through a meeting with windows open) and the level of Covid infection we decided to use Zoom again this year. This also means there shouldn't be a last minute cancellation or change of plan.

I am pleased we have elected some new members to the Guild during the year. Welcome to them.

I have visited Barham practice and am pleased to see the beginners there making good progress. Barham bells were completed and dedicated during the pandemic so a difficult time for a new band to become established. I think many of us have found it challenging to re-establish service and practice ringing. There has been an understandable drop off in

terms of numbers due to age, illness, moving away and, sadly, death. I think we have to be prepared to accept the situation as a challenge. There is a need for recruitment. We need to be ready with ringers who are willing and able to spend time teaching new recruits. I am organising a module 1 (teaching bell control) ART course for March 2022 to be held in our district. Please let me know if you may be interested in taking part. The Recruitment and Training committee are also considering putting on a Module 2 course. I believe the more people who have the skills and confidence to teach the better it will be for recovering post pandemic.

I know there are lots of examples of places where towers are working together to see that bells are rung. There may be fewer services being held in each church, particularly in rural areas but this may mean more ringers are available to help out with ringing at towers other than their own. Ringing is a team activity and we are used to working together. I think this is going to be more important than ever, as ringing recovers and hopefully grows.

I am looking forward to being able to do more ringing in 2022.

Thank you for the support you give to ringing and to this district.

Jenny Scase

Technical Advisors Report – South East 2021

Because of COVID restrictions the Belfry Advisory Committee has only met on one occasion during the year. Minutes of all meetings are uploaded to the guild web site.

The members however remain very active on bell restoration projects providing skilled assistance across the county. Some of those projects like Stowmarket , Combs and St Gregory's Sudbury are outside of our district. Within our district we have completed the final installation work at Barham and undertaken repairs and maintenance at Framlingham , Felixstowe , Falkenham, Cretingham, Easton and Henley.

The committee members are happy in future to provide support to parishes across the district on a variety of topics. Contact details are given in the guild handbook.

C I McArthur – Technical Advisor SE District and BAC Secretary.

Area rep report from Robert Scase

The following gives an overview of ringing in this area.

Ashbocking

We have returned to regular Sunday service ringing for the first time for nearly 30 years. Exciting times! All possible with the formation of Yellingham and the support we are able to offer each other.

Following a big tidy up of the tower, we found we could open the West door. This has made it possible to have a well ventilated and clear ringing chamber, making it readily accessible to use for ringing as well.

Hopefully we will be in a position in 2022 to begin teaching individuals at the start of their ringing journey.

Liz Christian

Cretingham

We have not returned to regular practices because of a shortage of local ringers, caused by several moving away during the last two years.

We have managed to ring for some services with the help of the "Yellingham" group. We have had some visitors, one large group, and quarter peals, also Jenny's "Booster" group practices.

Carol Brown

Debenham

We have gradually returned to weekly service and practice ringing.

For about half the year we have, like everywhere else, been limited to ringing just for services and on fewer bells following Covid guidelines. Since June we have rung for weekly services and Tuesday practices, open to all. Large west doors enable us to be well ventilated.

We have joined together with some other local towers with the aim of cooperating together as ringing recovers. Initially we are focusing on sharing ringers out for service ringing but hope to work with each other to teach, recruit and develop skills etc.

Jenny Scase

Framlingham

Framlingham bell ringers returned to practices right after the government lifted the restrictions. At the beginning there was still some hesitation among the members of our team but at the moment everybody who stayed away due to Covid restrictions is back. That means on practice nights there are between 6 and 11 ringers present which enables us to ring our full set of 8 bells.

We ring on a regular basis for services with average 6 ringers, same applies to weddings and (on one occasion so far) to funerals.

For Remembrance Day we rang 6 bells half muffled which was very much appreciated by the community.

On 3rd December Framlingham bell ringers will ring on 8 for the special occasion "Christmas on the Hill".

What new ringers concerns we have one beginner who is quite enthusiastic about learning the ropes.

The situation in our tower on the whole doesn't seem to be too bad but we are dealing at the moment with the fact that none of us is able to teach ringing beyond the basic level. Those who are willing to ring beyond "Plain Bob Doubles" or "- Minor" are not able to develop due to the lack of expertise. We are urgently in need of someone who could help us to improve what ringing quality concerns. It would be nice if we could evolve into a team who would be able to ring methods on 8 bells or some more sophisticated "Double" or "Minor" methods.

Jochen Culemann

Helmingham

Ringling has resumed for the monthly second Sunday service and the monthly third Friday practice.

Badingham and Dennington

Ringling at Badingham and Dennington is practice only at the moment. We are badly depleted in numbers with no real prospect of resuming service ringling.

Duncan Horrocks

Area Rep Report from Janet Looser

Holbrook are having a regular Tuesday evening practice, as in the Before Times.

Area Rep Report from David Stanford

Sunday ringling resumed at Clopton Burgh and Hasketon. Practices have restarted at Clopton subject to availability of ringers.

With the absence of a magazine, collating material has been a light touch responsibility with nothing whatsoever to do.

Area Report from Lesley Barrell (Falkenham and Felixstowe)

Following the easing of lockdown, Falkenham and Felixstowe are back to welcoming visitors for their respective practice nights and Sunday service ringling.

However, both towers have lost members and have now formed a mini-cluster where we share ringers to keep the practices up and running. Falkenham 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month and Felixstowe 1st, /3 rd and 5th Fridays. Sunday ringling at Falkenham is now only the 1st and 3rd Sundays (ringling 8.25 to 8.50am) and Felixstowe 9.30 to 9.55am every Sunday. Both towers are struggling for ringers and would greatly appreciate anyone twiddling their thumbs of a Sunday morning to come along and help out. Also on the practice nights.

Felixstowe held a “have-a-go” morning on the 11th September which resulted in good interest. Subsequently, these potential ringers have decided it's not for them but there remains two learners. The Guild has kindly inspected the belfry and replaced two ropes and the whole cleaned out. The simulator is now up and running and proving very useful.

Following a social media and parish magazine blitz, two learners started at Falkenham but have also since decided not to continue. I have been in contact with the 1st Kirton Scouts and interest has been shown in having-a-go and maybe doing their bell ringing badge. This is a great opportunity for recruitment and I look forward to welcoming them.

Falkenham belfry is now almost finished following the Guild inspection. Two clappers were re-bushed; the whole chamber cleaned; wheels, etc, treated and is just waiting for the frame to be painted – which is imminent. Also, the ringing chamber is due to have new lighting put in and the emergency light repaired so that it actually works.

Lesley Barrell

Area Report from Jonathan Williamson (Ipswich)

Ipswich – St. Mary-le-Tower

SMLT are holding practice nights on Monday evenings 7.15pm-9.00pm and ringing for Sunday service. Visitors are welcome with advance notice and all who ring are required to register a negative Lateral Flow Test before attending OR wear a mask to ring. Please email ipswichsmlt@suffolkbells.org.uk if you would like to visit.

Ringing is mostly on 10 or 12 and includes everything from Rounds and Call Changes to Stedman and Surprise Royal/Maximus. The band have entered both the 2022 regional GWP 12 Bell Trophy and the National 12 Bell Competitions. The new Vicar at SMLT (Tom Mumford) has already visited a practice night and pulled a few backstrokes! CO2 levels are closely monitored in the ringing chamber as an indication of the effectiveness of ventilation.

Ipswich – St. Margaret

St. Margaret's practice on a Tuesday evening 7pm-8.45pm and regularly ring for Sunday service. Practices and Sunday ringing are supported by ringers from SMLT wherever possible and practice nights are well attended with a focus on Rounds and Call Changes to change ringing on both 6 and 8. CO2 levels have also been monitored here but as a gallery ring there is good air movement and ventilation is not therefore a concern.

Ipswich St. Matthew & Bramford

These two towers have been working more closely together recently. The new Vicar at Bramford is Eric Falla who is himself a ringer and has recruited 5 new learners from the village. Joint practice nights are being held on alternate Tuesday evenings at Bramford 7.30pm-9.00pm. The intention is to move to weekly practices with a tied bell practice every other week with a longer term aim of getting going at St. Matthew's as well though this may have to wait since the ringing chamber there is smaller and ventilation less good.

Rushmere

Rushmere have started ringing again and the regular band is very pleased to be able to ring together again on Fridays 7.30pm-9.00pm for practice and for Sunday morning services. With limited ventilation in the tower they would appreciate advance notice of any visitors who would like to attend. Please email rushmerestandrew@suffolkbells.org.uk

Sproughton

Wednesday practices 7.30-9.00pm have resumed as has Sunday service ringing on the 1 st & 3rd Sundays of the month. A negative Lateral Flow Test is required for all who attend and a face mask should also be available. Practices are run from the church to better enable social distancing if necessary.

Jonathan Williamson

Offton

Quarter peals are resuming on a Tuesday, and practices (District Secretary's note).

Area Report from Mary Garner - A Snapshot of Ringing in the vicinity of Wickham Market

Brandeston and Kettleburgh

Throughout the year we have occasionally rung for the important services at both Brandeston and Kettleburgh, this is the same band of local friends.

Sadly we have lost/retired a number of our ringers to ill health and terminal illness, they have rung with us for many years and will be greatly missed.

When conditions allow we will start teaching again in both villages although it is most unlikely that we will have a regular practice night again.

Both sets of bells in good order.

Chris McArthur

Bredfield

It has been a gradual, baby-steps, return to ringing for us in Bredfield.

Ringing ceased when the church was closed in March 2020. When it was permitted, services with strictly limited numbers were held in the churchyard, but with the church locked we couldn't ring.

When restrictions relaxed a bit, we were able to ring 2 or 3 bells (socially-distanced) for the outdoor Christmas services, and to toll a single bell for Prince Philip's funeral and for two graveside funerals, but a wedding, held under Covid restrictions, could not be celebrated properly with bells.

It was a great joy, then, to be able to re-start regular practices in mid-September, and to ring for a wedding at the end of the month. We have gradually built up to ringing all six bells, with a fully-vaccinated regular band. Half-muffled ringing for Remembrance Sunday was especially appreciated by the village, as a return to normality.

As we are now in an Interregnum, with a shortage of service leaders, service times and frequency are a bit random at the moment. We ring whenever we can, but we have lost several ringers during lockdown (age, health, moving away), and without new volunteers to learn, we will be unable to ring all six bells every week.

Ann Pilgrim

Campsea Ashe

Saturday practices resumed at Campsea Ashe at the end of September, with a later start and finish. 9.30 to 10.45, which seems to suit ringers. The practices have been well attended; usually eight or nine people. Stedman has been successfully rung and plenty of other methods.

It has been tricky to find ringers for Sunday services though. The 9.30 time clashes with other services and we don't have six ringers in the village. I hope to teach more people from Campsea Ashe by holding one or two Open Towers or Ringing Festivals.

Glenys Fear

Pettistree

Having rung four or five bells over the Christmas period and a single bell for Prince Philip's funeral it was with great joy that we resumed regular service ringing from mid May, still mainly on five. Our first six bell ringing since 15th March 2020 took place on May 19th, when some restrictions were lifted. However, six bell ringing was only possible with certain combinations of ringers due to social distancing. Six bells have been rung regularly since July 19th. We are now ringing twice a week again, for Sunday services and practices. We are always cautious about having sufficient ventilation and are extremely grateful to Mike Cowling helping with this by frequently measuring the CO₂ levels.

Mary Garner

Ufford

Ufford have returned to a weekly shorter practice from 1930 to 2030, and numbers have not exceeded 8 ringers.

The services at Ufford have changed to the first and third Sunday and at an earlier time of 1000 so I think we will only be able to ring for the first Sunday, due to other already established ringing commitments.

Kate Eagle

Wickham Market

After what felt like forever, we finally resumed ringing at Wickham on 19th July when we held our first practice and rang for the first service on the following Sunday and it was a joy to hear the bells ring out across the village again. We have rung regularly ever since. We now find ourselves a little low on numbers as some of our ringers have moved away, others have had health issues, or they have just been slow to return to ringing. We are planning to have a recruitment drive in the New Year so hopefully we should be able to get the numbers back up again.

Ray Lewis