

W&DCRA

Rules

1st April 2023

RULES OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS CHANGE RINGING ASSOCIATION

1. Name

The Association shall be called The Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association (the Association).

2. Objects

The objects of the Association shall be:-

- (i) To foster ringing for the Services of the Church and to encourage the recognition of bellringers as officers of the Church.
- (ii) To cultivate and advance all aspects of the art and practice of change ringing.
- (iii) To encourage fellowship and communication among ringers.
- (iv) To encourage the proper care, maintenance and use of church bells and belfries.
- (v) To maintain a Belfry Repairs Fund.

3. Patrons

The Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Worcester and the Bishop Suffragan of Dudley for the time being shall be invited to become joint patrons of the Association.

4. President

The Dean of Worcester for the time being shall be invited to become President of the Association.

5. Vice-Presidents

At each Annual General Meeting of the Association there shall be elected Vice-Presidents not exceeding three in number.

6. Freeman

Persons who have rendered outstanding service to the Association may be elected Freeman at an Annual General Meeting of the Association on the recommendation of the Central Committee. Freeman shall be elected for life and no further subscriptions shall be payable.

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7. Membership

Membership shall be divided into the following classes:-

(i) Ringing Members.

Ringing Members shall be active church bell ringers, including those learning the art, and shall reside and/or ring in the Association area. A Ringing Member shall be affiliated through one tower only or, alternatively, shall be designated "Unattached".

(ii) Associate Members.

Associate Members shall be persons other than active ringers who may wish to support the work of the Association.

(iii) Honorary Members.

The Patrons, President and Chaplain, all for the time being, shall, unless holding Ringing or Associate Membership, be designated Honorary Members.

(iv) Non Resident Life Members.

A Non Resident Life Member shall be a ringer who does not fulfil the conditions of full membership under Rule 7(i). A Non Resident Life Member who subsequently fulfils the conditions of full membership under Rule 7(i) may become a Ringing Member and in that case shall pay annual subscription commencing on the 1st January after the member fulfils those requirements. The member should inform the Branch Secretary of such a transfer, which should be reported at the next branch meeting. A Ringing Member of two years' standing or more who ceases to fulfil the conditions under Rule 7(i) shall automatically become a Non Resident Life Member without further payment.

8. Election of Members

The following provisions shall apply:-

(i) Ringing Members and Associate Members shall usually be elected at a Branch meeting at which they should normally be present. Prospective members shall be proposed and seconded by Ringing Members. A vote on the proposition shall follow. Membership shall take effect from the end of the meeting.

(ii) Non Resident Life Members shall normally be elected at a Branch meeting. Prospective members shall be proposed and seconded by Ringing Members. A vote on the proposition shall follow.

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(iii) Ringing Members or Non Resident Life Members may be elected to membership before an Association peal attempt subject to ratification of the belfry election at the next available Branch meeting. Full details of such elections must be sent by the proposer to the Secretary of the Branch in which the election takes place or the proposer resides. The number of such provisional members shall not exceed half of the peal band.

(iv) Ringing Members whose subscriptions are more than twelve months in arrears shall forfeit all rights to membership until they pay all outstanding subscriptions or they are re-elected in accordance with these rules.

9. Subscriptions

The amount of subscription for all classes of members referred to in Rule 7 shall be decided at an Annual General Meeting of the Association. Subscriptions shall become due on the 1st of January in each year and shall be paid between that date and before the commencement of the Annual General Meeting in each year. A Ringing Member who is not a Freeman must meet this requirement before being permitted to speak and/or vote at General Meetings of the Association.

10. Officers

All Officers of the Association and all members of the Central Committee (except the Chaplain) shall be Ringing Members of the Association.

The Officers of the Association shall be:-

(i) A Master, whose duties shall be to promote the interests of the Association, to control all ringing activities at General Meetings or gatherings of the Association (other than Branch meetings or functions) and to deal with such other matters as may be provided for in these rules or as may be directed by the Central Committee.

(ii) A General Secretary, who shall keep the minutes of all General Meetings of the Association and of Central Committee Meetings, maintain a complete register of members, issue notices of all General Meetings of the Association and of the Central Committee, and carry out such other duties as may be directed by the Central Committee.

(iii) An Assistant General Secretary, whose duties shall be to assist the General Secretary and to act as directed by the Central Committee.

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(iv) A Treasurer, who shall receive monies on behalf of the Association, paying them into the Association's banking account.

Accounts shall be kept as the Central Committee shall require and all official expenses (other than Branch expenses) shall be paid in connection with the Association's activities. Association funds shall be invested on instructions from the Central Committee. All cheques must be signed by the Treasurer and the General Secretary or such other Officers authorised by the Central Committee. At the first meeting in each year of the Central Committee an examined statement of accounts made up to the previous 31st December shall be presented.

(v) A Chaplain.

(vi) A Peal Secretary, who shall receive peal fees and record all peals rung for the Association.

(vii) An Archivist, whose duties shall include:-

(a) Making arrangements for the safekeeping and insurance of the Association's assets, comprising:-

- i) The records of the Association, its Branches and Committees.
- ii) The Association's handbells.
- iii) Other artefacts and assets of the Association.

(b) Ensuring the maintenance, recording and storage of the assets, including acquisition and disposal of items as necessary.

(c) Promoting, overseeing and facilitating their use.

(viii) A Clerk to the Trustees of the Belfry Repairs Fund.

(ix) A Treasurer of the Belfry Repairs Fund.

11. Transfer of Duties

Newly elected Officers and Committee Members of the Association and its Branches shall normally assume their duties at the end of the meeting at which they are elected. Retiring Secretaries and Treasurers shall be allowed one month in which to complete and hand over their books to their successors.

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12. Central Committee

(i) The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Central Committee. It shall consist of the Officers of the Association, the Branch Masters and Branch Secretaries and one other representative elected by each Branch, the Central Council representatives, the Convenor of the Belfry Advisory Panel, the Safeguarding Contact, the Annual Report Editor and members who may have been added or co-opted within these rules.

(ii) Fifty percent of the current membership of the committee (rounded up to the nearest whole number) present shall form a quorum.

(iii) The Central Committee shall normally meet three times per year: in February, as soon after the Association Annual Meeting as practicable, and in November. Other meetings of the Central Committee may be called by the General Secretary after consultation with the Association Master and the Treasurer.

(iv) The General Secretary shall immediately call a meeting of the Central Committee if a request is sent to him/her signed by ten members of the Central Committee, specifying the proposed business to be transacted.

(v) The Chairman at meetings of the Central Committee shall be the Association Master or if he/she is not present, the Members attending shall elect a Chairman for that meeting.

(vi) The Central Committee shall have power to co-opt a maximum of two other Ringing Members of the Association, who shall retire at the following Annual General Meeting of the Association.

(vii) Should any Association Office fall vacant at any time, the Central Committee may appoint a Member to fill it until the next Annual General Meeting.

(viii) Any Member of the Central Committee shall have the right to bring business before it provided at least twenty one days notice is given to the General Secretary, who shall include such business verbatim in the agenda for the next meeting of the Central Committee.

(ix) The Central Committee may resolve, at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting in each year, to delegate any of its functions to a Standing Sub-Committee consisting of the Master, the General Secretary and the Treasurer, to exercise such functions between meetings of the Central Committee and to report on them at the following Central Committee meeting. The Standing Sub-Committee's expenditure shall not exceed any sum determined by the Central Committee.

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(x) All meetings of the Central Committee shall be open to Members of the Association as observers subject to the following:-

(a) Members of the Association shall give at least seven days notice to the General Secretary of their intention to be present as observers.

(b) The Central Committee shall have power to exclude observers during the discussion of matters which in its view raises issues of confidentiality.

(c) No Member of the Association who attends as an observer shall address, or take part in the business of, the Central Committee.

(xi) All members of the Central Committee except those under the age of eighteen or otherwise disqualified by law are Trustees of the Belfry Repairs Fund and need to be aware of their responsibilities as Charity Trustees.

13. Accountability

There shall be two Account Examiners, being Ringing Members of the Association of at least eighteen years of age and who shall not otherwise be members of the Central Committee, elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. They shall examine all accounts of the Association (except those of the Belfry Repairs Fund) and its Branches and report on the same to the Central Committee. Upon the prior instruction of the Central Committee, the examiners shall also have power to examine all or any books of account kept by the Officers of the Association or its Branches at any time during the year and to report thereon to the Central Committee.

14. General Meetings

(i) The Annual General Meeting shall be held between the 1st March and the 1st July in each year. The business to be transacted at an Annual General Meeting shall be:-

(a) To receive the Officers' reports and accounts for the previous year.

(b) To elect up to three Vice-Presidents of the Association.

(c) To elect the Officers of the Association for the coming year.

(d) To elect Association Account Examiners for the coming year.

(e) To deal with notices of motion received by the General Secretary.

(f) To transact such other business as may be considered appropriate to an Annual General Meeting and to deal with all other business required by these rules.

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(ii) All notices of motion and nominations for the election of Officers made by any Ringing Member shall be in writing and must be received by the General Secretary at least four weeks before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

(iii) A nomination for the election of an Officer shall name the office in question and contain the signatures of a proposer and seconder and of the nominee. In the event that no nomination has been received for any office by the due date, nominations for that office may be accepted at the Annual General Meeting.

(iv) Twenty five Ringing Members at any General Meeting of the Association shall form a quorum.

(v) Members who shall be entitled to speak and vote at General Meetings of the Association shall be those Ringing Members who meet the subscription requirements of Rule 9, the President and the Chaplain. Associate Members who meet the same requirement shall be entitled to speak but not to vote at such meetings.

(vi) The Chairman at a General Meeting of the Association shall be the President or, in his/her absence a Vice-President or, if there is no Vice-President present who is prepared to take the chair, the Association Master. If none of these are present then the members attending shall elect one of their number to act as Chairman for that particular meeting.

(vii) A Special General Meeting may be called by the Central Committee when deemed necessary. The General Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting upon receipt of a written notice signed by fifty Ringing Members. The written notice shall specify the business to be transacted at the meeting. A Special General Meeting shall take place within six weeks of the date of the Notice to the General Secretary. The General Secretary shall give at least three weeks notice of a Special General Meeting, the arrangements for which shall be made by the Standing Sub-Committee.

15. Branches of the Association

The Association shall be divided into Branches. Changes to Branch boundaries may only be made by a General Meeting after consultation with the Branches concerned. Branch affairs shall be conducted in accordance with Branch Rules as determined by a General Meeting of the Association.

16. Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

(i) The Association shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and shall loyally abide by its rules and decisions.

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(ii) Each Branch shall elect at its Annual Meeting one of its Ringing Members to be a Central Council representative. A further Central Council representative (if so permitted) shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. In the event of a vacancy in Central Council membership arising (for whatever reason), the Central Committee shall have power to fill the post.

17. Expenses

Travelling expenses shall be allowed to:-

(i) Branch Masters and Branch Secretaries for travelling to their own Branch Business and Committee Meetings.

(ii) The Account Examiners for attending the examination of the accounts.

(iii) Central Council Representatives for attending meetings of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers including hotel expenses not exceeding two nights. This amount to be approved by the General Secretary prior to attendance.

(iv) All other Members of the Central Committee for attending Central Committee Meetings.

18. Belfry Advisory Panel

The Central Committee shall have the power to appoint annually, at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, a Panel of Advisors headed by a Convenor. The Panel shall consist of members who in the Central Committee's opinion are competent to advise on all matters connected with rings of bells and to advise Church Authorities if so requested. All activities of the Panel shall be reported upon by the Convenor to the Central Committee.

The expenses of the Panel shall be payable by the Authorities or others seeking such advice, unless the Parochial Church Council is affiliated to the Belfry Repairs Fund, in which case their expenses shall be met by the Fund.

19. Peals

(i) All peals rung under the auspices of the Association shall conform in all respects to the rules and decisions of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

(ii) All ringers taking part in such peals shall be members of the Association as defined in Rule 7, provided always that no more than half of the total number of ringers taking part in such peals shall be Non Resident Life Members of the Association. The

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proposer shall forward details of any new members to a Branch Secretary, together with the appropriate subscription.

(iii) It shall be the duty of the conductor of a peal rung for the Association to ensure that publication of the details of the peal is made in The Ringing World. In addition he/she shall forward the following to the Peal Secretary within four weeks of a peal being rung and before the 15th January of the following year in respect of a peal rung during December:-

(a) A complete copy of the peal report as submitted to The Ringing World for inclusion in the Association's Annual Report.

(b) The name of the tower to which a Member ringing a first peal belongs.

(c) The name, address and tower of a Ringing Member elected prior to the peal attempt according to Rule 8(iii).

(d) The name and address of a Non-Resident Life Member elected prior to the peal attempt according to rule 8(iii).

(e) The total peal fees payable. The amount of the peal fee per ringer payable shall be determined by the Central Committee from time to time, and such fee shall be calculated solely by reference to the anticipated cost of printing peal performance records in the Annual Report for the year in question.

(iv) In any case where the full peal fee has not been received by the Peal Secretary by the 15th January of the year following that in which it was rung, the peal shall be recorded in the Annual Report in an abbreviated form only.

(v) Any band wishing to record a peal in the Illuminated Peal Book shall meet the cost.

(vi) Money collected from peal fees shall be added to the Association General Fund.

20. Safeguarding Contact

The Central Committee shall have the power to appoint annually, at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, a Safeguarding Contact. The Safeguarding Contact shall be a member who, in the Central Committee's opinion, is competent to advise on all matters relating to Safeguarding and to liaise with Church Authorities if so required. All activities of the Safeguarding Contact shall be reported to the Central Committee.

The expenses of the Safeguarding Contact shall be met from the General Fund.

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21. Annual Report Editor

The Central Committee shall have the power to appoint annually, at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, an Annual Report Editor. The Annual Report Editor shall be a member who, in the Central Committee's opinion, is competent to advise on all matters relating to the Association Annual Report. All activities of the Annual Report Editor shall be reported to the Central Committee, which shall have final approval over all content and costs associated with the production of the Annual Report.

22. Alteration of Rules

No alteration, deletion, or addition to these Rules or to Branch Rules shall be made except at a General Meeting of the Association. No amendment to the Rules shall have the effect of causing the Belfry Repairs Fund to cease to be a Charity at Law.

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Standing Orders - to be observed at General Meetings of the Association

1. Order of Business

All items on the Agenda shall take precedence over all other business. The Chairman shall have the power to exclude anything not on the Agenda unless the proposer secures a two-thirds majority for his/her subject to be included under 'Any Other Business'.

2. Minutes

The General Secretary shall read the minutes of the last meeting unless these have already been circulated or unless at a Special General Meeting it shall be decided by vote to postpone their reading until a later meeting. These shall be confirmed and corrections only shall be allowed.

3. Discussion

Every member shall stand when speaking and address the Chairman stating his/her name and tower or Branch. A proposer may speak for not more than five minutes and all other speakers shall be limited to a maximum of two minutes unless extended at the discretion of the Chairman.

4. Amendments to motions

No member shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same subject without the permission of the Chairman, except the proposer of the motion who may speak in reply. Amendments must be put to the meeting in reverse order and if one of them is carried it becomes the substantive motion and must be put to the meeting again.

5. Closing Debate

The motion for the next business or the closure may be moved and seconded only by members who have not previously spoken at any time during the debate. No speeches shall be allowed on such motions. If the closure is carried, the proposer of the original motion shall have the right to reply before the question is put.

6. Voting

Voting shall be by a show of hands except where a majority of those present decide on a ballot. Where it is deemed necessary by the Chairman, two scrutineers or tellers shall be appointed. The Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

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7. Conflict with Rules

Nothing herein contained shall exclude any provision contained in the Rules of the Association or the Branch Rules as the case may be, and in any case of conflict the provisions of the appropriate rule shall prevail.

APPENDIX

The 1984 Annual General Meeting passed a motion in the following terms:

"That in order to assist voting members to make a wise choice of Officers, all future candidates for election to Office in this Association and its Branches should be invited to make a brief pre-election statement, verbally or in writing, of the policy they intend to follow, or the contribution they intend to make, in the event of being elected to office."

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BRANCH RULES

The following shall be the Rules governing the Branches of the Association:

1. Branch Officers

(i) Each Branch shall elect the following officers for the ensuing year:-

(a) A Ringing Master, whose duties shall be to take charge of the ringing at all Branch Meetings and, if the Branch Chairman is not present, to act as Chairman. He/she shall endeavour to further the art of change ringing and promote the interests of the Association within that Branch.

(b) A Deputy Ringing Master, whose duties shall be to deputise within the Branch at the Ringing Master's request and assist in the discharge of the Ringing Master's duties.

(c) A Secretary, whose duties shall be to make all necessary arrangements for Branch meetings and carry out all other Branch secretarial work keeping an up to date list of branch members and at the end of the year to send same to the General Secretary.

(d) A Treasurer whose duties shall be to collect the subscriptions of all members in the Branch, pay official expenses connected with Branch meetings, to ensure that the accounts are up to date and at the end of each year, to send the same, together with the balance of monies received, to the General Treasurer.

(e) A Chairman, whose duties shall be to take the Chair at all business meetings of the Branch.

(f) One Central Council Representative to be elected in accordance with Rule 16(ii) of the main Association Rules.

(g) One Central Committee Representative.

(h) Up to four other members to serve on the Branch Committee.

(j) A Training Officer, which post shall be optional and whose duties shall be to assist the Ringing Master in all matters relating to training.

(ii) Should any Branch Office fall vacant at any time the Branch Committee may appoint a Branch Member to fill the position until the next Branch business meeting.

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2. Transfer of Duties

Newly elected Officers and Committee Members of the Association and its Branches shall assume their duties at the end of the meeting at which they are elected. Retiring Secretaries and Treasurers shall be allowed one month in which to complete and hand over their books to their successors.

3. Branch Committee

The affairs of each Branch shall be managed by a Branch Committee consisting of the Officers listed in Branch Rule 1. The Association's Master and General Secretary shall be ex-officio members of such Committee. The Chairman of Branch Committee Meetings shall be the Branch Ringing Master.

The Branch Committee shall meet once a year within one month prior to the date of the Branch Annual Meeting and at other times as shall be deemed necessary.

Four Members (not including ex-officio members) present shall form a quorum.

All meetings of Branch Committees shall be open to members of the Association registered by name as Ringing Members within the Branch in question, subject as follows:

a) A Ringing Member within the Branch shall give reasonable notice to the Branch Secretary of his or her intention to attend the next meeting of the Branch Committee as an observer and the Branch Secretary shall thereupon inform such Ringing Members of the date and time of the forthcoming Branch Committee meeting and reasonable accommodation for the attendance of observers at such meetings shall be provided.

b) The Branch Committee shall have power to exclude observers during the discussion of a matter which in its view raises an issue of confidentiality.

c) No member of the Association who attends a meeting of a Branch Committee as an observer shall address or take part in the business of the Branch Committee.

4. Ringing Stewards

Branch Committees may nominate for election at a Branch Meeting such number of Ringing Stewards as the Branch Committee deems necessary, such Ringing Stewards to retire at the following Branch Annual Meeting. The duties of the Ringing Stewards will be to assist the Branch Ringing Master in the co-ordination of ringing and instruction in the Branch, and such Stewards shall be under the direction of the Branch Ringing Master.

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5. Branch Meetings

(i) Three Business meetings of each Branch shall be held in the year, at which new members shall be elected in accordance with Association Rules and any other necessary Branch business transacted. The last meeting in each year shall be the Branch Annual Meeting at which the Officers of the Branch shall be elected. Practices may be arranged as desired.

(ii) Fifteen Ringing Members present shall form a quorum.

(iii) The Members who shall be entitled to speak and vote at Branch Meetings shall be those Ringing Members who are registered by name at any tower within the particular Branch or designated as "Unattached" within it. An Associate Member shall be entitled to speak, but not to vote, at any meeting of the Branch under which his/her membership is registered.

Association Officers shall also be allowed to speak at any Branch Meeting.

6. Alteration of Rules

No alteration, deletion or addition to Branch Rules shall be made except at a General Meeting of the Association. No amendment to the Rules shall have the effect of causing the Belfry Repairs Fund to cease to be a Charity at Law.

Adopted at a Special General Meeting held on 23rd March 1996 and subsequently amended as follows:

AGM 12th April 1997; AGM 13th April 1998; AGM 5th April 1999;

AGM 1st April 2002; AGM 21st April 2003; AGM 12th April 2004;

AGM 28th April 2012; AGM 21st April 2014; AGM 28th March 2016;

AGM 17th April 2017; AGM 2nd May 2018; AGM 30th March 2019; AGM 1st April 2023.