

The Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Objects, Constitution and Rules - 2023 revision

OBJECTS

The Guild shall promote ringing for Divine Service within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich by:

1. Promoting and encouraging the practice of bellringing.
2. Supporting the recruitment and training of bellringers.
3. Cultivating the art of scientific ringing.
4. Promoting an appreciation of the ringing chamber as part of God's house and encouraging care and attention to its cleanliness and proper equipment.
5. Promoting the preservation of bells in an efficient condition, recommending necessary repairs and renovations and providing reliable information and practical advice on the condition of the bells and their fittings.
6. Supporting restoration and/or augmentation.

CONSTITUTION

A. NAME

- 1 The Guild shall be known as the Suffolk Guild of Ringers for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- 1.1 The Guild shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.
- 1.2 The Guild shall be registered as a Charity at Law (Ref. 266869).
- 1.3 The Trustees of the Guild shall be at least three members of the Guild Executive as defined in rule J13, and shall be elected at the AGM.

B. MEMBERSHIP

- 2 Membership shall consist of the following categories:
 - 2.1 Ringing Member: A person who can ring rounds, unaided, on a tower bell.
 - 2.2 Associate Member: A Person who wishes to support the Guild.
 - 2.3 Life Honorary Member: A Ringing or Associate Member who has given outstanding service to the Guild.
 - 2.4 Non-Resident Life Member: A person qualified to be a Ringing or Associate Member, but who resides outside of the Guild's territory and is not a member under 2.1, 2.2 or 2.3.
- 3 Only Ringing and Life Honorary Members may vote or hold office in the Guild.
- 4 Churches within the Diocese may be affiliated to the Guild on payment of an annual donation of an amount at least equal to the subscription payable by a Ringing Member aged between 70 and 79.

C. DISTRICTS

- 5 There shall be four Districts, North East, North West, South East and South West. Towers may move from one District to another with the agreement of both Districts and subject to approval by the Guild Management Committee (GMC).

D. GOVERNMENT

- 6.1 The President shall be the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- 6.2 A Suffragan Bishop within the Diocese shall be a Vice-President.
- 6.3 Vice-Presidents elected before 2010 shall hold office for life and shall not be required to pay a subscription.
- 6.4 A non-member may be elected as a Patron at an AGM. Patrons shall hold office without re-election, but may be removed by a resolution at an AGM.
- 7 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) or any Special General Meeting (SGM) shall be the ultimate policy and decision-making body of the Guild. The AGM shall be held on the Saturday following Easter or as decided by the GMC. At any AGM or SGM a quorum shall be 5% of members eligible to vote.
- 8 Members shall be elected to the following Offices:

Chairman	Technical Advisor	Ringling Master
Librarian	Secretary	Handbells Trustee
Treasurer	Peal Secretary	Chairman of Belfry Advisory Cmttee
Report Editor	Magazine Editor	Public Relations Officer
Webmaster	Mini Ring Trustee	Central Council Reps
- 9 The Annual General Meeting shall appoint an Accountant, who is not a member of the GMC and need not be a member of the Guild, to act as Independent Examiner in accordance with The Charities Acts.
- 10 The following Committees shall be formed:

The Guild Management Committee (GMC), to co-ordinate Guild activities and publish a printed Annual Report and Accounts. It shall recommend the levels of subscriptions, peal fees, other methods of raising capital, authorise expenditure from Guild funds and may organise general meetings, ringing and social activities.

The Recruitment and Training Committee (RTC), to co-ordinate training and recruitment. The Belfry Advisory Committee (BAC), to advise and assist on all matters connected with rings of bells. It shall maintain an up-to-date directory of towers, listing the condition of Church bells in the Diocese.

E. FINANCE

- 11 All money in the Guild's funds not required for normal working purposes shall be invested or deposited by the Treasurer as may be directed by the GMC.
- 12 All cheques shall bear the signature of the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer.
- 12.1 Any cheque greater than a limit set by the GMC shall bear the signatures of two of the above.
- 13 The expenses listed in Rule K16 shall be paid out of the General Fund.
- 14 The interest received on the Jubilee Fund shall be transferred to the Guild Restoration Fund. The capital element of the fund shall be retained intact.
- 15 Grants from the Restoration Fund shall be authorised by the GMC, but shall only be paid after the work has been approved by the Guild Ringing Master and the Technical Advisor. Grants will normally be offered for work to restore bells and their fittings for full-circle ringing, but may include augmenting and other ancillary work associated with any such project.
- 16 The Library Fund shall be used for the purchase and repair of books and other items for the library.
- 17 The Handbell Fund shall be used for the repair, maintenance, renovation or augmentation of the Guild's handbells.
- 18 The Pipe Family Trust Fund shall be used for the encouragement of beginners in the art of change ringing in the Suffolk Guild. The fund will be administered by the Guild executive.
- 19 The GMC may establish further funds and shall specify the aims and objectives of such new funds.
- 20 The GMC may transfer sums from the General Fund to any specific funds and, if the purposes of the specific funds cease to exist, close these funds and transfer the balance to the General Fund.
- 21 The GMC shall recommend the proportion of peal fees, subscriptions of Ringing and Associate Members and Non-Resident Life Membership fees which shall be transferred annually to the Restoration Fund from the General Fund.

F. RECORDS AND HANDBELLS

- 22 All peals rung for the Guild and a summary of other peals and quarter-peals rung in the Diocese shall be published in the Annual Report.
- 23 The Librarian shall maintain an up-to-date inventory of publications owned by the Guild and the Secretary shall maintain an up-to-date inventory of other Guild assets.
- 24 The Handbells Trustee shall maintain the handbells in good condition and shall make recommendations for their repair to the GMC.

G. GENERAL

- 25 The Constitution and Rules may only be amended at an Annual or Special General Meeting of the Guild.
- 25.1 Fourteen days' notice of any proposed change to the Constitution and Rules of the Guild must have been provided to members through the Ringing World and the Guild website.
- 25.2 Any change must be approved by at least two-thirds of those present and voting and shall take effect from the date given in the proposal.
- 25.3 No amendment shall be authorised which shall have the effect of the Guild ceasing to be a Charity in Law.
- 26 In the event of dissolution of the Guild, any assets remaining after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Guild, but shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having similar Objects to the Guild.

GUILD RULES

H. ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 1 Ringing and Associate Members may be elected at any meeting by a majority of those present when proposed and seconded.
- 1.1 A member may belong to only one District, normally the District under which the member is shown in the Annual Report.
- 2 Subscriptions are due on election and thereafter, in advance, on January 1st each year and shall be set at the preceding AGM, or SGM. If a change in subscription has not been passed, the existing rate shall continue.
- 2.1 No member shall be entitled to be heard, vote or hold office if subscription for the current year is unpaid.
- 2.2 The subscriptions of members elected during or after October shall cover the remainder of that year and the whole of the following year.
- 2.3 Persons in full time education and members over 70 years of age shall pay a reduced rate of subscription.
- 3 Life Honorary Members may only be nominated by the GMC or a District and shall only be elected at a Guild AGM after their nomination has been approved by the GMC. No further subscription is payable after election.
- 4 Ringing or Associate Members may, on leaving the Diocese, inform the Guild Secretary that they wish to become Non-Resident Life Members. No subscription is payable during the period of non-residence.
- 5.1 Any person resident outside the Diocese who wishes to be associated with the Guild may be elected a Non-Resident

- Life Member. A one-off subscription is payable by such members.
- 5.2 Any Non-Resident Life membership ceases if the member takes up residency within the Diocese. The person may become a Ringing Member, without re-election, provided that the person was previously elected as a Ringing Member. The person must then pay the appropriate subscription.
- 6 For the purposes of peal ringing, new members may be provisionally elected in the belfry. Membership is subject to confirmation at a meeting of the appropriate District in the case of a Ringing Member or at a meeting of the GMC in the case of a Non-Resident life Member. If election is not confirmed the subscription shall be refunded.
- 7 Any member failing to conform to the Objects and Rules of the Guild may be expelled by the GMC which shall report the matter to the next Annual General Meeting. Such a member shall forfeit any payment made to the Guild.

I. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 8 All Officers shall retire at the Guild's AGM, but shall be eligible for re-election. The Chairman, Ringing Master, Secretary and Treasurer shall not serve more than five consecutive years in one post.
- 8.1 Nominations may be made in writing to the Guild Secretary or orally at the AGM providing they are proposed and seconded.
- 8.2 If more than one nomination for any office is received, election shall be by paper ballot, the successful candidate being the one with the highest number of votes. In the event of a tie the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
- 8.3 Central Council Representatives shall be elected, in accordance with the rules of the Central Council, during the second year of the triennium at the AGM of the Guild.

J. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- 9 The Guild Management Committee (GMC) shall consist of the Guild Chairman, Ringing Master, Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman of the Belfry Advisory Committee, and up to five members from each District, elected in accordance with Rule 20.
- 9.1 Nine members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.
- 9.2 The Chairman shall chair all Guild and GMC meetings. In his/her absence by a person elected by the meeting.
- 10 The Recruitment and Training Committee (RTC) shall consist of the Guild Ringing Master as Convenor and two members from each District.
- 11 The Belfry Advisory Committee (BAC) shall consist of the Chairman BAC, the Technical Adviser and such members as they may co-opt. Members shall be approved by the GMC.
- 12 Each Committee in Rules 9, 10 and 11 shall meet at least three times a year.
- 13 The Guild Executive shall consist of: Guild Chairman, Ringing Master, Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman of the Belfry Advisory Committee. The Executive shall take such emergency decisions as may be required before it is practical for the GMC to meet. They shall also make a temporary appointment until a General Meeting can be convened if a Guild Office becomes vacant between AGMs.
- 14 The GMC may convene sub-committees and shall determine their terms of reference, powers, duration and composition. All acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees shall be reported back to the GMC as soon as possible.
- 15 The GMC may request the attendance of other officers of members as may be required.

K. EXPENSES

- 16 The following shall be paid by the Treasurer out of Guild funds:
- The cost of printing the Annual Report and any other publications authorised by the GMC.
 - The expenses of Guild Meetings (including District).
 - Stationery, postage, telephone, notices of all meetings and other incidental expenses.
 - Guild insurances.
 - Central Council fees and reimbursement of Representatives' expenses attending each Council meeting, not exceeding the second class return rail fare and a subsistence allowance as may be determined by the GMC.
 - Such other expenses as the GMC may authorise.

L. PEAL RECORDS

- 17 All peals rung for the Guild must conform with the decisions of the Central Council. All those taking part must be members of the Guild.
- 18 Conductors shall forward the following to the Peal Secretary as soon as possible and not later than 15th January the following year:
- a) The names, addresses and subscriptions of any Non-Resident Life Members elected in the belfry.
 - b) The appropriate peal fees.
 - c) Compositions for peals of Triples and above and of such other peals as the Peal Secretary may request. Money received for items (a) and (b) shall be passed to the Guild Treasurer.

M. DISTRICT RULES

- 19 Each District shall hold an Annual General Meeting during the last quarter of the year for the purpose of receiving a report from the District Committee for the year, election of Officers and arranging activities for the year beginning the following January. Members may vote or stand for Office only in the District through which they exercise membership in accordance with Guild Rule 1.
- 20 The following Officers shall be elected annually: Chairman, Ringing Master, Secretary/Treasurer, Magazine Correspondent, two members to serve on the RTC and up to five members to serve on the GMC.
- 20.1 A District may elect additional Officers as required to assist in the running of the District.
- 20.2 The District Officers shall form the District Committee, which shall be responsible for the efficient management of the District's affairs and shall report to the Annual District Meeting on the year's work.
- 21 The District Secretary/Treasurer shall:
 - Collect all subscriptions and other moneys due and forward them to the Guild Treasurer.
 - Submit a statement of accounts to the Guild Treasurer by 15th January.
 - Submit a directory of tower correspondents and ringing times and a list of members to the Report Editor by 15th January.
 - Submit a statement, to the Guild Secretary, of all members qualifying for inclusion in the insurance scheme by the Guild AGM.
- 22 The District Magazine Correspondent shall report on District activities for the Guild Magazine, the 'Ringing World' and local newspapers.

REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE SUFFOLK GUILD HANDBELLS

- 1 The Suffolk Guild handbells are the property of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers, under the care of the Trustee. They consist of five sets of handbells:

25 bells by Taylors	size 20 in C (2 chromatic octaves)
16 bells generally by Shaw	size 19 in F (diatonic 13 + 3 semitones)
13 bells by Warner	size 20 in E (diatonic 12 + 1 semitone)
13 bells by various founders	size 20 in F (diatonic 13)
14 bells by probably Mears	size 18 in G (diatonic)

They are loaned to any member of the Guild whose name appears in the current Annual Report, according to the regulations relating to the handbells.
- 2 The bells are loaned in the first instance for a maximum period of three months. At the end of this period they are to be returned to the Trustee by the borrower and they may then be loaned for a further three months if they are not required by another member of the Guild. If they are borrowed for this further period, the borrower may be asked to return the bells to the Trustee if they are required by other member of the Guild. A member from another tower has priority over a member from the same tower as the preceding borrower.
- 3 The bells are the responsibility of the borrower, after he/she has signed for them, until they are returned to the Trustee by the borrower. The bells are not to be loaned to anyone by the borrower without the prior consent of the Trustee.
- 4 The bells must be returned to the Trustee upon request. The Trustee should endeavour to give seven days notice if they require the bells and should return them to the borrower as soon as possible.
- 5 If the bells are required for a particular occasion, they can be reserved up to three months in advance.
- 6 The bells are maintained by the Suffolk Guild. Borrowers are requested to give a donation for their maintenance and insurance.
- 7 The Trustee is responsible to the Guild Management Committee for the administration of the bells and decisions regarding the bells can be revoked by that Committee.

THE MITSON SHIELD, LESTER BRETT TROPHY AND ROSE TROPHY STRIKING COMPETITION RULES:

- 1 The competitions shall take place on date(s) decided by the GMC.
- 2 All Ringing Members and Life honorary Members of the Guild may compete providing their subscriptions are paid.
- 3 The Mitson Shield, Lester Brett and Rose Trophies shall be competed for as follows:

Mitson Shield and Lester Brett Trophy

- 3.1 Bands shall comprise six ringers fulfilling at least one of the following:
 - a) at least four are listed under the tower in the Annual Report
 - b) The ringers are a bona fide benefice (or similar) Sunday Service or practice night band.
- 3.2 a) For the Mitson Shield the test piece will be 240 true changes of any recognised Doubles or Minor Method(s). Opening rounds will not be marked.
b) For the Lester Brett Trophy call changes of at least eight minutes marked ringing, to include Queens, Whittingtons and Tittums. Marked changes start when the first change is made.

Rose Trophy

- 3.3 Bands shall comprise eight members of a District or eight ringers representing a tower, of whom at least six are bona fide Sunday Service Ringers.
- 3.4 The test piece will be at least 224 true changes of any recognised Triples or Major method(s), of which only the first 224 changes, excluding the opening rounds will be judged.
- 4 Neither the Mitson Shield nor the Rose Trophy can be held by a band not complying with Rule 3.
- 5 The times of the draws are to be advertised in the Ringing World and each band must have a representative present at the relevant draw.
- 6 A total of two minutes practice ringing will be allowed before each test piece.
- 7 In the event of bands ringing Doubles or Triples, a cover bell must be used.
- 8 The Guild Ringing Master may, at their discretion, specify the method and composition which are to be rung. Any band ringing a method or composition different from that specified shall be unable to hold the Mitson Shield or Rose Trophy.
- 9 In the event of a large entry, the Ringing Master may choose to shorten the length of either test piece.
- 10 A reserve ringer, appointed by the Ringing Master, will be available at the Ringing Master's discretion, to bands meeting short.
- 11 A minimum of two judges appointed by the Ringing Master will be present. Their decision is final.
- 12 The Mitson Shield, Lester Brett Trophy and the Rose Trophy are, and shall always remain, the sole property of the Guild, which may at any time give directions for their locations and safe keeping.
- 13 Interpretation of all rules is at the discretion of the Ringing Master.