

HIGHWEEK

CHURCH POLICY ON RINGING

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the policy on the ringing of bells at Highweek Church. The purpose is to ensure that the church maintains a good relation with all its neighbours at the same time acknowledging that bells have been in the tower in excess of 450 years and that the ringing of church bells is an integral part of church and town life.

The bells ring out to proclaim the glory of the risen Lord and that the Church is a living Church.

The policy also covers access to the tower and bells and dealing with complaints.

MANAGEMENT OF THE BELLS AND RINGING

Responsibility for ringing the bells rests with the Vicar and Churchwardens. In discharging this duty a Tower captain, is appointed, this post is normally selected by the ringers and approved by the Vicar and PCC. Additional posts may be appointed where it is felt appropriate.

The Tower Captains responsibility is to co-ordinate ringing, to ensure the safety of both local ringers and visiting ringers and bands. Where young people are involved to ensure compliance with the Church of England Guidance “Protecting All Gods Children” and The Central Council of Church Bellringers Guidance on Child Protection.

Where young persons under 18 are taught then the Tower Captain and others leading training will be checked under the safer recruitment policy for The Church of England and Methodist Church

The Tower Captain is also responsible for arranging for visiting ringers to be met and ensuring that the Vicar and Churchwardens are kept apprised of all such requests to ring the bells. These duties may be performed in the absence of the Tower Captain by an appropriate nominated person.

The Tower Captain is responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the bells and the bell ropes and to bring to the attention and advise the Church authorities of any problems that require rectification. In all cases safety is of paramount importance and will not be compromised under any circumstances.

RINGING TIMES

The bells will be rung at the following times.

- Sundays for the Morning Service as required and any other Sunday service as required.
- Tower Practice Night – The local ringers may hold a practice one evening a week commencing at 7:15 pm to be finished by 9.00 pm.
- Weddings, Funerals and Special Services – as required by the church.

EXTRA RINGING

- No more than one visiting band in a week. The normal time allotted to visiting ringers is no more than one hour or with the express permission of the Vicar this may be extended to one and a half hours. In such circumstances the time allotted for practice will be reduced to one hour
- On one occasion per Calendar month bells will be made available for a longer period of ringing this may either be a method ringing peal which takes about 2 hours 45 min to 3 hours or a competition where there is intermittent ringing during the afternoon and early evening. No other visiting ringers or practice will take place during that week.
- During the months of June July August, September such longer ringing will not take place during evenings and weekends.
- Notice of ringing for the coming month will be posted on the Church notice board on or before the first Sunday of the month in addition if individuals wish to be notified by email, then this can be arranged.

TIMES OF RINGING

Bells will not be rung before 08.45 am or after 09.00 pm unless as part of a pre-arranged national or local event or special occasion again advanced notice will be given to local residents.

VISITING RINGERS

In line with the agreed times visiting ringers and bands are welcome. It is the responsibility of the tower captain to ensure that individual ringers and bands are met and looked after whilst visiting and that visiting ringers are competent to handle the bells. All visiting bands/ ringers are required to have their own insurance policy; this is normally covered under household policies of individuals and they must comply with all guidance in relation to the protection of children and the vulnerable.

COMPLAINTS

Any complaints regarding the ringing of the Church Bells should be notified immediately to the Vicar and Churchwardens. On the receipt of a complaint the matter will be discussed between the Vicar, Churchwardens and Tower Captain and an agreed course of action taken to resolve the complaint. This will normally involve an early meeting with the complainant in an effort to find an amicable solution.

(Further guidance on dealing with complaints is available from the Central Council of Church Bellringers Website – www.cccbr.org.uk)

ACCESS TO THE TOWER

Any church bell tower contains many hazards and therefore access is restricted to the Tower Captain, any other ringer who is assisting the Tower Captain at their direction or any person who has the express consent of the Vicar and Churchwardens. All persons entering and climbing the tower should be aware of the risks involved and dress appropriately for the conditions and taken relevant safety precautions.

In line with guidance from insurers individuals working on bells should work in pairs. Other than in exceptional circumstances no person should work on a bell that is in the up position.

As above other than for maintenance purposes no one will enter the tower when any of the bells are up.

When ringing has concluded for safety, the bells will always be left in the downward position.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required by the Tower Captain, Vicar and Churchwardens.

Reviewed 19.09.2025