

Guild Rules

The Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Revised 25th April 2026

1. Name and Object

The name of the Guild shall be "**The Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers.**"

The objects of the Guild are:

- Strive to provide a service to the Church and Community by ringing for Church Services and Festivals, Community Festivals and Celebrations.
- To promote and advance change ringing in all the different modes of operation including ringing in or with Churches, Secular Towers, Mini Rings, Hand Bells and Simulators.
- To promote the care and restoration of bells used for full circle ringing in the Diocese of Lincoln.
- To recruit, train and develop bell ringers in the art of change ringing and endeavor to ensure the continuing use of bells for the ongoing needs of the church and community.

2. Membership

The Guild shall be composed of Ringing, Non-Resident Life, Associate and Honorary Life Members. All members shall at all times comply with these rules and the Guild's Code of Conduct.

a. Any competent* ringer residing within the Diocese, or actively ringing for Sunday service at a tower within the Diocese, shall be eligible for election as a Ringing Member of the Guild. A Ringing Member shall pay an Annual Subscription, the value of which shall be set at the previous Annual General Meeting of the Guild. The subscription rate for Ringing Members under the age of 16 or in full time education may be set at a lesser amount than that for adults. Subscriptions shall be due on the first of January each year. Any member whose subscription for the current year remains unpaid on 31st March shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the Guild. Such a ringer wishing to re-join must submit to re-election, to be confirmed at a Branch Meeting.

b. Any competent change-ringer who is not resident in the Diocese of Lincoln may be elected as a Non-Resident Life Member (NRLM) of the Guild on payment of a fee agreed each year by the Guild Committee. NRLMs may be elected by a Belfry election and confirmed at the next AGM. The Guild member accepting the fee will be the proposer and undertake to pass on the fee to the Guild Treasurer.

c. Any Ringing Member who ceases to meet the criteria of Rule 2a may apply for election as a Non-Resident Life Member without further subscription, provided they have paid annual subscriptions for not less than three years. NRLMs shall have no voting rights and shall not hold any office within the Guild.

d. Any non-ringer resident within the Diocese who has actively supported the work of the Guild shall be eligible for election as an Associate Member and shall pay a minimum annual subscription of not less than half the current Ringing Member rate. Associate Members shall have no voting rights and shall not hold any office.

e. Membership of any class is only valid after completion of a Membership Application form, AND registering online via the Guild website (awaiting confirmation by the Membership

Secretary), AND payment of membership fee.

f. Honorary Life Membership may be conferred on a Ringing or Associate Member who has given outstanding service to the aims and objectives of the Guild. No further subscription shall be required and they shall retain their existing voting rights.

g. Nomination and election of members shall in all cases follow the procedures as determined from time to time by the Guild Committee and laid down in Rule 6.

3. Officers and Committee

a. The Bishop of Lincoln shall be invited by the Executive Officers of the Guild (see Rule 3b) to serve as Patron.

b. The Executive Officers of the Guild shall be:

- a Master
- a Treasurer
- a Secretary

c. The other officers shall be:

- a Peal Secretary
- a Librarian
- a Report Secretary
- a Webmaster
- a Training Officer
- a Membership Secretary
- a Fund-raising organizer
- a Public Relations Officer
- a Bell Repair Fund Administrator
- a Safeguarding officer
- a Youth Representative

The Executive Officers may co-opt additional people (up to a maximum of four) for specialist advice or assistance with a specific project for a period of twelve months, after which it shall be subject to renewal. Such membership shall not carry voting rights.

d. The Presidents of each of the Branches shall be ex-officio Vice-Presidents of the Diocesan Guild.

e. The Guild Committee shall consist of the Officers mentioned in Rules 3b and 3c, the Branch Secretaries, the Trustees of the Guild's Bell Repair Fund, and the Guild's Representatives on the Central Council. Branch secretaries may appoint a proxy if unable to attend.

f. Any Office falling vacant shall be filled by the Committee. Any person so appointed shall hold office for the same period that their predecessor would have done.

g. At Committee Meetings nine shall form a quorum, of which three must be Guild Officers, one of whom must be an Executive Officer.

h. A new election for an Officer may be requested at any time inside a triennium upon receipt of a written request signed by 10% of the membership. The Guild or Branch committee shall give 60 days notice of the election to be held at the next AGM or at an extraordinary meeting, whichever is the sooner.

4. Branches

- a. To assist the Guild better to meet its objects, the Guild Committee may divide the Diocese into discrete geographical areas, to be known as Branches.
- b. Each Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting within the first six weeks of the calendar year at which it shall elect a President, Executive officers of Master, Secretary and Treasurer, and Branch committee members as determined by the Branch.
- c. Each Branch shall have the management of its own local affairs in all matters save where otherwise provided for in the Rules, or when they affect the general well-being of the Guild, in which case the General Committee of the Guild shall have the power to intervene.
- d. In the case where the Branch does not agree with the finding of the General Committee, the final decision shall lie with the next Annual General Meeting of the Guild or a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.

5. Central Council Membership

- a. The Guild shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.
- b. The number of the Guild's representatives on the Central Council shall be in compliance with the Council's Rules and shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

6. Elections

a. Members

1. Ringing Members and Associate Members shall be elected by a show of hands at a Branch meeting. The proposer shall confirm the nominee's competence and eligibility. For those aged over 18, the proposer shall confirm they have seen photographic ID. Following the meeting the Branch Secretary will inform the Membership Secretary and Guild Treasurer. The new member will then register via the Guild website (Rule 2e).

Accepted Photo ID: current valid passport, biometric residence permit, photo card driving licence, or citizenship card. Where no photo ID is available, a birth certificate, bank statement/council tax bill and utility bill may be accepted.

2. Non-Resident Life Members (Rule 2b) may be elected by a Belfry election and shall be confirmed at the next Annual General Meeting.

3. Non-Resident Life Members (Rule 2c) shall be elected by a show of hands at an AGM upon submission of written application to the Guild Secretary not less than one calendar month prior to the meeting.

4. Honorary Life Members shall be elected by paper ballot at an AGM and shall require approval of four-fifths of the members present. The proposal shall first be submitted in writing as a Branch proposal to the Guild Committee, which shall, after due consideration, make recommendation to the AGM.

5. In the event of a member being reviewed under the Code of Conduct, the decision of the Guild Committee about any period of exclusion from Guild Membership will override the election process set out in 6(a)(1).

b. Officers

1. The President, Master, Secretary and Central Council representatives shall be proposed using the appropriate nomination form, submitted to the relevant Secretary not less than one calendar month before the respective AGM. The form shall include the names and signatures

of the candidate, proposer and seconder. For Guild Executive officers and CC representatives, the form shall also contain a short statement from the candidate. Election shall be by paper ballot.

2. The Treasurer and all other Officers (Rule 3c) shall be nominated by the Guild or Branch committee and be subject to ratification at the relevant Annual General Meeting.

3. Guild and Branch positions are mutually exclusive.

7. Finance

a. The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for the collection of subscriptions from all Associate, Ringing and Non-Resident Members; all monies collected to be forwarded to the Guild Treasurer.

b. The Treasurer shall apportion the subscription income to cover the following items of expenditure:

i. Expenses of Guild Meetings

ii. The cost of printing the Annual Report

iii. Guild Insurance

iv. Postages, stationery and incidental expenditure

v. The fees due to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

vi. The expenses of the representatives on the Central Council

vii. The cost of advertisements in "The Ringing World"

viii. Any additional sum to maintain a Guild Fund as decided by the Guild Committee

ix. A contribution, being not more than 10% of the subscription, to a restricted Guild Training Fund

x. Branch administration expenses

xi. A donation, being not more than 50% of the subscription, to the Guild Bell Repair Fund

xii. Reasonable expenses arising from the operation of the Code of Conduct

c. Any expenditure not provided for in Rule 7b shall require authorisation by the Guild Committee before payment from Guild Funds.

d. A Guild Bell Repair Fund shall be maintained under the control of the Guild Committee who shall be authorised to receive monies on behalf of the Fund. Administration of the Fund shall be as laid down in the special rules of the Fund.

e. Two Inspectors of Accounts (who shall not be members of the Guild Committee) shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting to examine the accounts of the Guild Funds.

f. The Guild Committee will present a recommendation for all subscription rates and fees annually to the Annual General Meeting. New rates will operate from the first of January of the following calendar year. The proportion of subscriptions paid into the Bell Repair Fund and Training Fund shall be set annually by the Guild Committee. Subscriptions of Honorary and Ringing Members elected in or after October each year shall also cover the whole of the next calendar year.

g. The amount of the peal booking fee shall be only that required to meet the estimated cost of printing the peal records in the Annual Report and shall be reviewed from year to year.

8. Peals

All peals credited to the Guild shall conform in every respect with the decisions for peals enacted by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

a. Any person ringing in a peal credited to the Guild must be a member elected under Rule 2, and in any peal rung for the Guild outside the Diocese of Lincoln, at least half the band must be members elected under Rule 2a, 2c or 2f.

b. The conductor of any peal rung for the Guild shall forward as soon as possible to the Peal Secretary a peal booking fee according to the current rate per person. The total sum collected during the year shall be paid by the Peal Secretary to the Guild Treasurer as soon as possible after the end of each calendar year.

c. The conductor of any peal rung for the Guild on seven or more bells shall forward details of the composition to the Peal Secretary as soon as possible after completion. The Peal Secretary is empowered to request any other composition at his/her discretion.

9. Meetings

a. The Annual General Meeting of the Guild shall normally be held at Lincoln on the last Saturday in April. A half-yearly meeting may be held in September at the discretion of the Executive Officers, or a Special General Meeting may be called at the request of any Branch.

b. Twenty-eight days' notice of the date and place of a General Meeting shall be given by notice in the "Ringing World" and, with the agenda, to Branch Secretaries, who shall notify their respective towers.

c. At all meetings of the Guild the Chairman shall be: the President; the Master of the Guild; the President or Chairman of the Branch in which the meeting is being held; or a member elected by the meeting.

d. At any general meeting of the Guild the number of voting members present required to constitute a quorum shall be at least 25, including at least two executive officers, at least one CC representative and ideally at least two voting members from each branch.

e. The Master shall have control of the ringing at all Guild meetings, or shall nominate an efficient member as deputy.

10. Alterations to These Rules

a. No alteration of these rules may be made except at a General Meeting of the Guild and must be passed by a two-thirds majority of those members present.

b. A minimum of twenty-eight days' notice of such Meeting and proposed alteration must be given to each member through their respective towers via their Branch Secretaries.

Notes to the Rules

Rule 2a	<i>"Competent" shall mean having demonstrated an ability to ring rounds safely and unassisted, and actively supporting a tower within the Diocese.</i>
Rule 2f	<i>Whilst wishing to retain Hon. Life Membership as an honour conferred for outstanding service to the Guild, the Guild committee also wishes to record outstanding service to a Branch or Tower by recording a member's name on a Roll of Honour.</i>

Rule 3b	<i>Wherever possible, the Executive Officers shall endeavour to manage their tenure of office in such a way as to maintain a continuity of experience of the management and organisation of the Guild.</i>
Rule 3e	<i>The appointment of the Trustees of the Guild's Bell Repair Fund is as laid down in the Rules of the Fund.</i>
Code of Conduct	<i>In addition to the rules, there is now a Code of Conduct which members should adhere to. Amended following AGM April 2026.</i>

These Rules were revised 25th April 2026