

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUHLD
TOWERS AND BELFRIES SUB-COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTION AND CODE OF CONDUCT

This document defines the constitution and terms of reference of the Towers and Belfries Sub-committee and lays down a code of conduct for the members of the sub-committee.

CONSTITUTION

Sub-committee status

The sub-committee shall be a sub-committee of the General Committee of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers. As such it will be answerable to the General Committee on policy matters and will report regularly to the General Committee on the activities it has undertaken. For convenience the sub-committee will normally be referred to simply as the Towers and Belfries Committee.

Object of the Sub-committee

The object of the sub-committee shall be to assist in achieving "the promotion of interest in the care of all bells within the diocese", which is one of the objects of the Guild.

Terms of Reference

In order to meet this object, the sub-committee shall have the following terms of reference:-

To provide advice within the limits of the expertise available to the Sub-committee to any tower in the Diocese of Oxford on any matter concerning the tower, the bells, frame and fittings or any other matter of direct relevance to maintaining the bells in the tower in working order.

To provide advice to the Trustees of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund on the suitability of applications for a grant from the Bell Fund.

To respond to requests from the Trustees of the Bell Fund to carry out inspections of work undertaken in a tower which has been offered a grant from the Bell Fund, for the purpose of advising the Trustees that such work has been carried out satisfactorily so that any grant may be paid.

To provide similar assistance to the administrators of the Guild Bell Restoration Fund as is provided to the Trustees of the Bell Fund.

To arrange training courses to provide towers with self-help maintenance information

To run the Best Kept Tower Competition in the Diocese of Oxford

To act as the focus for the Guild for the exchange of information on redundant bells between the Central Council, the Guild, and other Associations.

Membership

Elected membership of the Sub-committee will be drawn from the General Committee and such members, who should have relevant experience, will be elected annually at the appropriate meeting of the General Committee. Guild members with appropriate expertise may also be co-opted by the Sub-committee annually.

The Guild Master and Honorary Secretary shall be ex-officio members of the sub-committee

The Sub-committee shall appoint its own Chairman who will be responsible for submitting a written report annually to the General Committee of the Guild

Meetings

Meetings will be convened by the Chairman with the agreement of members. There shall be at least two meetings a year.

GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Sub-committee members will:-

1. at all times work towards the objects of the Guild;
2. conduct themselves in such a manner as not to bring the sub-committee or the Guild into disrepute;
3. recognise that the work of the sub-committee is undertaken in a spirit of voluntary assistance with expertise freely given, although acceptance of payment of expenses may be appropriate,
4. confine advice given to matters for which they are professionally qualified or on which they have relevant experience;
5. recognise that it may be in the best interests of the Guild to refer a problem to professionally qualified persons, if doubt as to the extent of the problem and its solution exists;
6. be impartial in offering guidance to a church on sources of professional advice, when needed, for example when advising on the choice of bellhanger from whom quotations may be sought;
7. take into account relevant safety legislation when carrying out inspections, especially the need to ensure that inspections are never carried out alone;
8. comply with conditions attached to insurance policies held by the Guild, so as not to invalidate such insurance.
9. ensure that reports on inspections which may be acted upon, for example by undertaking remedial work in a tower, carry an appropriate disclaimer to ensure that the Sub-committee or the Guild does not incur any legal liability by recommending such work.
10. in the event of carrying out an inspection which results in a recommendation to withhold a grant, seek a second opinion from the Chairman before making any report or comment either to the tower or the Trustees

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS EMPLOYED BY OR ASSOCIATED WITH THE BELLHANGING TRADE

The Sub-committee should encourage Guild Members employed or associated with professional bellhangers to become members. The special status of such members does, however, require certain voluntary constraints upon their activities in the interests of maintaining good relations between bellhangers and the Guild and to ensure that the activities of such members do not result in any legal liability on the subcommittee or the Guild arising from any intervention in a contract between a bellhanger and a church.

Subcommittee members employed by, or associated with, a professional bellhanger will, in addition to the points in the General Code of Conduct above:-

1. declare their interest, which will be duly recorded in the minutes of the Sub-committee
2. declare their interest on any written report they produce and if necessary, state expressly that the report does not necessarily represent the views of his employer.
3. be excluded from discussions involving analysis or comparisons of tenders involving other bellhangers.
4. not be involved in any inspection carried out for the purpose of recommending whether a Bell Fund grant should be paid, or work undertaken, by the bellhanger by whom he is employed or with whom he is associated.

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