

***Oxford Diocesan Guild***  
***of***  
***Church Bell Ringers***

**RULES**  
*(As at 16 May 2009)*

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**BRANCH RULES**

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## **THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS**

### **1. NAME**

The name of the Guild shall be "The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers" hereinafter referred to as the "Guild".

### **2. INTERPRETATION**

In these Rules, except where the context otherwise requires:-

the singular includes the plural and the masculine includes the feminine,

"the Diocese" means the geographical area which from time to time comprises the Diocese of Oxford in the Church of England,

"member" means a member of the Guild in any category,

"voting member" means a member entitled under these Rules to vote,

"Officer" means any of the persons mentioned in Rule 9(a), (b) and (c) (i)

"Branch" means a Branch of the Guild duly constituted under Rule 20.

### **3. OBJECTS**

The objects of the Guild are:-

- (a) the encouragement of the attendance of its members both at service ringing and at public worship;
- (b) the recognition of the position of ringers as Church workers;
- (c) the recruitment and training of new ringers, so that there may be regular service ringing in all the towers within the Diocese where the bells are ringable;
- (d) the promotion of interest in the care of all the bells within the Diocese; and
- (e) the promotion of the art of change ringing.

### **4. AFFILIATION**

The Guild may be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and shall, if so affiliated, abide by the rules and decisions thereof.

## 5. MEMBERSHIP

There shall be the following categories of membership:-

(a) Resident Ringing Members.

To become a Resident Ringing Member a candidate must:-

- (i) be competent to ring for Sunday Service;
- (ii) live within the Diocese or ring regularly at a church within the Diocese and either
- (iii) be elected on the proposition of a voting member at a General Meeting of the Guild or of a Branch or
- (iv) be elected before starting for a peal by the voting members then present.

Such election shall be of no effect unless ratified at a subsequent meeting of the Guild or of a Branch.

(b) Non-resident Ringing Members.

To become a Non-resident Ringing Member a candidate must:-

- (i) live outside the Diocese and either
- (ii) be elected on the proposition of a voting member at a General Meeting or
- (iii) be elected by the voting members present before starting for a peal.

Whenever a Non-resident Ringing Member is elected before starting for a peal the conductor of the peal shall forward his subscription to the Peal Secretary together with his name and address and the date and place of the election. Such election shall be of no effect unless ratified at the next Guild Annual General Meeting.

(c) A Resident Ringing Member may become a Non-resident Ringing Member in accordance with Rule 8(b) and a Non-resident Ringing Member may become a Resident Ringing Member in accordance with Rule 8(c).

(d) Life members.

A Resident Ringing Member may become a Life Member at any time by paying a lump sum equal to 25 times the annual subscription current at the time. A Life Member shall retain his membership regardless of his residence.

(e) Distinguished Members.

A member who has been a Resident Ringing Member for at least 30 years and who has given meritorious service to the Guild or a Branch may be proposed for Distinguished Membership by two members of the Guild. This proposal, which should include a citation of the reasons for it, should be sent to the Honorary General Secretary. If approved by the Master, Deputy Master and Honorary General Secretary, the names of those proposed for Distinguished Membership will go forward for ratification at the Guild AGM.

(f) Honorary Members.

Anyone appointed or elected to be the President or a Vice-President under Rule 9 who is not already a voting member shall become an Honorary Member.

Anyone who is not a voting member and who is considered to have given meritorious service to the Guild may be elected as an Honorary Member by a General Meeting of the Guild or of a Branch.

(g) Associate Members.

A person ineligible for membership as a voting member and who takes an active interest in the Guild or a Branch may be elected as an Associate Member at a General Meeting of the Guild or of a Branch.

(h) Honorary Ringing Members.

A person who was elected an Honorary Ringing Member before the 2009 AGM.

**6. ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE AND HOLD OFFICE**

(a) Members of the following categories and no others shall be entitled to hold office and to vote at all meetings of the Guild or of the Branch of which they are members, including meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which they are members:-

Resident Ringing Members, Life Members, Distinguished Members, Honorary Ringing Members and Honorary Members.

(b) Non-resident Ringing Members and Associate Members may attend meetings of the Guild or of its Branches. They shall not be entitled to be elected to any committee or sub-committee of the Guild or of a Branch but may be co-opted by any such committee or sub-committee which has power to co-opt. When attending a meeting a Non-resident Ringing Member or Associate Member may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the person presiding at such meeting.

**7. EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION**

(a) Any member may be expelled or suspended from membership on the ground that he has by word or action brought discredit to the Guild, provided that the procedure laid down in this Rule is followed.

(b) A proposal to expel or suspend a member may be made only by:-

(i) a resolution of a Branch or

(ii) a proposal signed by not less than five voting members.

(c) Any such proposal shall be sent in writing to the Honorary General Secretary who shall within 28 days convene a meeting of the Finance and General

Purposes Sub-committee, of which at least 14 days notice shall be given to the members of the Sub-committee, to the member concerned and to the Branch or members making the proposal.

- (d) The member concerned shall be entitled to be present and to speak at any meeting of the Sub-committee when such proposal is considered but shall withdraw when the Sub-committee considers its recommendation. A representative of the Branch or of the members making the proposal shall also be entitled to be present and to speak but shall also withdraw when the Sub-committee considers its recommendation.
- (e) After hearing the case for the proposal and for the member concerned, the Sub-committee shall recommend to the General Committee whether or not the member concerned should be expelled or suspended from membership for a specific period. Such recommendation shall be considered at the next meeting of the General Committee which may accept or reject the recommendation, or vary the period of suspension. The decision of the General Committee shall be final.
- (f) The Sub-committee may draw up rules for the conduct of hearings under this Rule and, if so, such rules shall be communicated to the parties concerned.
- (g) A member expelled under this Rule shall not be re-admitted to membership within two years and then only with the consent of the General Committee after notice of proposed re-admission has been given on the agenda. Any money owing by the expelled member to the Guild shall become payable immediately on expulsion and any property of the Guild in his care or possession shall be returned immediately to the appropriate officer.
- (h) A member suspended under this Rule shall return immediately to the appropriate officer any property of the Guild in his care or possession and shall not be re-admitted to membership after suspension unless such property has been returned and any money owing by him to the Guild has been paid.

## **8. SUBSCRIPTION**

- (a) Resident Ringing Members, Distinguished members and Associate Members shall pay an annual subscription of such an amount as shall from time to time be decided by the General Committee. Such subscription shall be payable on election to membership and thereafter annually on the 1st. January in respect of that calendar year and shall be paid to the Honorary Treasurer of the Branch to which the member belongs. Any Resident Ringing Member or

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Associate Member whose subscription shall be unpaid by the 31st. March in the year in which it is due shall thereupon cease to be a member of the Guild and shall not be re-admitted to membership unless the subscription for that year is first paid, provided that a Branch may resolve to excuse such payment after notice of such proposal has been given in accordance with Branch Rule E.

- (b) A Resident Ringing Member who ceases to meet the condition of Rule 5(a) (ii) may become a Non-resident Ringing Member without further election either on payment of the amount of the Non-resident Ringing Member's subscription, or without further payment if he has previously paid annual subscriptions of a total not less than the amount of the Non-resident Ringing Member's subscription. Such change of status shall be communicated by the Branch Secretary to the Honorary General Secretary.
- (c) A Non-resident Ringing Member shall, immediately on election, pay a subscription of such amount as shall from time to time be decided by the General Committee, such subscription to be paid as provided by Rule 5(b). A Non-resident Ringing Member who subsequently qualifies as a Resident Ringing Member under Rule 5(a) (ii) shall thereupon cease to be a Non-resident Ringing Member but shall, without further election, become a Resident Ringing Member and shall be required to pay the annual subscription from the 1st. January following the date of his qualification.
- (d) Following election under Rule 5(a) or qualification under paragraph (c) of this Rule a Resident Ringing Member shall be issued with a certificate of membership and with a copy of the current Rules of the Guild.

## 9. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

- (a) The Lord Bishop of the Diocese shall be invited to be the President of the Guild.
- (b) The Bishops Suffragan of the Diocese, the Archdeacons within the Diocese and the Deans of Christ Church and Windsor shall be invited to be Vice-Presidents. Other persons who have performed meritorious service for the Guild may be elected Vice-Presidents at a General Meeting.
- (c) There shall be:-
  - (i) A Master, a Deputy Master and five Stewards of the Guild all of whom shall be change ringers, an Honorary General Secretary, an Honorary General Treasurer, an Honorary Librarian, an Editor of the Report and a Peal Secretary. Additional officers may, from time to time, be appointed by a General Meeting after consideration of a report by the General

Committee and (ii) Representatives of the Guild to serve on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers shall be elected from time to time so as to comply with the rules of that organisation.

- (d) All such persons as are mentioned in Rule 9(c) shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting from among the voting members present or who shall have agreed to be nominated. Those elected shall hold office from the end of the meeting at which they were elected until the end of the next following Annual General Meeting, provided that the persons elected as representatives of the Guild to serve on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers shall serve until the expiration of their period of office under the rules of the Central Council.
- (e) There shall be three Trustees of the Guild. The Trustees shall be elected at a General Meeting of the Guild from among the voting members and each Trustee shall hold office from the time of his election until he shall notify the Honorary General Secretary in writing of his desire to resign and, in that event, shall cease to hold office upon the election of some other person as a Trustee in his place.
- (f) There shall be a General Committee consisting of:-
- (i) those members who accept office or who are elected under paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (e) of this Rule;
  - (ii) the Branch representatives mentioned in Branch Rule F and
  - (iii) six members elected at the Annual General Meeting from among the voting members.
- (g) Should a vacancy arise among the officers, the General Committee shall appoint a substitute who shall hold office until the end of the next Annual General Meeting, provided that, if the appointment is urgent in the opinion of the Master or, in his absence, the Deputy Master, it may be so made by the Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee.

## **10. GENERAL MEETINGS**

- (a) A General Meeting to be known as the Annual General Meeting shall be held each year. The business to be transacted at the Annual General Meeting shall be:-
- (i) to receive from the General Committee a report and audited accounts for the previous year;
  - (ii) to elect the officers of the Guild in accordance with Rule 9;
  - (iii) to appoint an Independent Assessor who shall be appropriately certificated;
  - (iv) other items placed on the agenda by the General Committee and

- (v) any further business allowed by the chairman.
- (b) The Honorary General Secretary, whenever requested by the General Committee, or in writing by any 25 voting members, shall, within 28 days of receipt of such request, convene an Extraordinary General Meeting. In case of emergency, the President, the Master or the Honorary General Secretary may convene such a meeting at his own discretion.
- (c) Not less than 14 days notice in writing of any General Meeting specifying the date, time and place and the business to be transacted at such meeting shall be given to the tower correspondent of each tower within the Diocese at which there are voting members of the Guild. Whenever possible, notice of such meeting shall also be given by publication in "The Ringing World".
- (d) No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum of 50 voting members be present. Every voting member present shall have one vote and matters shall be decided by a simple majority except where otherwise stated in these Rules. In the case of an equality in the voting the chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
- (e) The Master shall take the chair, whenever possible, at all General Meetings and General Committee Meetings. In his absence the Deputy Master shall take the chair but if he also is absent, the meeting shall elect an officer to take the chair.

## **11. MANAGEMENT**

- (a) The management of the Guild shall be entrusted to the General Committee, which may regulate its own proceedings and generally exercise all such powers of the Guild as are not required by these Rules to be exercised by a General Meeting or specifically by some other committee, sub-committee or Branch. At General Committee meetings 20 voting members shall be a quorum. Other committees, sub-committees and Branches shall fix their own quorums.
- (b) The General Committee may from time to time appoint such sub-committees as it considers necessary; and in particular shall appoint the following standing sub-committees:-
  - (i) a Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee;
  - (ii) an Education Sub-committee and
  - (iii) a Towers and Belfries Sub-committee.

The terms of reference of any sub-committee shall be as determined by the General Committee from time to time.

- (c) The Honorary General Secretary shall, if possible, attend all General Meetings and General Committee Meetings. He shall keep the minutes of such meetings in duplicate (the duplicate copy being in the care of the Honorary Librarian), conduct all the correspondence of the Guild, except in matters relating to finance, issue notices of meetings and carry out such other duties as are required for the advancement of the Guild.
- (d) A register of members shall be kept by such person as the General Committee shall agree.

## **12. FINANCE**

- (a) The property of the Guild, both real and personal, shall be vested in the Trustees. Cheques and other orders drawn on the Guild banking accounts shall be signed by the Honorary General Treasurer or by a member appointed by the General Committee to sign cheques and by one of the Trustees, or by two of the Trustees; save, however, that cheques for not more than two hundred pounds may be signed by the Honorary General Treasurer alone, or by the member appointed by the General Committee to sign cheques.
- (b) The Honorary General Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that satisfactory arrangements exist for the safe receipt and banking of all monies due or paid to the Guild and the efficient payment of all expenses incurred by the Guild. He shall keep such accounts as the General Committee may direct. At the Annual General Meeting he shall present an audited statement of accounts made up to the previous 31st. December. He shall be responsible for investing any funds which are surplus to current needs, subject to the approval of the Trustees.

## **13. RESERVE FUND**

- (a) There shall be a Reserve Fund which may be augmented by transfer from the General Fund by resolution of the General Committee.
- (b) The Reserve Fund shall be used to make grants to voting members or their dependants in the event of distress or to cover extraordinary expenditure which cannot be borne by the General Fund. Grants from the Reserve Fund shall be made only by the General Committee but in an emergency may be authorised by any three officers of the Guild, provided that a report as to such emergency action shall be made to the General Committee at its next following meeting.

#### **14. LIBRARY**

- (a) The Honorary Librarian shall have the care and maintenance of the Guild Library, the duplicate minute book, the first Guild peal book, the list of peals together with the bound copies of the Annual Reports containing such peals, the Roll of Honour and such other property belonging to the Guild as may be placed in his care by the General Committee. He shall issue and receive books in accordance with paragraph (b) of this Rule.
- (b) Books and the Guild handbells may be borrowed by any member in accordance with such conditions as may from time to time be determined by the General Committee.
- (c) The Honorary Librarian shall be empowered to purchase suitable books.

#### **15. CUSTODY AND INSURANCE OF GUILD PROPERTY**

- (a) All Guild property, other than that mentioned in Rule 14, shall be in the care and custody of such person as the General Committee may from time to time direct.
- (b) The Guild property mentioned in Rule 14 and all other Guild property shall be adequately insured by the Guild.

#### **16. DAMAGE**

Any damage to bells or gear incurred at a Guild function through negligence of any ringer present shall be made good at the expense of the Guild.

#### **17. DISSOLUTION OF THE GUILD**

The Guild shall not be dissolved nor its funds divided or disposed of except by a majority of three quarters of the voting members present at a General Meeting of which not less than 28 days notice in writing has been given to the tower correspondents of each tower within the Diocese having voting members of the Guild and such notice shall have specified the intention to propose such a resolution.

#### **18. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

No motion shall be put in the agenda at any General Meeting except as specified in Rule 10(a) unless a notice in writing specifying the resolution to be proposed shall have been given to the Honorary General Secretary not less than six weeks before the date of the General Meeting at which such resolution is to be proposed.

## **19. ALTERATION OF RULES**

Alterations or additions to these Rules or to Branch Rules shall not be made except at a General Meeting after consideration of a report by the General Committee. All such alterations or additions must be approved by three quarters of the voting members present.

## **20. BRANCHES**

In order to advance its objects and to make for better organisation the Guild shall be divided into Branches based on geographical areas. Any reorganisation of Branches shall take place only with the consent of the towers and Branches involved. Such reorganisation shall be subject to approval by the General Committee.

## **21. ANNUAL REPORT**

The General Committee shall decide each year whether to publish a report on the activities of the Guild and shall decide the content of any such report.

## **22. PEALS**

- (a) A peal will be recognised by the Guild only if it complies with the following conditions:-
- (i) The peal must comply with the Rules of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers;
  - (ii) All participants must be members of the Guild or provisionally elected in accordance with Rule 5(a) or (b);
  - (iii) The conductor of the peal shall submit to the Peal Secretary details of the peal including participants and the composition (for seven or more bells), details of provisionally elected members and the appropriate peal fee as determined by the General Committee. This submission must be received by the Peal Secretary within one month of the peal being rung.
- (b) A peal may be rejected by the Guild after publication in "The Ringing World" if it is subsequently found not to comply with any of the conditions of paragraph (a) of this Rule.

## BRANCH RULES

- A. Branch members must be voting or Associate Members of the Guild. Only voting members of the Branch may vote at Branch meetings.
- B. There shall be a Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer of each Branch (hereinafter referred to as "the Branch officers"). Every Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting each year and the Branch officers shall be elected at such meeting from among the voting members of the Branch. They shall hold office from the end of such meeting until the end of the next following Branch Annual General Meeting. If the Branch so resolves the same person may hold the offices of Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. Additional officers of the Branch may from time to time be appointed at the Branch Annual General Meeting.
- C. There shall be a committee of each Branch consisting of the Branch officers, a representative of each tower of the Branch at which there are Branch members and the Branch representatives on the General Committee.
- D. Should a vacancy arise among the Branch officers, it shall be filled by the Branch in general meeting or by the Branch committee and the person so appointed shall hold office until the end of the next following Branch Annual General Meeting.
- E. The Annual General Meeting of the Branch shall be held each year at such time as each Branch may decide, when the Branch officers and the Branch representatives on the Guild General Committee shall be elected and general business transacted Not less than 14 days notice in writing of the date, time and place and the business to be transacted at the meeting shall be given by the Branch Honorary Secretary to the Guild General Officers and to the correspondent of each tower of the Branch at which there are Branch members.
- F. At all General Committee Meetings of the Guild each Branch shall be entitled to be represented by its Branch Secretary and one representative for every hundred Branch members or part of one hundred Branch members exceeding twenty five.
- G. The Branch Honorary Treasurer shall collect the subscriptions of the Branch members who are Resident Ringing Members and Associate Members and shall forward to the Honorary General Treasurer by the 1st. December each Year such

proportion of the subscriptions as shall from time to time be decided by the General Committee, the remainder of the subscriptions being retained for the use of the Branch. The Branch Honorary Treasurer shall submit an audited statement of accounts at each Annual General Meeting of the Branch and shall forward a copy of such statement to the Honorary General Treasurer.

- H. Any damage to any bell or gear incurred through the negligence of a ringer present at a Branch function shall be made good at the expense of the Guild, provided that notice of any such damage shall be given as soon as possible to the Honorary General Secretary by the Branch Honorary Secretary.
- I. Each Branch may regulate its own proceedings and make rules for the conduct of its business provided that such rules are not inconsistent with the Guild Rules and these Branch Rules. Should any such inconsistency occur, the Guild Rules and these Branch Rules shall prevail.

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