



Stewardship & Management Workgroup

of The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH
BELL RINGERS

Appointment of Bell Ringing Tower Captain

A Guide for Bell-Ringers and Churches

Introduction

This note offers advice to ringers and churches about the appointment of the 'Tower Captain' in a church with bells. The person appointed may not be called the 'Tower Captain' in all towers – 'Ringing Master' is another title that is often used, or that may be used for another person with different responsibilities. In this note, the words 'Tower Captain' will be used even if local terminology is different from this.

These notes have been written from the perspective of churches in the Church of England. Some ringing societies offer advice for towers in their area, with specific advice on appointments and responsibilities. Although probably broadly applicable, local differences should be considered for some towers, for example those that are not in the Church of England, or not in church ownership.

Making the Appointment

Normally, the Tower Captain is appointed by the incumbent of the church concerned. This is a responsible position in a church with bells and should be in writing, ideally for a defined period of time. The incumbent will usually consult the ringers as to who is appointed. This may be from a recommendation made at a tower AGM with the incumbent present, but arrangements vary from church to church.

The Role and Responsibilities of Tower Captain

Normally the Tower Captain is a bell ringer. They will be delegated specific responsibilities on appointment that are likely to include the following –

- Maintain regular two-way contact both formally and informally about the bells and ringing, with the incumbent, PCC, church wardens and parish office.
- Assist with carrying out and implementing church risk assessments, and ensure that ringing and ringers are addressed appropriately in the church health and safety policies.
- Ensure that the bells and associated infrastructure are in good condition and that appropriate maintenance inspections and repairs are carried out.
- Ensure that activities in the tower are carried out safely.
- Arrange for the bells to be rung for services and on other appropriate occasions.
- Lead the band of ringers, including recruitment, training and development of a good standard of ringing skills.
- Comply with any requirements set out in the parish insurance policy.

- Ensure that activities in the tower are carried out in accordance with the Parish Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure that ringers' personal data (e.g. phone numbers, emails, addresses) are managed in accordance with the requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) legislation.
- Make appropriate arrangements for the secure management of tower assets (e.g. handbells, tower records) and money raised for the tower and bells, including wedding fees and visitor donations.
- Be a member of, or co-opted to, the PCC.
- Be the point of contact with the diocesan ringing society or equivalent in the area.
- Promote bell ringing positively within the church and local community.
- Undergo a personal DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check as required for groups such as bell ringers (cannot be delegated).

In most towers, several of these responsibilities may be delegated to other ringers, probably as agreed at an AGM of the Ringers. These may include Ringing Master, Tower Secretary, Steeple Keeper and Ringing Teachers. It is also practical for a Deputy Tower Captain to be appointed, to provide cover for absence and opportunities for others to gain experience and offer succession.

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