

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 training 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 fellowship between ringers.

Constitution

2. The Association shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) 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 hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) within six months of the end of each financial year; the AGM will:
 - i. be chaired by the Master, or in their absence the Deputy Master
 - ii. require a quoracy of twenty voting members
 - iii. be minuted, with minutes made available on the Association's website
 - iv. approve the accounts of the Association and the Ringing Support Fund
 - v. elect officers to promote and deliver the aims of the Association. At a minimum these officers will include a Master, Deputy Master, General Secretary, Treasurer, Tower Advisor, Education Officer, Ringing Support Fund Officer, Safeguarding Officer, Data Control Officer and representatives to the CCCBR. Candidates for election to Tower Advisory roles must be approved in advance by the General Committee.
 - vi. in the case of voting, a simple majority will be required (unless agreed otherwise in advance), and in the case of a tie the Chair will have the casting vote.
5. The Association will be supported by an Executive and a General Committee, who may appoint sub-committees as required.
 - i. The Executive comprises The Master, General Secretary and Treasurer, and will conduct the day to day business of the Association
 - ii. The General Committee comprises the elected officers together with a representative from each of the Association's Branches (Rule 9).
 - iii. The General Committee will provide an elected forum to consider Association business, making recommendations to its membership as required. Specifically the General Committee will approve the Association's annual budget, and elect new Honorary Life Members
 - iv. The General Committee may co-opt up to two additional members where required for specific reason
 - v. Quoracy for the General Committee will be eight, with at least 50% of those present being elected Association Officers.

6. The financial year of the Association shall run from 1st January to 31st December.
7. Association finances will operate through bank accounts in the Association's name, managed by the Treasurer, and where a minimum of two elected officer are required to pay monies from the account(s).
8. The Association shall appoint an Independent Examiner to give transparent assurance on its financial and related activities.
9. The Association shall be organised in Branches, who will ensure they have the structures needed to support the administration of the Association's membership and financial affairs. Each Branch at a minimum will elect a representative for membership of the Association's General Committee (Rule 5ii).
10. In the event that members agree to dissolve the Association, the General Committee will transfer any remaining funds, after payment of all liabilities, to another Association affiliated to the CCCBR.

Membership

11. The membership shall consist of General Members, Junior 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 Captain, 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. Junior Members pay an annual fee set at 50% of the General Member fee. Junior Members will automatically transfer to General Membership status at the next January 1st after their 18th birthday.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. 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 General 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.

Membership and Affiliation Fees

- 12. 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).
- 13. 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.

Safeguarding

- 14. It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that our towers and ringing activities are safe for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 15. Individual towers and members must ensure they are aware of and compliant with their local Church Safeguarding policies and follow Diocesan guidelines and requirements.
- 16. The Association has an elected Safeguarding Officer who can provide further advice and information.
- 17. In the event of any safeguarding concerns the Parish, Diocesan and Association safeguarding officers must be informed.

Health and Safety

- 18. Bands comprising Association members should ensure they are aware of and compliant with their local church health and safety policies and procedures.

Ringling Support Fund

- 19. In accordance with Object iii the Association maintains a Ringing Support Fund. The Fund is an Incorporated Charitable Organisation and is governed through its own objects and rules. Decisions on the award of grants are made by the Fund Trustees. An annual report on its activity is presented to the General Committee.

Training

- 20. 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.
- 21. The Association Education Officer works closely with the Deputies and the Branch Education Officers to support Object ii.

Striking Competitions

- 22. 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.
- 23. Each Branch shall make its own arrangements for the selection of its representative teams in accordance with individual competition rules.

24. 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

25. All ringers must be members of the Association for the peal to be recorded by the Association, with at least half of those participating being General or Honorary Life Members.
26. 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.
27. Each year the AGM will recommend a suggested, per rope, peal donation to the Ringing Support Fund.
28. 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.

Changes to Rules

29. The Association rules will be formally reviewed every five years by the General Committee, reporting the results of this review to the next AGM for decision. The next review will be considered at the 2025 AGM.
30. Any member may propose a rule change at any time, via their Branch General Committee representative. Such proposals will be brought to the next General Committee for consideration and recommendation for decision at the next AGM.

These rules were updated and agreed at the Association's Annual General Meeting on