

Rules of the Guild (as revised May 9th, 2026)

Registered Charity No 1105766

- 1 Name.** The Guild shall be called The Hereford Diocesan Guild of Berringers, hereinafter referred to as the Guild.
- 2 President.** The Bishop of Hereford shall be invited to be the President of the Guild.
- 3 Vice-Presidents.** The Suffragan and/or Assistant Bishop shall be invited to be joint Vice-Presidents of the Guild. Any other persons considered to have given outstanding and exceptional service to the Guild may be elected to be Vice-Presidents at an Annual General Meeting of the Guild after recommendation by the Management Committee.
- 4 Objects.** The objects of the Guild are:
 - (a) to advance the Christian religion by the ringing of bells for worship and other appropriate occasions with the attractiveness of perfection.
 - (b) to promote and encourage the art of bellringing for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively, by the provision of education and training in change ringing.
 - (c) to promote due order in the belfry, and to bring ringers into closer fellowship with each other.
 - (d) to promote an interest in the care of all bells in the Diocese.
- 5 Membership and Election of Members.** Members shall be categorised as:
 - (a) **Ringling Members.** Any ringer having been elected at a District or General Meeting shall be a Ringling Member of the Guild. Subscriptions shall be determined by a General Meeting of the Guild, after considering any recommendations from the Management Committee. A reduced rate shall be payable by persons under the age of 18.

Any ringer who has completed 25 years as a Ringling Member of the Guild shall be presented with a silver-coloured badge at an Annual General Meeting and this will be recorded in the Annual Report.
 - (b) **Life Members.** Any ringer who has completed 50 years as a Ringling Member shall be proposed as a Life Member of the Guild at an Annual General Meeting and upon election no further subscription shall be payable. A gold-coloured badge will be presented and this will be recorded in the Annual Report.
 - (c) **Associate Members.** Any persons (other than active ringers) wishing to support the work of the Guild shall be entitled to become Associate Members. They shall be elected at District Meetings, and subscriptions shall be determined as above [Rule 5(a)]. An Associate Member has no power to vote at a Guild Meeting.
 - (d) **Freemen.** After recommendation by the Management Committee, the honour of Freeman may be conferred by the Annual General Meeting on members considered worthy of special recognition by reason of services rendered to the Guild. The number of Freemen shall not exceed twelve.
 - (e) **Non-Resident Life Members.**
 - (i) A ringer normally resident outside the Diocese of Hereford may be elected a Non-Resident Life Member at a District or Guild Meeting and a subscription determined as above [Rule 5(a)] is payable to the District Treasurer or Treasurer at the time of election.
 - (ii) A Non-Resident Life Member may be elected provisionally immediately prior to a Guild peal attempt. The new member shall be proposed and seconded by members of the Guild, of whom at least three shall take part in the peal attempt. The new member's name, address and subscription, together with the peal details [as per Rule 17(c) and (d)], shall be forwarded to the Peal Recorder, who will arrange for the provisional tower election to be ratified at a District or Guild meeting and will forward the subscription to the Treasurer.
 - (iii) A Non-Resident Life Member has no power to vote at Guild meetings.
 - (iv) A Ringling Member who leaves the Diocese shall be entitled to become a Non-Resident Life Member without further payment following notification to the appropriate District Secretary.
 - (v) A Non-Resident Life Member becoming resident in the Diocese shall cease to be a Non-Resident Life Member but may become a Ringling Member subject to ratification at the next available meeting and payment of the annual subscription.
- 6 Voting.** All elections and decisions at Guild meetings, other than those involving an alteration to the Rules, shall be decided by a simple majority of the members voting (including the Chairman of the meeting) and in the event of a tied vote the Chairman of the meeting shall have the casting vote.
- 7 Officers.**
 - (a) **Executive Officers.** The Guild shall appoint Executive Officers who shall be *ex officio* Trustees of the Guild. They shall collectively exercise day-to-day administration of the Guild and shall hold all residual executive powers. They may hold such informal meetings as are deemed necessary, both to deal with urgent routine matters and to formulate proposals for consideration by the Management Committee and the Districts.
 - (b) **The Executive Officers of the Guild are:**
 - (i) the Guild Master;
 - (ii) the Guild Secretary;
 - (iii) the Guild Treasurer;
 - (iv) the Peal Recorder;
 - (v) the Report Secretary;
 - (vi) the Guild Education Officer.
 - (c) **Non-Executive Officers.** The Guild may appoint such Non-Executive Officers as it sees fit. A list of non-executive officers will be published annually.
 - (d) **Nominations for Guild Offices.** Nominations for Executive Officers, Non-Executive Officers and Central Council Representatives shall, in years when the offices are open for election, be forwarded to the Secretary by 28th February, such nominees having indicated their willingness to serve.
 - (e) **Election of Officers.** Officers shall be elected from the membership of the Guild at an Annual General Meeting, after considering any recommendations that might be made by the Management Committee, and shall take office from the end of the meeting at which they are appointed.
 - (f) **Term of Office.**

- (i) The Master shall be elected for a term of three years and thereafter may be re-elected on an annual basis, subject to a maximum term of six years.
- (ii) All other Officers shall be elected for a term of one year and may, if they wish, offer themselves for re-election.
- (iii) In the event of a casual vacancy the Management Committee shall have the power to co-opt from the membership of the Guild. Any Officer thus co-opted shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting when the vacancy shall be filled by election.
- (iv) No Executive Officer shall (otherwise than as a Trustee of the Guild) acquire any interest in property belonging to the Guild or receive remuneration or be interested in any contract entered into by the Trustees.

8 Duties of Officers.

- (a) The **Guild Master**: shall, if he or she desires, preside at any meeting and take charge of ringing at any Guild or District Meeting at which he or she is present.
- (b) The **Guild Secretary**: shall keep the minutes of the General and Committee meetings of the Guild, issue notices of General meetings, maintain contact with the Guild membership through the District Secretaries and carry out such other duties as may be required by the Management Committee. The Secretary shall inform the President and Vice-Presidents of all Guild meetings and activities.
- (c) The **Guild Treasurer**: shall pay into the Guild banking account all monies received by him or her on behalf of the Guild. He or she shall keep such accounts as the Management Committee desire and publish accounts as directed by the Management Committee. At the Annual General Meeting he or she shall present an independently examined statement of account made up to the previous 31st December. He or she shall, on instructions from the Management Committee, invest Guild funds which are surplus to current needs.
- (d) The **Peal Recorder**: shall record all peals rung for the Guild and maintain a Guild peal book. The Peal Recorder shall be responsible for ensuring, so far as practicable, that all peals have complied with Rule 17.
- (e) The **Report Secretary**: shall compile and present an Annual Report of the Guild as early as possible in accordance with the Management Committee's wishes.
- (f) The **Guild Education Officer**: shall co-ordinate the work of the District Education Officers and convene their meetings from time to time.
- (g) **Non-Executive Officers**: The duties of the Non-Executive Officers will be published annually.

9 Management Committee.

- (a) **Membership**. The Management Committee shall consist of:
 - (i) the Officers of the Guild [as stated in Rule 7];
 - (ii) the Secretary of, and one elected representative from, each District;
 - (iii) the Central Council Representatives;
 - (iv) four Clerical Representatives from the Diocese, who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting after considering any recommendations from the Management Committee;
- (b) **Meetings**. There shall be at least two ordinary Meetings of the Management Committee in every year. One of these meetings shall be held not earlier than 7th March in each year prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary may call other meetings after consultation with the Executive Officers, or at the request of a Management Committee meeting.
- (c) **Quorum**. Twelve members of the Management Committee shall form a quorum.

10 Annual General Meeting.

- (a) The Annual General Meeting of the Guild shall ordinarily be held on the second Saturday in May in a Guild District to be determined by the previous Annual General Meeting or, in the event of any difficulties, by the Management Committee.
- (b) The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting shall be decided by the Management Committee and shall be distributed to District Secretaries not less than three weeks prior to the date of the Meeting; it shall
 - (i) include any item proposed by a District or the Management Committee;
 - (ii) give full details of any proposed alteration to these rules, such proposal to be in accordance with the requirements of Rule 20 hereof;
 - (iii) consider the donation to the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellingers Bell Restoration Fund of an amount not exceeding the sum specified by the Management Committee;
 - (iv) include, at the discretion of the Management Committee, any item proposed by an individual Member;
- (c) The Meeting shall, after considering any recommendations from the Management Committee, elect an Independent Examiner who shall examine the accounts of the Guild and submit a report to the next Annual General Meeting. This report shall be attached to the published accounts.

11 Special General Meeting.

- (a) The Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting;
 - (i) on the instructions of the Management Committee;
 - (ii) within six weeks of receiving a motion signed by twenty-five Members of the Guild (Ringing Members, Life Members or Freemen) specifying the motion to be placed before the Meeting.
- (b) The Secretary shall give four weeks' notice to District Secretaries of the calling of a Special General Meeting;
- (c) The quorum for a Special General Meeting shall be fifty Members.

12 Property.

- (a) All property of the Guild shall be the responsibility of the Management Committee.
- (b) The Secretary shall have powers of discretion on conditions of issue and shall submit an annual report to the Management Committee on the state of the property and the loans made.
- (c) Written applications for loans shall be made to the Secretary.

13 Finance.

- (a) The financial year of the Guild shall be from 1st January to 31st December.

- (b) The accounts of the Guild shall be submitted by the Guild Treasurer to the Independent Examiner and shall be published in the Annual Report.
- (c) The methods of payment and collection of subscriptions shall be agreed by the Executive Committee and be appropriate to the type of membership, affiliation and processes available for collection at the time.
- (d) Subscriptions become due for payment on 1st January.
- (e) In support of any application for funding from the Guild, the districts should submit a budgeted expenditure plan. Funding applications will be reviewed by the Trustees who will take into account the financial situation and charitable aims of the Guild.

14 Districts.

- (a) The Guild shall be divided into Districts, the boundaries of which shall be decided by the Management Committee.
- (b) Each District will be expected to conduct its own affairs, and shall take appropriate measures to maintain proper control of its finances, but shall have regard to the Guild Rules and Management Committee decisions.
- (c) The financial year of the Districts shall be from 1st January to 31st December or such other date as shall be approved by the Management Committee.
- (d) Each District shall elect a Secretary, Treasurer, one representative to the Management Committee and such other Officers as they consider necessary.
- (e) Each District shall hold an Annual General Meeting before 28th February, at which the District Officers shall present a District Report and a Statement of Accounts.
- (f) The District Secretary shall be responsible for sending to the Report Secretary not later than 28th February a copy of the District Report, together with a list of paid-up members for the previous year and addresses (including e-mail addresses, if possible) of District Officers and Tower Correspondents for the current year.
- (g) The District Treasurer must send the Guild Treasurer a statement of the previous year's District accounts, approved by a District meeting, by February 28th, together with a list of any members who have paid the District Treasurer for the current year and the subscription money collected.
- (h) Notice of any District meeting shall be given to the Tower Captain or Secretary of each tower within the District.

15 Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

- (a) The Guild shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and shall loyally abide by the Rules and Decision thereof.
- (b) Central Council Representatives shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting every year. Nominations should be received by the General Secretary by 28th February.
- (c) Each Representative attending the Annual General Meeting of the Central Council shall be entitled to such sums as agreed by the Management Committee towards out-of-pocket expenses.

16 Suspension and Lapse of Membership.

- (a) The Management Committee shall have power to dismiss any members who fail to comply with the Rules of the Guild, or who render themselves unfit for membership. The Committee shall report their name to the next General Meeting and in the event of the member being dismissed all payments made to the Guild shall be forfeited. No member shall be dismissed, however, until they have been given seven days' notice in writing by the Secretary of the time and date at which they shall be required to attend before the Management Committee.
- (b) Members who have not paid their subscription by the 31st December of the current year shall automatically, and without notice, cease to be members with effect from the 1st January of that year; they may be re-admitted without election at any time on payment of one year's current annual subscription.
- (c) Members who have not paid their subscription for the current year by 28th February shall be deemed to be in arrears; their membership and insurance cover shall be suspended until their subscription is received by the Guild Treasurer.

17 Peals.

- (a) All peals that are rung for the Guild shall conform in all respects to the Rules and Decisions of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.
- (b) All ringers taking part in such peals shall be fully paid-up members of the Guild, elected in accordance with Rule 5 hereof.
- (c) A fee, to be determined by a General Meeting after considering any recommendation from the Management Committee, shall be paid to the Guild for recording the details of any peal as a Guild performance.
- (d) The conductor of the peal shall be responsible for sending details of the performance, together with the fee [as in Rule 17(c) hereof] to the Peal Recorder within one month of the peal being rung.

18 Annual Report. At the discretion of the Management Committee the Guild shall publish a Report, the form, contents and price of which shall be determined by the said Committee.

19 Rules. A copy of the Rules shall be issued to every Ringing Member.

20 Alteration of Rules.

- (a) No alteration, deletion or addition to these Rules shall be made except at an Annual or Special General Meeting.
- (b) Any such proposal for consideration at an Annual General Meeting shall be made either by a district or by the Management committee and shall be received by the Guild Secretary not less than 90 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- (c) Any proposal to alter, delete or add to these rules at a Special General Meeting shall be made in accordance with Rule 11 hereof.
- (d) Any alteration to these rules must receive the assent of not less than two thirds of the Members present.
- (e) No amendment shall be made to these rules that will cause the Guild to cease to be a charity in law.
- (f) Following any decision to amend these rules a copy of the revised rules, together with a copy of the minutes of the meeting at which they were adopted, shall be sent to the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

- 21 Dissolution.** If the Trustees decide that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Guild it shall convene a meeting of all members of the Guild, of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Trustees shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Guild. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Guild as the members of the Guild may determine or failing that shall be applied for some other charitable purpose. A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Guild must be sent to the Charity Commission for England and Wales.
- 22 Interpretation.** The interpretation of the above rules, and any matter not covered by them, shall be decided by the Management Committee.