

Dear Friends,

As you know we have been conducting a review of our Association & Bell Fund rules. This has already been the subject of much discussion and iteration through the Standing Committee, General Committee and the AGM.

At its meeting in July the General Committee agreed a draft for discussion at the AGM. This draft was subsequently copied to Branch Chairs, Secretaries and Ringing Masters; Branch General Council Reps will of course have had the drafts with the opportunity to discuss within their Branches.

Comments received at and since the AGM have been logged and will be considered by the General Committee along with any further comments received through this stage.

The General Committee will review all comments and agree a final draft which will be placed before the next AGM which will be held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (in Frame Branch or by Zoom depending on the situation).

The version as discussed at the AGM is available on the Association Website, and I would be glad to receive any further comment. It would be helpful if these could be co-ordinated by Branches, with a single response from each Branch to [general.secretary@bath-wells.org](mailto:general.secretary@bath-wells.org). This was discussed at the AGM and my thanks to Branches who have already provided this response. I would be very grateful if all further responses could be with me by 14<sup>th</sup> February. To confirm these are the same versions provided to Branch Officers for consideration in July 2020, and therefore no doubt Branches will have already had discussions about the proposed changes.

There are three items to consider which follow sequentially in this document:

1. Association Rules
2. Bell Fund Rules
3. General Processes

The third of these is a guidance note only and is not a formal part of our rules, nevertheless constructive comments are welcomed.

14<sup>th</sup> February will end the consultation phase, we will then enter a final drafting phase leading up to the General Committee meeting in March, and the result will be placed before the AGM in May for formal ratification.

I am very grateful for your contribution to this, agreeing a set of rules that meets everyone's ideal is at best not easy, we are doing our best.

Very best wishes

David Parfrey

# **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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

# **The Bath & Wells Ringing Support Fund**

## **Rules of the Fund**

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

### **Objects**

1. The Bath & Wells Ringing Support Fund operates as an incorporated Charity, regulated by the Charities Commission. The Charity Registration Number is 273962 and Inland Revenue Reference is XN 44116. Its objects shall be:
  - i. The provision support to the tower advisory service as relating to the maintenance and repair of church bell Installations
  - ii. The provision support to education activities as relating to the instruction of new and developing bands to promote the art of church bell ringing, augmenting the training support available through the Association Education Officer.
  - iii. The provision of grants toward the repair and renovation of church bells and their fittings
  - iv. The provision of grants toward sound control where this is recommended as beneficial to the community surrounding the church tower
  - v. The provision of grants towards augmentation of church peals where this is seen as increasing the opportunity for ringing for divine service or promoting the art of church bell ringing
  - vi. The provision of grants towards training facilities where these are beneficial to training new bands or where they have wider training benefit across the local Branch

### **Governance**

1. Object iii of the Rules of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers requires that the Association provides a Ringing Support Fund to support the furtherance of it Objects.
2. The fund is a self-standing Charity, and therefore requires its own Governance. In order to maintain the connection with the Association and its Objects and Rules, the Trustees of the Fund are the Master (Chair), the General Secretary, The Treasurer, The Ringing Support Fund Officer, The Tower Advisor and the Education Officer. The Trustees shall have the power to co-opt up to two further Trustees, who are confirmed each year, but may serve a maximum of five years.
3. Decisions on grant awards from the fund are made by the Trustees and can be made at any time. Decisions will be reported on an annual basis to the General Committee.
4. The Fund will be administered on a day to day basis by the Ringing Support Fund Officer.
5. The Association's Treasurer will also act as Treasurer for the Fund.
6. The financial year for the fund will be 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

### **Eligibility**

7. Eligibility for grant aid is restricted to those Churches within the Diocese of Bath & Wells who are affiliated to the Association
8. Consideration will also be given to churches within the Diocese under the care of an appropriate registered charity, where this charity is affiliated to the Association, and where the bells are either of significant historical importance or an opportunity for the development of an Association Training Facility exists.

9. Eligibility additionally requires evidence of the payment of at least five years affiliation fees and a written undertaking to continue affiliation for a minimum of a further five years. Where a prospective applicant has not been affiliated for five years a single payment to bring the fee paid up to the affiliation requirement may be made at the time of formal request for grant aid.

### **Consideration & Approval**

10. Applications for grant support for works on towers or bells must be led by the Incumbent or PCC Secretary. Where the church is in the care of a registered charity the application must be made by an authorised Trustee of that charity.
11. Works to bells, frames or structures is subject to the Church of England Faculty process. Evidence of the appropriate approval level is a precursor to the approval of any grant.
12. Where the support requested is for bell maintenance, repair, sound control or augmentation an inspection by the Tower Advisory Service will be required, this is an essential requirement, and forms a part of the application process.
13. Where the support requested is related to Education or Training a recommendation from the Education Officer will form a part of the application process.
14. Grant support must not be assumed prior to decision by the Trustees.
15. Consideration will not normally be given to support for works undertaken prior to any grant application (see also rule 16).
16. If emergency repairs are required urgent inspections can usually be arranged, and a fast track approval process used. The waiving of this requirement may only be made in extreme and rare cases by the Association's Tower Advisor and would require a compelling reason.
17. Grant funding can only be applied to the specific works approved. Where works outside the agreed scope become necessary these must be prior approved before funding can be assumed.
18. All works must be completed within two years from the date of grant approval unless a specific extension has been approved by the Trustees.
19. Works to bells, frames and other structures must be completed to the satisfaction of the Tower Advisor before final funding is released.
20. Support for training must be completed to the satisfaction of the Education Officer before final funding is released.
21. Generally funding is released upon satisfactory completion of the approved project. In exceptional cases where staged payments were approved by the Trustees, these are subject to full claw back in the event of satisfactory completion not being achieved.

# The Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers

## Generally Required Processes

This document should be read in conjunction with either the Association Rules or the Ringing Support Fund Rules as appropriate. It provides further information on the interpretation of the rules and guidance on how to apply the rules, including step by step guides.

We seek to continuously improve, and therefore this document may be updated at any time. Please ensure when using that you are always using the latest version as available on the Association website.

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Version	Reason for update	Author	Date
4.0	General Committee Input	D L Parfrey	24/08/20
4.1	Error correction post proof read to v4.0	D L Parfrey	26/08/20

## **1. Membership**

Voting members are: Honorary Life Members, General Members, Members Emeritus and Associate Members.

### **a. General Member & Associate Members**

General Members make up the majority of the membership and are ringers attached to a tower affiliated to the Association or resident within one of the Branches of the Association, but unattached to an affiliated tower. General Members pay an annual subscription.

Associate members are ringers who are not actively ringing, or non-ringers, who wish to share and support the Objects of the Association. Associate members may be attached to an affiliated tower or resident within one of the Branches of the Association, but unattached to an affiliated tower. Associate Members pay an annual subscription.

Annual Subscriptions for General and Associate Members are agreed each year at the Association's Annual General Meeting.

- (i) For attached members, the Tower Master/Captain or Tutor approves the proposition for membership
- (ii) Proposal for election is made at a Branch Meeting and may be made by any voting member and seconded by another voting member.
- (iii) Voting members present at the meeting are asked to confirm the election
- (iv) The Branch Secretary records the election in the minutes of the meeting.
- (v) The Branch Secretary completes and gives the new member a Membership Certificate (Branch Secretaries should maintain a small stock for this purpose, refreshing their stock from the Membership Secretary).
- (vi) The Branch Secretary arranges for completion of the New Member and GDPR form.
- (vii) The Branch Secretary or Treasurer collect subscriptions upon election and the Branch Treasurer arranges for these to be paid into the Association's bank account direct, or via the Association Treasurer. This must be done within one month of election.
- (viii) Election is not complete, and membership will not be recognised until elements i-vii are fully complete.
- (ix) Once elements i-iv are fully completed the Branch Secretary sends the completed New Member and GDPR form to the Membership Secretary.
- (x) The Membership Secretary records the new member in the membership database and a digital copy of the form is retained.

### **b. Members Emeritus**

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.

- (i) The Branch Secretary confirms that the individual concerned is an existing General Member with at least ten years fully paid membership (information obtainable from the Membership Secretary).
- (ii) The Branch Secretary minutes the change of status at the next available Branch Meeting and confirms change to Member if not present at the meeting.
- (iii) Upon transfer no further annual subscriptions will be due from the Member.
- (iv) The Branch Secretary notifies the Membership Secretary.
- (v) The Membership Secretary records the change of status in the membership database

### **c. Honorary Life Members**

Honorary Life Members (HLM) are elected by the General Committee. This status is awarded in exceptional circumstances only, and in recognition for outstanding services to the Association and the Art of Ringing.

- (i) HLM submissions are considered at the Annual Meeting of the General Committee normally held in March of each year.
- (ii) To enable consideration any proposal must be lodged with the General Secretary (GS) by the end of February. In the absence of exceptional circumstance agreed with the GS any proposals received the February cut-off will be held over for consideration the following year.
- (iii) HLM status is not normally awarded for long service, other arrangements exist for recognising this.
- (iv) HLM status is not normally awarded for service to a tower or other local contribution. In these cases, members are encouraged to consider other ways to recognise this valuable service, for example 'The Master's Certificate of Commendation'.
- (v) HLM status is normally reserved for outstanding service at an Association level
- (vi) Any member may propose another for election; however, the case should normally be submitted by the relevant Branch Chair (BC).
- (vii) The proposer drafts case for election. There is no prescribed format, however the case should make a compelling argument as to why the Member should be awarded HLM status (see introductory paragraph above).
- (viii) The BC submits the case by sending to the GS.
- (ix) The GS will add the proposal to the Agenda for the next General Committee meeting and share the proposal with committee members in advance of the meeting.
- (x) The General Committee will consider the case and make its decision.
- (xi) The GS conveys the decision to the proposing BC.
- (xii) If the proposal is successful, the Master will write to the Member.
- (xiii) The Membership Secretary (MS) will update the membership database
- (xiv) The MS will provide the completed certificate for award at the next Association AGM.
- (xv) Upon election to HLM the individual ceases to pay annual subscriptions

### **d. Non-Resident Life Members**

Non-Resident Life Members (NRLM) are those who have either moved away from the Association's geography, transferring from General Member status, or those who wish to ring a Peal credited to the Association. These members pay a one-off fee equivalent to one year's General subscription, they are not entitled to vote at Association or Branch meetings.

These members may transfer to General Member status – see 'Changes to Membership' below.

For a peal to be credited to the Association the Conductor must confirm that all of the band are Association members, or if any require election to NRLM status. Elections to General Member (GM) status cannot be made in this way, only the NRLM process is open to tower election. On rare occasions where a resident non-member requires election for a peal, they may be elected as an NRLM and subsequently seek election as a GM. Provided the individual paid the NRLM subscription they will not be required to pay a further subscription upon election to GM (until the normal next annual payment becomes due).

For peal election:

- (i) It is an Association requirement that at least half of the band must be General or Honorary Life Members.
- (ii) One of the GMs or HLMs present shall propose the new NRLM, and another shall second. Provided other voting members present are agreed then the new member shall be considered duly elected.
- (iii) The conductor shall collect the one-off subscription from the new member and forward this to the Peal Secretary (PS) – this may be done at the same time as sending Peal Donations. This may be done following individual performances or grouped into monthly submissions.

- (iv) The Conductor in reporting the Peal to the PS shall identify the newly elected member.
- (v) The PS will pay subscriptions received (along with Peal donations) into the Association's bank account direct, or via the Association Treasurer, also providing the Treasurer with the information required to enable proper accounting for funds received.
- (vi) The PS shall provide the Membership Secretary (MS) with the names and election dates all new members elected in this way. The PS may provide the information as and when the elections take place or grouped into a monthly notification.
- (vii) The MS will add the new members to the membership database.
- (viii) If NRLM members wish to have their contact details used by the Association they will need to complete a New Member & GDPR form, these will be available via the Association website.

#### **e. Changes to Membership**

The formal request to change status will be recorded at the appropriate Branch Meeting, following which the Branch Secretary (BS) will notify the Membership Secretary (MS).

The MS holds and maintains the membership database, which is the master list of members. All changes must be notified in writing to the MS as follows:

- (i) New General & Associate Members notified by the relevant BS
- (ii) Transfers to Member Emeritus notified by the relevant BS
- (iii) New Honorary Life Members notified by the General Secretary
- (iv) New Non-Resident Life Members (NRLM) notified by the Peal Secretary (PS)
- (v) Transfers to NRLM status notified by the relevant BS
- (vi) Membership name changes notified by the relevant BS (or Peal Secretary in the case of an NRLM's name change identified prior to a peal attempt)
- (vii) Death of a resident member should be notified by the relevant BS
- (viii) There is no reliable mechanism for reporting the death of an NRLM, however where news of a death is heard this should be notified to the MS

Where a NRLM had previously been a General Member (GM) of the Association who had transferred to NRLM status they may transfer back without the need for election and without break in service. By way of example, Fred was a General Member for 20 years before moving to another part of the country, transferring to Non-Resident Life Member, 5 years later he returns to Somerset. He contacts the relevant Branch Secretary and requests transfer back to General Member status. Upon completion of the New Member & GDPR form and payment of the annual subscription he is re-admitted as a General Member and is deemed to have 25 years unbroken service.

Where an NRLM who has not previously been a GM wishes to transfer, they may be elected to through the normal GM election process.

## **2. Subscriptions**

Subscriptions for Non-Resident Life Members when elected for a peal are collected by the conductor and forwarded to the Peal Secretary.

Initial subscriptions from new members upon their election at Branch meetings are collected by the Branch Secretary or Treasurer and banked direct or forwarded to the Association Treasurer within one month of receipt.

Annual subscriptions falling due on January 1<sup>st</sup> are collected by the Branch Treasurer by the end of February and banked direct or forwarded to the Association Treasurer within one month of receipt.

Branch Treasurers may retain up to one quarter of Annual Subscriptions collected to reimburse Branch administrative expenses through the year. All expenses must be reasonable and fully documented. The unspent balance of these retained funds must be returned to the Association

bank account or the Association Treasurer together with a reconciled and detailed statement covering all monies spent by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. By way of worked example:

- 1) *Branch Treasurer collects subscriptions for the year 2023 that fall due from members on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.*
- 2) *Annual subscription collection is completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.*
- 3) *At least 75% of collected subscriptions are deposited in the Association's bank by the Branch Treasurer within one month of receipt and therefore at the latest by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023*
- 4) *A detailed reconciliation for the banked monies is sent by the Branch Treasurer to the Association Treasurer, clearly showing the amount retained by the Branch. This is provided at the same time as banking takes place.*
- 5) *Through the year the Branch incurs administrative expenses, and these are reimbursed by the Branch Treasurer using the retained funds. All expenses reimbursed are fully and properly documented by the Branch Treasurer. This documentation is open to examination by the Association Treasurer or the Association's Independent Examiner.*
- 6) *On 31<sup>st</sup> December the Branch Treasurer closes the records on 2023 administrative expenses and on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 opens a new record for 2024.*
- 7) *By January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 the Branch Treasurer will have deposited in the Association bank the total remaining balance from 2023 retained subscription funds. Also, by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 the Branch Treasurer will have provided a fully detailed statement covering the expenses paid during 2023. The sum of this statement must equal the total 2023 subscription not deposited into the Association's bank account.*
- 8) *This process is repeated each year, this way each year is fully reconcilable. No funds should be held from one year to the next, each year's finances being kept distinct from each other.*

Process is as follows:

- (i) Branch Secretaries (BS) send reminder to Tower Master/Captains/Correspondents during December.
- (ii) Branch Treasurers (BT) collect subscriptions from Unattached Members by end of February each year.
- (iii) Tower Master/Captains/Correspondents collect subscriptions from their tower members.
- (iv) Tower Master/Captains/Correspondents send a full list of their tower members together with the collected subscriptions to the BT by end of February each year. Where Members Emeritus and/or Honorary Life Members are included in the list this will lead to a difference between the numbers of subscriptions collected and the member numbers, in which case this should be identified such that reconciliation between the subscription and member list is clear.
- (v) Within one month of receipt, and subject to the permitted retention described above, BTs pay the collected subscriptions into the Association's bank account, keeping a record of the deposit.

### **3. Annual Reporting**

In the past there has been some confusion for members relating to Branch annual reports, membership, payment of subscriptions and publication in the Association's Annual Report.

To clarify this, there are two distinct elements of Branch reporting, one part looks backwards to the year ended and the other looks forward to the year starting. To simplify and further clarify these are now to be considered separately and are now titled '**Annual Membership Return**' and '**Annual Branch Return**'.

Guidance on each is now given below, together with further information on the membership database.

#### 4. Annual Membership Return

it is important to recognise that subscriptions relate to the year starting and the annual report relates to the year ended.

By way of worked example:

- 1) *The annual report for 2023 is produced in the spring of 2024, i.e. looking back to the previous year.*
- 2) *The membership lists collated during January/February in 2023 (see process below) feed into the annual report for 2023 (not the Jan/Feb 2024 lists which feed into the annual report for 2024).*
- 3) *Elections and transfers that take place through 2023 will feed into the annual report for 2023 – **provided this information has been given to the Membership Secretary at the right time.***
- 4) *During January 2024, the Membership Secretary will liaise with the Report Editor regarding the tower & membership lists for publication in the 2024 report.*

At the beginning of each year:

- (i) Branch Secretaries (BS) collate the Tower Member information (see Subscriptions above), adding the Unattached Member information and send to the Association's Treasurer (Tr) by end of February each year together with the collected subscription monies, where this has not already been banked.
- (ii) The Tr will undertake the accounting for subscription income using the Branch Returns as necessary and will then provide a copy of the Branch Returns to the Membership Secretary (MS).
- (iii) The Membership Secretary (MS) will confirm the Branch Returns against the existing database, updating the subscription payment history record.
- (iv) Any discrepancy between the Branch Returns and the existing information held will be identified by the MS who will contact BS direct to enable reconciliation of the two data sets.
- (v) Where Members exist on the database, but are not on the Branch Return, and the BS is unable to resolve the difference, the Member record will be identified in the database as dormant.
- (vi) Where Members exist in Branch Returns but are not on the database the BS will be asked to provide details of the Member's election, transfer in from another Branch or change of Member status.

#### 5. Membership Database

For the database to have meaning it is essential that it is maintained, and that information held is current. The database is maintained by the Membership Secretary and is updated as information from others is received. The database is reconciled annually upon receipt of Branch Membership Returns.

Information held includes:

- Membership number
- Member name
- Date first elected
- Current membership class
- Previous name(s) where changes have occurred
- Date(s) of name change(s)
- Earlier membership classes where changes have occurred
- Date(s) of membership class change(s)
- Record of annual subscription payments
- Branch (where relevant)
- Tower affiliation (where relevant)
- Contact details, if provided and if permission has been granted for storing (GPDR)
- Whether the member has given permission under GPDR to publish their names.

## 6. Annual Branch Return

The Association's year end is 31<sup>st</sup> December, and the activities for that year are published in an Annual Report produced once accounts have been completed and independently examined, and all other information has been collated. Branches are required to provide an annual Branch Return for inclusion in the Association Report. The Annual Membership Return is separate from the Annual Branch Return and is described above. This section concerns, solely, the Annual Branch Return which reports on the year ended the previous 31<sup>st</sup> December.

The Annual Branch Report is completed by the Branch Secretary and sent to Report Editor by the 31<sup>st</sup> January each year. The return requires only a short narrative (maximum 400 words) account of Branch activities over the year just ended (31<sup>st</sup> December).

nb the tower details for publication in the Association Annual Report are taken from the Association website by the Report Editor. It is essential that Tower Correspondents, working with Branch Secretaries, ensure that any changes to tower details are sent to the Webmaster as soon as possible to enable the website to be updated.

## 7. Master's Certificate of Commendation

Any member may propose another for the award of the Master's Certificate of Commendation, which recognises recognise extended or specific service of high note to the Member's local tower or Branch.

- (i) The member discusses the proposition with the Branch Chair (BC) / Committee and makes the case for award.
- (ii) The Branch Chair (BC) makes the formal proposal to the Master. There is no prescribed format, but the case should be in writing and be compelling.
- (iii) The Master receives the case and considers, taking advice from the Standing Committee or others as he/she sees fit.
- (iv) If the Award is granted, then the Master writes to the recipient to inform them and confirms the award to the BC.
- (v) The Certificate is ideally presented by the Master at the next available Association Meeting (or other Association gathering). If this is not practical, then the Certificate will be presented at the next relevant Branch meeting by the BC (or the Master if present).
- (vi) The Master's Certificate of Commendation Recipients are listed in the Annual Report
- (vii) The Master's Certificate of Commendation may be awarded more than once to the same recipient (but each award will need a different case).
- (viii) This Award does not replace either HLM or Long Service Certificates.

## 8. Safeguarding

The Association has an elected Safeguarding Officer (SO) who can provide further information and advice to tower representatives and Parochial Church Councils where requested. The SO will offer advice and take any action appropriate to their advisory role and the laws and policies in this area, however the SO will not deal with any issues directly arising from complaints or allegations of abuse other than to refer to the appropriate authorities immediately.

- Safeguarding training is mandatory for those who are leading or managing training activities involving children, young people, or vulnerable people. Ringers forming part of a band who only assist by their presence are not required to participate in advanced courses, however it is a requirement of the association that they successfully complete awareness training. Those undergoing awareness training will be shown how to recognise signs of anxiety, neglect or abuse in children, young people, and adults.
- **Direct approach from an individual** - members should provide reassurance and note any concern raised, following the guidance provided through safeguarding training. These concerns should be discussed with the Parish Safeguarding Officer who will advise about any further action. If they are not available, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be

consulted. **If there is immediate risk of harm call the emergency services on 999 and then inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.**

- **Members concerns** - any concerns about, children, young people and/or adults, should be discussed with the Parish Safeguarding Officer who will advise about any further action. If they are not available, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be consulted. **If there is immediate risk of harm call the emergency services on 999 and then inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.**
- In the case of both known offenders and potential offenders it must always be borne in mind that the incumbent and churchwardens have ultimate sanction in allowing access to the tower. All ringers should appreciate that there is no automatic right to ring bells in any tower controlled by the church.
- All our churches are required by The House of Bishops' to follow the Safeguarding Policy entitled 'Promoting a Safer Church'. In the church, generally the porch, the name(s) and contact details of the local parish safeguarding officer(s), the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer(s) and the Local Authority Social Services must be displayed. In addition, they must show how to get help outside the church with child and adult safeguarding issues. Many of our towers are not accessed via the church and ringers may not see these posters on display. As a result, those in the ringing chamber may not be aware of whom to contact if they think/know someone is at risk of, or is being abused, or presents a risk to others. Although not compulsory, to help better protect the whole community, it would be helpful if these safeguarding details could be displayed where ringers will be able to see them.

## 9. Peal Recording

Rules 31 – 35 govern the ringing and recording of Peals for the Association.

Peals may be credited to the Association provided that all of the band are Association Members, with at least half being Honorary Life Members or General Members. Any non-members may be elected as Non-Resident Life Members in a belfry election immediately before the commencement of the attempt (see section 1d above).

In practice any individual may undertake the recording activities on behalf of a peal band, for example any nominated member of the band, or a 'peal week' arranger, however for the avoidance of doubt the responsibility for a peal and its recording remains with the Conductor.

For each peal to be credited with the Association.

- (i) Within one month full details must be sent in writing to the Association Peal Secretary together with peal donations collected from the ringers (and any new Non-Resident Life Member subscriptions).
- (ii) Frequent peal conductors may group peal details and submit monthly. In this case donations may be paid direct to the bank by agreement with the Association Treasurer and Peal Secretary.
- (iii) Full peal details are required for analysis purposes, however only peal headings will be published in the Annual Report
- (iv) Donations are for the benefit of the Ringing Support Fund to support the long-term maintenance of bells and their use across the Association

## 10. Tower Advisory Service

The Association provides a Tower Advisory Service which is supported through the Ringing Support Fund to support affiliated churches within the Diocese. Advice might for example be sought for:

- General information purposes on the condition of the tower, its bells and associated equipment (excluding clock and other specialist equipment)
- In support of a Church Quinquennial Inspection
- In support of a project not directly about the bells, but where the Church wishes to minimise risk to the bells or ensure the ringing areas and equipment are fully considered in plans.

- As the starting point for a bell (or related) project that might potentially lead to a Ringing Support Fund grant request

Where an eligible tower wishing to take advantage of the Service, the PCC, or the Charity responsible for the Tower should authorise one of their number to act as the local contact:

- (i) The authorised individual should contact the Ringing Support Fund Officer to request the inspection, explaining the reason for the request.
- (ii) The Ringing Support Fund Officer (RSFO) is empowered to allocate support from the fund to enable the inspection
- (iii) The RSFO requests the Tower Advisory Service to undertake the inspection
- (iv) The Tower Advisory Service will liaise directly with the local authorised contact to arrange and undertake the inspection.
- (v) The Tower Advisory Service prepares a report and forwards this to the RSFO who sends a copy to the local authorised contact.
- (vi) This ends the inspection process. If as a consequence the Tower/Church wishes to request financial support towards further works then a formal grant application from the Ringing Support Fund must be commenced.

## 11. Ringing Support Fund

The Ringing Support Fund is an incorporated charity, and has its own rules and Trustees as published in the Association Annual Report and on the Association's website.

Applications to the fund may be made at any time. Decisions will be made as soon as possible following receipt of a satisfactorily completed application, including the reports of all precursor inspections. Where decisions involve the Trustees, these are likely to be made electronically, with the opportunity for questions to be raised prior to decision. Where a major, novel or contentious decision is required a Trustee meeting will be called, which may be using a virtual platform, such as Zoom – physical, in-person, meetings will not be called unless a decision is exceptionally complex or there are many decisions to make. At the normal annual meeting of the General Committee, the Ringing Support Fund Officer (RSFO) will provide a report on Trustee decisions and progress on grants and applications since its last General Committee meeting.

If one of the Trustees is also an applicant or is a member of a tower which is the subject of an application, then good governance will preclude that individual from participating in decision making on that application. In this case the individual will not participate in the decision meeting or any other decision related discussion. They will also not be permitted to 'lobby' other Trustees. If the RSFO is connected to an application, then the General Secretary will perform the RSFO role. Where the Tower Advisor (TA) is connected to an application then an Assistant TA (ATA) will take the TA role.

The Fund is administered by the RSFO. There are six categories of grant award as covered in the Fund rules:

- a. Tower advisory service
- b. Repair and renovation of church bells and their fittings
- c. Sound control
- d. Augmentation
- e. Instruction to new and developing bands
- f. Training facilities

### Category a.

Where an inspection is required, either to support a Church's quinquennial inspection, or for any other purely advisory purpose:

- (i) The authorised individual (The PCC Secretary or authorised Charity Trustee) contacts the RSFO or the Tower Advisor (TA) to make the request.
- (ii) The RSFO & TA will liaise to facilitate the inspection.

- (iii) The Tower Advisory Service will make arrangements for the visit with the nominated contact (this may be different from the authorised individual).
- (iv) The TA or an ATA will undertake the visit and prepare a report.
- (v) The Report will be sent to the authorised individual.
- (vi) This ends the process. If on receipt of the report a grant application is considered this will be a new action within categories b – d above. At the discretion of the RSFO & TA, the need for a further inspection may be waived.

### Categories b – d

To note:

- Churches within the remit of the Church of England should always consult the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) before planning any works. The DAC will be able to advise on whether the works fall into List A (PCC Authority required), List B (Archdeacon authority required) or whether a full Faculty is required. Applicants will be required to provide one of the following:
  - Evidence of why the application meets List A status.
  - A copy of the Archdeacon's approval for List B works
  - A copy of the approved full faculty
- An inspection by the Tower Advisory Service will always be required as a precursor to, and a condition of, consideration of any grant application. As above, if the application follows an earlier inspection already undertaken by the Tower Advisory Service then this may, at the discretion of the RSFO & TA be deemed adequate.
- Requesters should never assume approval or make assumptions on the amount which may be granted, any commitment made is at the risk of the requesting body.
- Grants will not normally cover works already done.
- Applications to support emergency works can be fast tracked in exceptional circumstances (these should be discussed directly with the RSFO), but again no assumption should be made about the application outcome.

Once PCC or Trustee body has identified a wish to apply for support from the fund:

- (i) The PCC or Trustee body should ensure it is eligible to apply for Fund support.
- (ii) The PCC or Trustee body should identify and authorise an individual to act on its behalf with the Fund
- (iii) The individual contacts the RSFO to lodge the intention to apply
- (iv) The RSFO ensures the requester has the correct application form and any advice on its completion needed. The RSFO informs the requester that the required inspection will be arranged.
- (v) The RSFO liaises with the TA to facilitate the required inspection and the inspection takes place (this process is described above under Category a.)
- (vi) Requester completes the form and this together with the inspection report is forwarded electronically to the RSFO.
- (vii) The RSFO copies the form and report electronically to the Fund Trustees and makes arrangements for the application to be considered (most likely by Zoom).
- (viii) Trustees make decision on whether to award, and if so, how much should be awarded
- (ix) RSFO feeds back outcome to requester
- (x) If an award is made the work may begin when ready
- (xi) On conclusion of the works the requester contacts the RSFO to commence completion actions.
- (xii) RSFO liaises with TA to arrange a completion inspection
- (xiii) TA or ATA undertakes completion meeting and provides short report (sent to requester and RSFO)
- (xiv) Assuming work is completed satisfactorily the RSFO arranges with the Association Treasurer to release grant monies to the PCC or Charity.
- (xv) RSFO closes the file and archives.

Requesters should bear in mind:

- That any award will be for specific works, final payment will only be against these same specific works. If requesters wish to change the project, then they should contact the RSFO to discuss. It should be noted however that changes will require a revised grant approval, and the outcome of such approval should not be presumed.

- All works must be completed within two years of the grant award, following this the award will automatically lapse and be considered closed without liability for any payment. If works cannot be completed in two years, an extension to the grant may be granted at Trustee discretion. Approval should be sought as early as possible and it will require a new firm completion date.
- If in exceptional cases stage payments have been agreed and made, and subsequently the works are not completed, or not completed to the satisfaction of the TA, the RSFO will commence claw back. For the avoidance of doubt this means that the recipient body will be liable for repayment in full of all monies received from the fund.

To assist with decision making requesters may wish to consider in their application (this list is not exhaustive).

- The scale and complexity of the project.
- The absolute necessity, for example is this maintaining a ringable peal who have a functioning band. In other words, is the application supporting the first Object of the Association.
- What benefit will be brought by improving the installation
- What benefit is to be gained by augmentation
- The location and overall loudness of bells where sound control is requested, and what benefit will be brought by sound control

### **Categories e & f**

These concern education and training of existing and new ringers. Therefore any request for support will be made to Education Officer (EO), who will determine whether the need can be satisfied through the General Fund supported mechanisms, or whether due to its scale, complexity or strategic support is required from the Ringing Support Fund.

Formal requests to the Fund in this area will be made by the EO in conjunction with the original requester, and/or other members of the Education & Training Network. The EO may at their discretion leave the formal application with the originating requester, this might be more likely to happen in the case of requests for support for training facilities (such as simulators) or other training installations. This is because good governance will require the EO to stand back from any involvement in decision making on grant awards where they are the applicant.

Where applications are made for support from the EO then the EO will liaise directly with the RSFO to provide sufficient material for Trustees to make their decision on award and award level. As before where this is the case for reasons of good governance the EO may not participate in the decision process.

Where the EO has agreed that the originator should progress application then the process is similar to that for categories b – d above (but note there are some differences):

As with the Tower Advisor in b-d above, where the EO is the applicant the Deputy EO will be asked to fulfil the EO participation in decision making.

- (i) The originating body should ensure it is eligible to apply for Fund support.
- (ii) The originating body should identify and authorise an individual to act on its behalf with the Fund
- (iii) The individual contacts the RSFO to lodge the intention to apply
- (iv) The RSFO ensures the requester has the correct application form and any advice on its completion needed. The RSFO confirms with the EO that they are aware of the intended application.
- (v) The EO may give general advice, but cannot participate in the application as this will require them to stand back from the decision process.
- (vi) Requester completes the form (which includes a justification for the investment) and forwards electronically to the RSFO.
- (vii) The RSFO copies the form and electronically to the Fund Trustees and makes arrangements for the application to be considered (most likely by Zoom).
- (viii) Trustees make decision on whether to award, and if so, how much should be awarded
- (ix) RSFO feeds back outcome to requester
- (x) If an award is made the work may begin when ready
- (xi) On conclusion of the works the requester contacts the RSFO to commence completion actions.

- (xii) RSFO liaises with EO to arrange a completion report
- (xiii) EO provides short report (sent to requester and RSFO)
- (xiv) Assuming work is completed satisfactorily the RSFO arranges with the Association Treasurer to release grant monies to the PCC or Charity.
- (xv) RSFO closes the file and archives.

To assist with decision making requesters may wish to consider in their application (this list is not exhaustive).

- How will the development and its effect be maintained beyond the grant?
- How will the effect of the grant underpin the first and fourth Objects of the Association?
- How will the new or existing ringers benefiting from the investment from the Fund be encouraged to be full participants in the Association and its Branches.
- In the case of investment in training facilities or installation, how will they benefit:
  - Local ringing at the tower requesting.
  - The wider Branch and Association and members, for example how will the facilities be made readily available to others

## 12. Glossary

<b>Officer</b>	<b>Committees</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
<b>Master</b>	<b>Standing/General/Trustee RSF</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Deputy Master</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>DM</b>
<b>General Secretary</b>	<b>General/Standing/Trustee RSF</b>	<b>GS</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>General/Standing/Trustee RSF</b>	<b>TR</b>
<b>Ringling Support Fund Officer</b>	<b>General/Trustee RSF</b>	<b>RSFO</b>
<b>Tower Advisor</b>	<b>General/Trustee RSF</b>	<b>TA</b>
<b>Assistant Tower Advisor</b>		<b>ATA</b>
<b>Education Officer</b>	<b>General/Trustee RSF</b>	<b>EO</b>
<b>Deputy Education Officer</b>		<b>DEO</b>
<b>Peal Secretary</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>PS</b>
<b>Quarter Peal Secretary</b>		<b>QS</b>
<b>Webmaster</b>		<b>WEB</b>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>MS</b>
<b>Report Editor</b>		<b>RE</b>
<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>SO</b>
<b>Librarian</b>		<b>LIB</b>
<b>Independent Examiner</b>		<b>IE</b>
<b>Representatives on the Central Council</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>RCC</b>
<b>Branch Chair</b>		<b>BC</b>
<b>Branch Secretary</b>		<b>BS</b>
<b>Branch Treasurer</b>		<b>BT</b>
<b>Branch Ringing Master</b>		<b>BRM</b>
<b>Branch Education Officer</b>		<b>BEO</b>
<b>Branch Representative to General Committee</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>BGC</b>

<b>Membership Class</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
<b>General Member</b>	<b>GM</b>
<b>Honorary Life Member</b>	<b>HLM</b>
<b>Member Emeritus</b>	<b>ME</b>
<b>Associate Member</b>	<b>AM</b>
<b>Non-Resident Life Member</b>	<b>NRLM</b>
<b>Master's Certificate of Commendation Holder</b>	<b>MCCH</b>