

The Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers

Rules of the Association

(an accompanying document gives guidance on the processes which underpin and assist with the application of these rules)

Objects

1. The Society shall be called The Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers and its objects shall be:
 - i. Recognition of the true position of ringers as Church workers and the encouragement of ringing for Divine Service.
 - ii. Promotion of the Art of Church Bell Ringing within the Bath & Wells Diocese, especially by giving support and instruction to ringers when requested.
 - iii. To support the Maintenance, Restoration and Ringing of Church Bells within the Bath & Wells Diocese by the provision of an Advisory Service and a Ringing Support Fund
 - iv. Promotion of order and fellowship between ringers.

Constitution

2. The Association shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and shall observe the rules and decisions of the Council.
3. The Bishop of Bath and Wells shall be ex-officio President and the Suffragan Bishop of Taunton, the Dean of Wells, and the Archdeacons of Bath, Wells and Taunton shall be ex-officio Vice-presidents. There may be other elected Vice-presidents.
4. The Association shall elect at an AGM such officers, without limit, as required to promote the aims of the Association. The officers shall include: Master, Deputy Master, General Secretary, Treasurer, Tower Advisor and Assistant Tower Advisor(s), Education Officer and Deputy Education Officer(s), Peal Secretary, Membership Secretary, Report Editor, Ringing Support Fund Officer, Safeguarding Officer, Librarian, Webmaster and representatives to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR). Candidates for election to Tower Advisor and Assistant Tower Advisor must be approved in advance by the General Committee.
5. Accountable to its members, the normal business of the Association will be conducted by the General Committee, which is empowered to appoint sub-committees as required. The General Committee shall consist of:
 - i. The Master, Deputy Master, General Secretary, Treasurer, Tower Advisor, Safeguarding Officer, Education Officer, Membership Secretary, Report Editor, Peal Secretary, Ringing Support Fund Officer, Webmaster and CCCBR representatives.
 - ii. A representative from each of the Association's Branches (Rule 9).
 - iii. Co-opted members where required for specific reason (however there shall be a limit of two co-opted members at any time).

Quoracy at meetings of the General Committee shall require eight members, where at least 50% of those present are elected Association Officers from group i above.
6. The Financial Year of the Association shall run from 1st January to 31st December.
7. The Association shall appoint an Independent Examiner to give transparent assurance on its financial and related activities.

8. A Standing Committee shall act on behalf of the Association on matters of urgency between meetings of the General Committee; this shall comprise the Master, General Secretary and Treasurer together with up to two further members appointed by the General Committee from within their number.
9. The Association shall be organised in Branches. Each Branch must hold an Annual General Meeting each year, at which it must elect a Chairman, Ringing Master, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Officer and Maintenance Contact together with such other officers as it may determine. Branches may at their discretion combine roles, provided the individual role responsibilities are clearly maintained, and that at no time are there less than three elected officers. One of the elected officers shall represent the Branch at the Association's General Committee (Rule 5ii).
10. Each affiliated tower shall have a tower correspondent to assist with routine contact between the Association and its members. Where an affiliated tower has no members, this correspondent should be the PCC Secretary (or Church Warden) or a designated Trustee, where the tower is in the care of a charitable organisation.
11. Safeguarding is handled at Association level (Rules 15 – 18), if any Branch Officer is approached regarding a safeguarding matter they must always direct the individual raising the matter directly to the Association Safeguarding Officer, they must never seek to resolve the matter themselves or act as "go-between".

Membership

12. The membership shall consist of General Members, Associate Members, Honorary Life Members, Members Emeritus and Non- Resident Life Members,
 - i. General Members reside in the Diocese or are regular members of a Tower affiliated to the Association, and:
 - a. May be proposed at the discretion of their Tower Master, Tutor, or other Member of good standing in the Branch.
 - b. May be elected at any Branch Meeting, whether or not they are present.
 - c. May be active in the Branch, but unattached to a particular tower.
 - d. Accept the requirement for annual membership subscription.
 - e. Accept the requirement for the completion of a New Member and GDPR Form.
 - f. Re-election will be required if subscription payments lapse for more than one year.
 - g. May transfer to Non-Resident Life Member status if they cease to be resident or affiliated to an Association Tower.
 - h. Membership may be suspended or withdrawn at the discretion of the General Committee, in which case there shall be a right of appeal to that body.
 - ii. Associate Members are those non-ringers, or ringers who are not currently active, who support and wish to be associated with the aims of the Association. The election terms and processes are identical to those for General Members.
 - iii. Honorary Life Members (HLM) shall be elected by the General Committee for outstanding services to the Association and the Art of Ringing. Upon election the Member ceases to be required to pay annual subscriptions.
 - iv. Member Emeritus provides for long standing General Members (minimum ten years fully paid membership) who are unable to ring due to illness or infirmity but wish to continue to support the Objects of the Association. Upon transfer no further annual subscriptions will be due from the Member.
 - v. Non-Resident Life Members are those who have either transferred from General Member status or those who wish to ring a Peal credited to the Association. These members:
 - a. Shall make a single subscription equivalent to the annual ordinary subscription. This is waived if transferring from resident member and at least three years subscriptions have been paid.

- b. Where prior to a peal attempt, can only be elected when at least half the band are HLM or Ordinary Members of the Association.
 - c. Are not eligible to stand for office or vote at Association or Branch meetings
 - d. May choose to have a continuing relationship with the Association by completing a Membership Form, together with a GDPR form to provide consent for their contact details to be held.
 - e. May seek transfer to General Membership via normal election process (Rule 9i above) in the appropriate Branch.
13. Members shall be eligible for the award of “The Master’s Certificate of Commendation”. The Master’s Certificate of Commendation is awarded at the Master’s discretion to recognise extended or specific service of high note to the Association or to the Member’s local tower or Branch. Any member may nominate another member for recommendation by the Branch Officers.

Membership and Affiliation Fees

14. PCCs and other charitable organisations entrusted with the care of churches shall be invited to pay an affiliation fee annually for each tower with a ring of bells. The recommended fee shall be decided annually by the Annual General Meeting. Affiliation is one of the pre-requisite requirements for grant aid eligibility from the Ringing Support Fund (although unaffiliated towers may request and receive Tower Advisory Service inspections).
15. Membership Fee (subscription) rates shall be decided annually at a General Meeting of the Association, to take effect from the beginning of the next financial year.
- i. All new member subscriptions fall due and are payable on election.
 - ii. All annual subscriptions fall due on 1st January each year and should be paid to the Branch Treasurer by the end of February.
 - iii. The subscription of any new member elected between 1st October and 31st December shall run until 31st December of the following year. Thereafter the member moves to the normal subscription date.
16. Branches may retain up to one quarter of the total amount of subscriptions collected to cover reasonable Branch administrative expenses, subject to:
- i. All expenses must be agreed by Branch Officers and properly recorded.
 - ii. A fully reconciled detailed statement of expenses, together with the full balance of retained subscriptions shall be provided to the Association Treasurer before the 31st January each year.
 - iii. All other subscriptions received will be paid to the Association account within one month of receipt. A reconciled statement detailing the source of funds shall be provided to the Association Treasurer whenever monies are deposited.

Branch Annual Returns

17. Branches shall provide two annual returns each year: one covering the Branch Activities and one covering Branch Membership. Full details of the process and requirement are provided in the guidance notes.

Safeguarding

18. The Association treats safeguarding in the ringing community with utmost importance. It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that our towers and ringing activities are safe for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
19. Individual towers and members must ensure they are aware of and compliant with their local Church Safeguarding policies and follow Diocesan guidelines and requirements.
20. The Association has an elected Safeguarding Officer who can provide further advice and information.
21. In the event of any safeguarding concerns the Parish, Diocesan and Association safeguarding officers must be informed.
22. All members are required to complete safeguarding awareness training, and Tower Masters and those delivering training must undertake the appropriate additional training. The specific training

requirements are kept under review by the Safeguarding Officer and the Master and published on the Association website.

Health and Safety

23. Individual towers should ensure they are aware of and compliant with their local Church health and safety policies and procedures.

Ringling Support Fund

24. In accordance with Object iii the Association maintains a Ringling Support Fund. The Fund is an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and is governed through its own objects and rules. Decisions on the award of grants from this fund are made by the Fund Trustees. The Trustee Board is chaired by the Master and also comprises the General Secretary, Treasurer, Tower Advisor, Education Officer, Ringling Support Fund Officer. Fund Trustees have the power to co-opt up to two further Trustee Members. An annual report on its activity is presented to the General Committee.

Training

25. To support Object ii the Association has an elected Education Officer and Deputy Education Officer(s), supported by financial resources from the Association's General Fund.
26. The Association Education Officer works closely with the Deputies and the Branch Education Officers to support Object ii.
27. Where support is requested for education or training this should always be made through the relevant Branch Education Officer or direct to the Association Education. The Association Education Officer will use the General Fund financial resources at their disposal to assist in meeting needs, and where additional support is required, or where a significant or strategic opportunity exists the Association Education Officer will consider grant funding from the Ringling Support Fund.

Striking Competitions

28. To encourage the quality of its art and the fellowship of its members the Association shall seek to hold inter-Branch striking competitions each year. Normally these will include 6 bell competitions and 8 bell competitions.
29. Each Branch shall make its own arrangements for the selection of its representative teams in accordance with individual competition rules.
30. Competition rules will be kept under review and will be published on the Association Website together with competition arrangements at the appropriate time each year.

Peals

31. All ringers must be members of the Association for the peal to be recorded by the Association, with at least half of those participating, General or Honorary Life Members.
32. The Association reserves the right to refuse to accept any peals which, in the opinion of the Standing Committee together with the Peal Secretary, may bring the Association into disrepute.
33. Each year the AGM will recommend a suggested, per rope, peal donation to the Ringling Support Fund.
34. Full details of each peal rung for the Association, together with the donations, shall be forwarded to the Peal Secretary by the end of the next calendar month.
35. A list of peals rung for the Association each year will be published in the Annual Report, with full details available via the Association's website.

Alteration to Rules

36. Proposals for alteration to the rules shall be considered at an Annual General Meeting of the Association. Proposals will be circulated to Branch Secretaries in advance to enable Branch and Individual Tower consideration.