Agenda for the combined Advent and MIT Guild Meeting

Monday, November 8, 2021

7:30 pm

2020 MIT/Advent Guild Minutes: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12WuDw__CsA1l4WRroR7XWUNvgAfO90EHauPOhurzjA4/edit?usp=sharing>

Meeting convened online at 7:34

Present (at various points): John B., Josh, Jeff Del Papa, Laura, Kat, Elaine, Phoebe, Julia, Leland, Sarah, Danielle, Ricky, Margaret, Austin, Cally, Bryn, Greg R., John S., Todd, David Wilson, Dale

Agenda:

1. **New member election**
   1. - not at this time

Josh proposed having current learners (Catherine, Rachel) voted in as members of the Advent Guild. It was eventually decided not to do this, since (a) we hadn't asked their permission first, (b) they haven't really attended regular Advent Guild practice, and (c) it wouldn't convey any benefits, since they still wouldn't be allowed to come to practices at Old North (the Church has asked us not to teach handling). **Action item:** Ask the church about revising this policy, with particular regard to MIT students and members of the congregation (Dale)

1. **Advent Officer reports**
   1. Tower Captain (Austin Paul): Wednesday practices going well, though attendance at Sunday service ringing has been somewhat sparse lately. We've also been doing regular (muffled) practices on Fridays for learners (and people interested in learning teaching. Currently have a large group of teachers. More learners, or anyone else interested, would be welcomed: email Austin
   2. Ringing Master (Phoebe House): Nothing much to add, but wanted to highlight the action item about a tower cleaning day.
   3. Steeple Keeper (Elaine Hansen/Greg Russell): Elaine wasn't yet in the meeting, so Greg gave an interim report. We've been using muffles a lot (see above); there's some looseness on the clapper on the six. **Action Item:** look into this (Elaine/Greg). **Action Item:** Ask the church about fixing the door (and if they’d like us to pay to fix it)(Dale).
   4. Secretary (Josh Burson): Not much to report. I've taken some minutes. Last winter, we sent out a virtual holiday card (plus a few hard copies to people without email, et al.); this year, the plan is to go back to signing and mailing out paper cards.
   5. Treasurer (Laura Dickerson): We have a bunch of money ($7,353) and we're not doing much with it. We merged the accounts a few years back. There's some ongoing difficulties with our bank: Bryn is currently the only one signatory on the account. **Action Item:** Get more signatories (Laura/Bryn/Austin/others). **Action Item:** Look into getting an online group subscription to *The Ringing World* (Laura/Bryn/others).

Greg asked what we'd spent money on in the past. The answer is chiefly ropes and bell parts (8 ropes at ON is £1,900, though it would probably be a bit less at Advent.) However, more recently the Church of the Advent has been fairly happy to pay for these, and Old North has tentatively expressed a similar willingness, provided that it could be a predictable annual budget item. **Action Item:** make up an annual rope budget for Old North; talk to Advent about buying more ropes (Laura/Dale/Steeplekeepers).

Bryn suggested and Austin proposed that brainstorming other things we might do with our funds be postponed to a separate finance meeting, to be held some time in the next few weeks. General agreement.

* 1. Church Liaison (Dale Winter) (absent: report read by Austin): Some negotiation was required to allow us to return to ringing, and the visitor policy (see above) has remained a tricky issue. All in all, though, we continue to have a solid working relationship with both churches. However, please loop Dale in early with any problems/requests/news for the churches, so he doesn't get blindsided, or have to ask the churches for things at the last minute.
  2. Clapper Correspondent (Laura Dickerson): The Clapper comes out every quarter (and you should join the NAGCR so you can read it!)(There are other good reasons too –JRB). Laura has submitted a report every issue.
  3. Spreadsheet Reminder-er (No report)

1. **Advent Guid Officer Elections**
   1. Tower Captain - Austin re-nominated
   2. Ringing Master - Phoebe/Danielle

There was some discussion as to whether this office needed to exist, which led to further discussion on its history as a separate role charged specifically with teaching/keeping track of learners' progress. Austin and others thought that reviving this role seemed potentially useful. Josh nominated Danielle, who demurred. After some negotiation, Phoebe and Danielle were jointly nominated, with Phoebe keeping the title and Danielle playing an advisory role.

* 1. Steeple Keeper - Elaine/Greg, w/ Kat apprentice?
  2. Secretary - Josh
  3. Treasurer - Laura

We're going to have a separate meeting to talk about restructuring this position; Laura should remain treasurer until then.

**Action Item**: Send out a summary of how you think the financial organization should be restructured (Austin)

* 1. Church Liaison - Dale

It was pointed out that having continuity in the person whom the churches contact would be a good thing, so Dale was re-nominated.

* 1. Clapper Correspondent - Laura
  2. Spreadsheet Reminder - Ricky (needs instructions)

1. **MIT Guild Officer Reports**
   1. Ringing Master (John Bihn): We’ve resumed ringing at Old North. We’re having regular practices, with numbers somewhat similar to those pre-pandemic (5-8 ringers at typical practice post-COVID), and decent numbers on Sundays. Some of our more recent learners have been making rapid progress. We’ve also rung for several weddings and other events, and the church has been grateful that we’ve been able to do that.

John also said that we should revert to having a separate MIT Guild meeting (May/July). **Action Item:** Set a tentative/approximate date for the MIT Guild meeting (John B./others)

John was willing to continue as RM, but was also willing to step down.

* 1. Steeple Keeper (Ricky Morse): Ricky has replaced the staple on the #8; the #2 and #5 seem to be vibrating strangely, but when examined, everything looks normal. He’s also lengthened the ropes. Overall, everything looks mostly okay.

Josh interjected that he thought the state of the mortar and brick decay in the tower was cause for some concern. Someone else pointed out that we’d at one point hoped that that would be fixed by the church doing a massive refurbishment campaign; it now appears that they’re going to concentrate on a new HVAC system, instead. **Action Item:** email church about the state of the brickwork and suggest repointing (Josh/Dale). **Action Item** (long-term): Could we ask the church to put in a heat pump/other air circulation stuff in the tower when they bring in workmen for HVAC?

**Action Item**: Yearly rope quote (Ricky)

* 1. Church Liaison (Dale: See above)
  2. Secretary (Margaret Pan): Not much to report. There was a meeting last year. Also, we’ve created a group email for the various officers of both guilds, which you can reach by emailing [boston-ringing-officers@googlegroups.com](mailto:boston-ringing-officers@googlegroups.com) (it is administered by [boston.ringing@gmail.com](mailto:boston.ringing@gmail.com) , available for a future guild use if needed)
  3. Handbell Keeper (Bryn Reinstadler): Bryn was asked where the bells are currently located. A: They were brought to the Midway, but were then taken back to the Student Center, so they’re safe but inaccessible. There was some discussion about how (or whether) we’d be able to access them. Danielle is in the MIT system, and so thought she might be able to get in; but getting into that particular room now requires you to get help from the custodians.

1. **MIT Officer elections**
   1. Ringing Master - Kat
   2. Steeple Keeper - Ricky
   3. Secretary - Margaret

There was some discussion of the possibility of having the Advent Guild secretary do both jobs, but Josh wasn’t enthusiastic so we decided to stick with the current system for now..

* 1. Handbell Keeper - Cally (Bryn stepped down, because she’s moved to Northampton)
  2. President - Naomi Schurr
  3. Treasurer - CJ Quines - both of whom have done sterling work for us over the last few months

1. **MIT Affiliation Status**
   1. Current status:

We elected a President and Treasurer (see above)

For re-registration as a MIT student group, we need to submit member lists and have 5 (notionally) active student members, and we don’t have that at the present.

* 1. IAP course this winter

John pointed out that if we were going to have one, this was the time to start planning it. For that, though, we’d need volunteers:

* + 1. Danielle: willing to deal with paperwork, but not to run the thing again
    2. Kat: point person
    3. (lots of volunteer teachers, presenters, and other volunteers, notably Cally)

Bryn pointed out that curricula for past IAP courses exist, which will make the planning process a lot easier.

**Action Item:** Follow-up meeting to organize IAP course (Kat/Danielle/Cally/Bryn)

1. **COVID protocols**

There was some discussion, and an informal poll of those present, on what safety precautions would be needed/acceptable for ringing as we move into winter. Air filters, keeping the windows open, and installing an exhaust fan were all noted (and Cally noted that they have a spare exhaust fan.) Further discussion was postponed to the finance meeting.

**Action Item:** Create and send out poll on safety measures (Austin/John)

1. **Teaching on Fridays**

Notes above were briefly re-stated. Note that it's only in the past few weeks that we've had more than one person regularly come to learn handling. Email Austin if you or anyone is interested, or if you'd just like to come have some rope time.

There was some discussion about criteria for invitation, but it was ultimately agreed that it didn’t make sense to further restrict opportunities to try out ringing.

1. **Online ringing**
   1. Leave as is

David Wilson noted that attendance is down, but practices continue to happen Monday and Wednesday. There was a brief discussion of trying to narrow the time slots so as to have more people present at the same time, but it was ultimately decided that things were working well enough as they are.

The question was also raised as to whether we want to advertise these practices to total beginners. If so, it was suggested that (a) they be asked to come half an hour after the start of practice, and (b) that the group be informed well in advance, so that they can be ready for them and have a good solid band present.

1. **Other business**
   1. Recruitment

**Action Item:** Invite anyone who's interested (Everyone).

**Action Item:** Compile/share list of people who have expressed interest. (Ed Futcher?)

* + 1. Set up MeetUp group?

After some discussion, it appears that this would cost $30 per month (which seems affordable), and that due to the nature of the platform, we'd be able to limit events to a manageable number of learners. Deferred to Finance Meeting.

* 1. Advent Tower Cleaning (dust and cobweb removal)

**Action Item:** Organize tower cleaning day (Danielle)

* 1. Quarterly quarter peal afternoons

**Action Item:** Organize quarter peels (Phoebe/Danielle).

Bryn stressed the importance of keeping the Church of the Advent accustomed to letting us ring in the tower for several hours one Sunday afternoon a quarter—even if we end up using is for something like handling practice, instead of peels or quarter peels.

* 1. Request for any additional business: ***None***.

***Plenary Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.***

1. **Smaller Group Discussion: Alternative Handbell Venue**

The following potential locations were suggested:

* 1. Bryn and Leland's apartment in Cambridge
  2. Christ Church Cambridge (they have a handbell choir, some of whom Leland knows)
  3. Lesley University (Kat would be needed to liaise, but they seem to have a less closed campus than MIT.)
  4. Church of the Advent (Possibly just the tower and the library? Even so, there may be scheduling issues)
  5. Greg and Cathy's house in Dracut.

All of these possibilities have advantages and drawbacks.

Austin suggested having monthly, rather than weekly, Monday handbell sessions, so as to encourage online ringing to continue. There was fairly universal agreement that this was a good idea.

**Action Item:** Look into options for a monthly venue for handbells (Cally)

**Action Item:** Contact the Church of the Advent (Dale/Cally)

***Meeting ended 9:35***

**Stuff for the Finance Meeting:**

* + 1. Bryn is only signatory
    2. What to do with money?
       1. Ed has old list
       2. Online RR subs
       3. Bb fees
       4. Air filter
       5. Exhaust fan?
       6. MeetUp
    3. Keep peal/qp fees?

**Action Items:**

- Ask Old North about revising its policies regarding visitors to the tower and letting us teach handling, with particular regard to MIT students and members of the congregation (Dale: ***done***)

- Look into what's up with the clapper on the #6 at Advent (Elaine/Greg)

- Ask the Church of the Advent about fixing the ringing room door (and if they’d like us to pay to fix it)(Dale).

- Buy Holiday cards (Josh)

- Get more signatories on our bank account (Laura/Bryn/Austin/others)

- Look into getting an online group subscription to The Ringing World (Laura/Bryn/others)

- Make up an annual rope budget for Old North (Laura/Dale/Ricky)

- Talk to Advent about buying more ropes (Laura/Dale/Steeplekeepers)

- Send out a summary of how you think the finances should be re-structured (Austin)

- Set a tentative/approximate date for the MIT Guild meeting (John B./others)

- Email Old North about the state of the brickwork and suggest repointing (Josh/Dale).

- Ask Old North to put in a heat pump/other air circulation stuff in the tower when they bring in workmen for HVAC? (Dale/Greg: **Long-Term**)

- Follow-up meeting to organize IAP course (Kat/Danielle/Cally/Bryn)

- Create and send out poll on safety measures (Austin/John)

- Compile/share list of people who have expressed interest in ringing (Ed Futcher?? Laura??)

- Organize quarter peels (Phoebe/Danielle).

- Organize tower cleaning day (Danielle)

- Look into options for a monthly venue for handbells (Cally)

- Contact Advent, ditto (Cally)

- Invite people to join the fun! (Everyone)

ADDED: Josh and/or Austin to research Meetup and then potentially contact Bruce/Tom Farthing about getting a Meetup account for the entire NAGCR.