

Guild Week Business Meeting

Held in Northallerton Scout and Guide Centre on Wednesday 26th August 2026

Minutes

1) Members Present

President: J A Agg

Minute Taker: C T Winkless-Clark

Toby Clifton

Alan Winter

Clarke Walters

Rod Lebon

Karen Lebon

Stedman Lebon III*

Richard Underwood

Nicholas Small

Chris Rogers

Naomi Laredo

Jonathan Shanklin

Ander Holroyd

Christine Hill

Nick Smith

Peter Hill

Richard Youdale

John Harrison

John Hutchinson

Brian Meads

Richard Smith

Martin Bright

John Sturdy

Lena van Dongen

James Tan

Peel**

*Non-human, non-member

**Non-human

2) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Poline Sidiropoulou

Joe Wakeling

Eleanor Marshall

Ben Shorter

Melissa Nash

Abby Higton

Andrew Cooke

Kate Jennings

Amy Dunn

Jadd Virji

Oliver Bennett

Hannah Cargill Thompson

Matthew Collier

Thomas Haslam

Ian Vincent

Sam Canning

Stella Johnson

Marianne Hayward

Alan Scholfield

Vivian Nutton

Dale Barton

Dave Richards

Catriona Agg

Rebecca Woodgate

Ben Willetts was explicitly unapologetic about their absence

Meeting convened at 19:30

3) Minutes of the Guild Week Business Meeting 2025

These were proposed as a true and complete account by John Sturdy, the proposal was seconded by Nicholas Small, and accepted nem con.

a) Matters arising

None

4) Matters arising from the 2026 AGM

a) Central Council Fees

Richard Smith explained that the CCCBR affiliation fees have increased to £1pp as of January. Guild numbers have typically been declared at ~200, but this could be changed significantly depending on how exactly we define an “Active Member”. A rough count of people at Guild events last committee year was at 150, so this year we declared and paid for 160 Active Members. This is not sustainable as we do not have regular annual income beyond one-off membership fees. He suggested the following options:

1) Continue paying £160/yr and find a way to fund this – perhaps through donations from alumni – Ander pointed out this would be less than a pint each for the members in attendance! Richard Underwood and Rod wondered about adding a little bit on to Guild Week charges. John Hutchinson wished to stress that this may add pressure onto the organiser, though this could be something that can be considered in the post-week money sorting. Richard Smith would prefer that this be opt-in, which Clarke agreed with – he pointed out that the “entertainment cost” of Guild Week is very low!

- Peter suggested that if we can sort out becoming an official charity, donations could be gift-aided. Richard Smith explained that this has been investigated before, but the requirements to be overseen by both the proctors (as a university society) and the charities commission are very difficult to reconcile, so this would be a lot of work to sort.

- John Sturdy wished to clarify whether this would be formalised or informal. The president is keen to keep it an informal arrangement, but ensure that those who donate be recorded and thanked. Toby pointed out that other societies with life membership (e.g. the Railway Club) do suggest/encourage alumni donations. Richard Youdale is concerned that leaving things to donations has

the potential to leave us in the lurch at some point in the future. Ander suggested an opt-out system as a compromise

2) Switch to CCCBR Associate Membership, aimed at societies which do not collect annual subs. At 40ppp that would be £64/yr. This would result in us dropping from 2 representatives (provided we continue to declare over 150 members) to 1. Richard Smith is an ex officio member of the council so could continue to represent us even if not officially our representative (he wouldn't be able to vote but his biggest impact is from speaking in council). Richard Smith expressed concern about the optics of the switch (that we might be seen to be suggesting that we don't support the CC activities), though John Harrison did not feel he sees this viewpoint regarding societies which have already switched. We believe that many of the other university societies have made/are planning on making the switch.

3) Reducing our numbers below 150 and therefore paying less, while dropping down to one representative

4) Technically we could change our rules and disaffiliate, but we don't really feel we want to do this

Toby queried why the subs had been increased. Richard Smith explained that historically the CCCBR budget has been spent mostly on self-administration. They are now changing this by funding things like the North-West Ringing Course, but also using some money to employ paid administrative staff – the direct impact of these is currently unclear, though hopefully there will be elaboration at the next CC meeting. John Harrison added that the Council's historical investments are no longer proving as lucrative as they used to be, which has meant that membership fees need to cover a greater portion of existing costs.

Jonathan Shanklin feels that, as many of us are also members of territorial and other associations, should we be paying multiple times for the same thing? Richard Smith feels that paying twice gains extra voices representing you, and from more viewpoints – Richard Smith particularly is representing student interests, which e.g. the EDA is not

Jonathan Shanklin also questions whether the Guild is getting its money's worth. Richard Smith points out that guild activities are tangibly benefitted by the CC – e.g. helping fund the ART recruitment packages, which pay for the hire of the Charmborough Ring for the Freshers' Fair

Chris Rogers points out that the Guild has historically had very strong links with the CCCBR (e.g. Guild members being Council past presidents, secretaries, etc.)

Peter suggests that we encourage people to remember the Guild in their Wills – we have historically done well with this, particularly in regards handbells (see e.g. the various sets donated by J Bruce Williams)

Nick Smith questions the process of selecting which our membership category. Richard Smith feels that we should only need to vote if we want to change. Our rules state that we must be “Affiliated”. We believe that this allows either membership option. John Sturdy points out that a definitive vote will need to be at an AGM, and in the intervening time we can set up the suggested fundraising and see how it goes!

John Harrison feels that the CC is too big, and so societies reducing their numbers of representatives would be a good thing (as was recently failed to be voted through on everyone dropping to one representative). People could still contribute through work groups, without needing to be representatives. While agreeing in principle, Richard Smith disagreed in this particular context, as if we reduce our voice but nobody else does, then our voice is diminished.

Richard Smith will put a summary of the background and options in this situation into a document which can be sent to the wider membership in advance of a definitive vote at the AGM.

Toby requested that Richard Smith could present a formal report on his/Dave Richards’ activities as reps to the AGM each year, to help the student members understand better what is happening on the Council. Richard Smith was very happy to do this.

By a show of hands, 21 out of 25 members present (84%) were in favour of option 1: maintaining the status quo, and gently fundraising from among the alumni to cover this

b) Guild Sesquicentenary in 2029

We are looking to organise many events for our 150th Anniversary. It would be nice if the Dinner was at a big college like St John’s (Trinity would be very difficult to secure due to a £1000 room booking fee and requiring fellow approval).

A Lundy trip is being organised by James Tan and Kate Jennings. This would be in addition to the regular Guild Week. This will maybe happen around Easter, but this is still up in the air.

We would also like to produce an updated Guild History, adding to the book produced for the centenary. Jonathan Agg will be reaching out via email for volunteers to write

sections, as well as for people to share their memories and stories of their time in the Guild.

5) Current Guild Week

John Hutchinson is not expecting there to be any further changes to the schedule. He believes that all remaining driving times should be accurate! Updated QP bands for the next two days are on the WhatsApp.

Toby proposed a vote of thanks to John Hutchinson for organising, to Lena for sorting transport, and Jonny Nash for dealing with finances. This was met with enthusiastic applause.

Lena apologised for how often people have had to drive. She explained that there have been fewer drivers than usual this year. Toby motioned to thank those who have been driving (a lot), again met with strong agreement.

6) Future Guild Weeks

The plan is that next year will be on the usual dates (Sat 21st- Wed 25th). Unfortunately, we do not currently have a volunteer to organise, so if you know anyone who might be up for it then give them some encouragement. Jonathan Agg suggested we visit somewhere slightly more central (e.g. Bedfordshire/Northamptonshire).

Clarke pointed out that historically, we used to visit Cambridgeshire fairly regularly, and it would be nice to bring this back. It is suggested that 2029 might be a good year to do this!

7) Obituaries

In the past year, the following Guild members have passed away:

Michael Davidson, Ben Crowdy, Peter Shipton, Ian Smith, John McClenahan, Robin Heppenstall, and Rowan Sylvester-Bradley.

Robin was remembered as a regular Guild Week attendee, last seen in Beverley 2022. John Hutchinson pointed out that Robin had been instrumental in producing a Selwyn College Peal Book.

Chris Rogers has been in touch with Ian's wife Claire since his death, and recalled that they had been in Cambridge at similar times, and shared many memories.

A moment of silence was observed as we paid our respects to those we have lost.

8) Diary Dates

- London Outing: Saturday 28th November, to Croydon and South London (organised by Chris Winkless-Clark)
- Dinner Day: Usual date after the end of term, Saturday 20th March 2027 at Homerton College, details to follow

9) AOB

From Dave Richards (Senior Treasurer) – NatWest hold lots of records about the Guild Accounts and we wish to tidy them up a bit – former secretaries need removing as signatories (Kirsten Hawkins, Stella Johnson, Lena van Dongen, James Ellison). Jonathan Agg proposed that we do so, Chris Winkless-Clark seconding. This was supported unanimously by the meeting.

Peter pointed out that it would have been nice if the Guild handbells had been present at Guild Week, rather than having to rely on Ian Vincent's set. Chris Winkless-Clark apologised for having left them at home!

Meeting adjourned at 20:27