

GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS
RULES 2006

1. NAME AND OBJECTS

- 1.1 This Society shall be called 'The Guild of Devonshire Ringers'.
- 1.2 The object of the Guild shall be the promotion of the Christian religion by
- (a) the promotion and fostering of the ringing of bells for Christian worship and on other appropriate occasions;
 - (b) the provision of financial assistance to churches within Devon for the purpose of maintaining and improving their bell installations.
- 1.3 To this end the Guild shall seek to encourage
- (a) ringing for divine service and the recognition of the true position of ringers as church workers;
 - (b) the promotion of order and good feeling among ringers;
 - (c) the cultivation of the art of method-ringing.

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 Branches

The Guild shall be divided geographically into Branches, as determined by a General Meeting after consideration by the General Committee. A General Meeting shall also have the power to give branch status to other ringing societies within the county of Devon.

2.2 Membership

- (a) The Guild shall consist of Ringing Members, Honorary Members and Non-Resident Life Members.
- (b) Members shall be admitted at any meeting of the Guild or of the Branch to which the member wishes to be attached on being proposed and seconded, and approved by the majority of those voting.
- (c) Members who wish to terminate their association with the Guild shall do so in writing to the General Secretary or to the Secretary of the Branch to which they are attached.
- (d) A member whose conduct brings the Guild into disrepute shall have his or her membership withdrawn by recommendation of the General Committee and the assent of the majority of those present at a General Meeting.

2.3 Ringing Members

- (a) shall be persons able to ring rounds competently.
- (b) shall pay the appropriate subscription.
- (c) shall be attached to a Branch either directly or through an affiliated tower.
- (d) shall be entitled to receive the annual report.
- (e) shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Guild and of the Branch to which they are attached.
- (f) shall be entitled to hold office within the Guild and the Branch to which they are attached, subject to the conditions of 4.2 (c).
- (g) shall be entitled to receive the appropriate Guild certificates when they have satisfied the relevant conditions.
- (h) shall after payment of three consecutive annual subscriptions be entitled on becoming resident outside the County of Devon to be Non-Resident Life Members without further payment.
- (i) may be nominated as Vice-Presidents in recognition of service to the Guild. Vice-Presidents shall be exempt from the annual subscription without loss of membership privileges.

2.4 Non-Resident Life Members

- (a) shall be persons normally resident outside the County of Devon able to ring rounds competently.
- (b) shall pay the appropriate non-resident life subscription.
- (c) shall not be entitled to receive the annual report or to vote at meetings or to hold office in the Guild or Branches.

(d) shall become Ringing Members without election from 1st January after taking up residence in the County of Devon. On leaving the County they may resume Non-Resident Life Membership without further payment.

2.5 Honorary Members

- (a) shall be persons in sympathy with the objects of the Guild.
- (b) shall pay no subscription and shall be subject to re-election annually at the appropriate branch Annual General Meeting.
- (c) shall be attached to a Branch.
- (d) shall be entitled to receive the annual report, if they so desire.
- (e) shall not be entitled to vote at meetings or to hold office in the Guild or Branches.
- (f) shall transfer to Ringing Membership without election upon payment of the appropriate subscription if able to ring rounds competently.

2.6 Affiliated Towers

- (a) Towers wishing to become affiliated to the Guild shall make a written request to the Secretary of the Branch to which they would like to be attached.
- (b) Affiliation shall be ratified at any meeting of the Guild or appropriate Branch.
- (c) Each affiliated tower shall pay an annual subscription equal to that of a ringing member, and shall receive a copy of the annual report, 4 copies of Ringing Round Devon and a Guild Affiliation Card each year.
- (d) Affiliated towers requesting instruction may have the privilege of being taught by competent instructors appointed by the Guild, the expenses for such instructors and instruction to be paid by the members of the Guild or the Branch of the Guild in such proportion as may be determined by the General or Branch Committee as the case may be.

2.7 The Guild shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and loyally abide by the rules and decisions thereof.

3. SUBSCRIPTIONS

3.1 Subscription rates shall be recommended annually by the General Committee and endorsed by the Annual General Meeting.

3.2 All subscriptions shall become due on January 1st and no member whose subscription is three months in arrears shall be entitled to any privileges of membership until the arrears are paid. The membership of any person whose subscription is twelve months in arrears shall be deemed to have terminated. Any members elected after September 30th shall pay no subscription until the following January unless taking part in a peal for the Guild.

4. GOVERNMENT

4.1 General

- (a) The Bishop of Exeter shall always be invited to be patron, and the Suffragan Bishops and Archdeacons shall be invited to be associate patrons.
- (b) The Annual General Meeting shall be held between Easter Day and the end of June.
- (c) The quorum shall be fifty Ringing Members or one-tenth of the total ringing membership, whichever is the lower. If the meeting is inquorate, business shall be conducted with each motion requiring the assent of not less than two-thirds of those present. Matters involving expenditure by the Guild and changes to this constitution shall not be decided at an inquorate meeting.
- (d) At the Annual General Meeting each year the members shall nominate and elect from the Ringing Members: a President, a Master, a General Secretary, a General Treasurer, a Librarian, an Education Officer, a Peal Secretary, a Quarter Peal Secretary, a Report Secretary, a Publicity Officer, one or more Bell Advisers, three Trustees of the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund and a Safeguarding Officer.
- (e) At the Annual General Meeting each year the General Committee may nominate for election from the Ringing Members one or more Vice-Presidents in recognition of service to the Guild. Vice-Presidents

shall be elected for life and shall be exempt from the annual subscription without loss of membership privileges. They shall also be entitled to participate in meetings of the General Committee if they so wish.

- (f) The members shall also appoint a suitably qualified independent Examiner of Accounts at the Annual General Meeting each year.
- (g) Triennially at the Annual General Meeting, the Central Council Representatives shall be elected.
- (h) Triennially at the Annual General Meeting, five members of the Devon Ringers' Council shall be elected.
- (i) An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Guild may be called by the Standing Committee, or shall take place within one month of a written request of 25 ringing members to the President or General Secretary.
- (j) No-one except paid up Ringing Members and Vice-Presidents may speak at meetings of the Guild or its Branches, unless invited to do so by the person chairing the meeting.

4.2 General Committee

- (a) There shall be a General Committee consisting of the Guild officers as defined at 4.1 (d), together with the Central Council Representatives, a Guild representative of the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund Committee, the Chairman, Secretary and one representative of each Branch, and any co-opted members.
- (b) The number of co-opted members shall not exceed one third of the total membership of the Committee at the time of co-option.
- (c) Members under the age of 18 shall not serve on the Committee.
- (d) The Committee shall meet at least twice a year and the quorum shall be ten or one third, whichever shall be the greater.
- (e) In the event of Branch Officers or representatives being unable to attend a General Committee Meeting, they may each appoint a member of their own Branch as their deputy, who shall have the right to vote.
- (f) The General Committee shall have general powers of management subject to Guild or Branch rules, and, in the event of a casual vacancy among the officers to appoint a successor to act until the next Annual General Meeting.
- (g) An extraordinary meeting of the Committee shall take place within one month of a written request of five members of the Committee to the President or General Secretary.
- (h) The President, the Master, the Secretary and the Treasurer shall form a Standing Committee with power to co-opt not more than two Ringing Members of the General Committee in order to make decisions as necessary for the administration of the Guild between meetings of the Guild or the General Committee.

4.3 Branches

- (a) Every Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting at which the members of the Branch shall nominate and elect from their numbers a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Ringing Master, a representative on the General Committee, and such others as may be determined by the Branch, subject to 4.2(c).
- (b) Every Branch shall be administered by a Committee consisting of the Chairman, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Ringing Master and such others as may be determined by the Branch, subject to 4.2 (c).
- (c) The Secretary of each Branch shall collect and forward to the Report Secretary not later than January 31st a correct list of members and reports of the work of the Branch and of its individual bands during the previous year.
- (d) The Treasurer of each Branch shall send to the General Treasurer by January 31st the Branch accounts for the past year and by March 31st the subscriptions of the members for the current year, retaining the agreed percentage for Branch needs. The subscriptions of members elected subsequently shall be sent to the General Treasurer before December 31st.

5. FUNDS

5.1 In addition to the general fund there shall be:

- (a) an instruction fund;
- (b) a bell restoration fund as distinct from the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund.

5.2 If the General Committee by a simple majority decides at any time on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Guild, it shall call a meeting of the members of the Guild who have the power to vote, of which meeting not less than 21 days notice (stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed thereat) shall be given. If such decision shall be confirmed by the assent of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting at such meeting the General Committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the Guild. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be distributed for the purposes of bell maintenance and restoration equally among those churches which at the time of the dissolution are affiliated to the Guild or shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Guild as the General Committee may with the approval of the Charity Commissioners determine.

5.3 A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Guild. All cheques must be signed by not less than two members of the General Committee.

6. ANNUAL REPORT

The Guild shall publish an Annual Report, the form, contents and price of which shall be determined by the General Committee, but always to include a statement of the Guild's accounts signed by the General Treasurer together with the report of the independent Examiner of Accounts thereon.

7. PEALS

7.1 Peals rung by the Guild shall be recorded in the Guild Peal Book and printed in the Annual Report.

7.2 All those taking part shall be either fully paid up Ringing Members or Non-Resident Life Members of the Guild. More than half the band shall be current or former Ringing Members.

7.3 An assembly of ringers before attempting a peal may constitute a meeting of the Guild for the purpose of electing members of the peal band as Ringing or Non-Resident Life Members; more than half the band must be Ringing Members.

7.4 A peal fee per ringer fixed annually by the General Committee and published in the Annual Report shall be sent to the Peal Secretary together with full details of the peal rung, including the composition, within one month.

8. GENERAL

8.1 If any member shall forward to the public press any communication reflecting adversely on any affiliated tower or upon any member thereof in connection with their membership without first obtaining permission from the General Secretary, the General Committee shall be empowered to discuss and if necessary censure such action.

8.2 Any alteration of this Constitution shall receive the assent of not less than two-thirds of the ringing membership of the Guild for the time being present and voting at a meeting specially called for the purpose provided that notice of any such alteration shall have been received by the General Secretary in writing not less than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is to be proposed. At least 14 days clear notice in writing of such a meeting, setting forth the terms of the alteration, shall be sent by the General Secretary to each ringing member of the Guild provided that no alteration shall be made to this rule, rule 1.2 and rule 5.2 and provided that no alteration shall be made which would have the effect of causing the Guild to cease to be a charity at law.