



The Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers

Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinaries

Purpose

This document lays out the process to investigate and recommend a way forward in relation to any potential disciplinary matter involving any member of the BWDACR. This covers all potential disciplinary related matters including those of a safeguarding nature.

Overview

Wherever possible, matters of dispute should be resolved locally and informally, perhaps involving the Branch Chair. However, where this is not possible, or if the alleged matter is of a more serious nature, then it must be referred formally using this procedure.

All alleged disciplinary matters will be:

- Dealt with fairly and consistently
- Investigated fully to get as much information as possible, this will include formal interviews with the key parties
- The decision may be made by the Master after taking any relevant advice, however the Master may choose to form a panel from the General Committee to assist in conducting the investigation and determining an outcome.
- Members interviewed may be accompanied by a relevant other person
- Everyone will have a chance to have their say before decisions are made
- An appeal against any decision will be permitted
- At all times the alleged disciplinary matter, its investigation and its outcome will be confidential between the parties and the panel.
- Following any appeal, the decision will be final.

Commencing the Disciplinary Process

On becoming aware of the alleged disciplinary matter, the Master will determine the level of investigation required and whether a panel is required. Depending on the seriousness, the Master may determine that the matter should go before the full General Committee for consideration. The Master will take whatever advice they deem appropriate at this stage.

Selecting the Panel

Where a panel is to be used it will be chaired by the Master. The panel will normally include the General Secretary and at least one further elected Association Officer member of the General Committee. The panel will be mindful of any conflict of interest in its members.

Investigating the Matter

All reasonable attempts to gather relevant evidence will be made, and this will include interviews with all direct parties. Where necessary other people relevant to the matter may be interviewed. Those interviewed may be accompanied by another relevant individual.

Determining the Outcome

After reviewing all of the available evidence an opinion will be formed, by those hearing the matter, on the best way forward for all. They will take into consideration the impact of their decision on all affected parties including the wider membership, the relevant Branch and the Association itself. Where relevant they will also consider the impact on the home tower(s)

and Churches of the parties, and where necessary discussing the outcome confidentially with relevant incumbents.

Remedies

There are a number of remedies possible, depending on the severity of the offence. These include:

1. A letter from the Master confirming the findings, explaining that these are not consistent with our Association and its objects. Such a letter will clarify that any repeat may lead to more serious outcomes.
2. Where relevant, withdrawal of HLM status
3. Where relevant, removal from any Branch or Association office
4. Cancelling of Association Membership.

Where either of remedy's 2-4 above are proposed, and the matter is not one of a safeguarding nature (involving other safeguarding authorities) the remedy will be recommended to the General Committee for final decision.

It is not within the gift of the Association to prevent an expelled member from continuing to ring or participate in local tower activities, however in these cases:

- The local incumbent will be confidentially advised of the individual's expulsion, together with the reasons why. It will be for the local incumbent to take any local action on whether the individual should continue ringing in their tower or not.
- Any peal, quarter peal, date touch etc rung including an expelled member (after expulsion) will not be permitted to be accredited to the Association.

In the case of a disciplinary matter involving a Safeguarding issue, any remedy will be in support of, and consistent with the approach being taken by relevant officials managing the Safeguarding issue, such as the Diocesan Safeguarding team, the Parish/Benefice Incumbent and Safeguarding Officer or the Police. In these cases the Master will discuss and agree the Association's recommended remedy with those relevant authorities with due regard to confidentiality, noting that expulsion from the Association will inevitably cause the matter to become public.

Communicating the Outcome

The outcome will be communicated in writing confidentially to all relevant parties. The letter will give clarity on whether an offence leading to a disciplinary outcome has been found to have been committed, and what course of action or remedy has been determined as appropriate.

Appeal

On receipt of the outcome letter either party may appeal against the decision or the remedies. Such appeal should be in writing within one week to the General Secretary. The appeal itself will be considered by the Master, or equivalent, of a neighbouring association or guild.

The individual considering the appeal will take such advice, or conduct such other investigation as required before reaching decision on the appeal. Following review, a decision on the appeal will be communicated to the relevant parties.

No further appeal will be permitted.

30th August 2024