

# Your bell tower and the environment for ringing



Central Council of Church bell  
Ringers,  
Stewardship & Management  
Workgroup



# What is your Tower like?

- Yes, it is stone, tall, spire, etc
- but ....
- ..... what else?





# What is “a Tower”?

Depends on what matters to you...

- People
- External environment
- Bells and ringing
- Facilities
- Organisation

They all matter to someone!

# What sort of visitor?

- I hear bells! How is that done?
- Free evening. Where could I go?
- Just moved in – join the band!
- Training day
- Staying in the area
- Outing / open day
- Potential new ringer, new hobby



# Your expectations?

... so what do ringers expect or want?

... and the potential recruit

... and the church

.... or the neighbours and community?

# Your expectations

- Information – times etc
- Friendly and welcoming
- Challenging and fun
- Well lit, warm, dry
- Bells “gettable” and a pleasure to ring
- Kitchen, loos, meeting facilities
- Structured training, awards, outcomes
- Helpful, supportive ringers
- Accessible and safe
- Aspiration and support for all to progress
- To pay for lessons



# Ringling is welcoming!

- Information, recruiting and informing ringers
  - Ringing times, contact details visible in church (even when locked), on church website etc
- **Friendly** – welcoming, supportive members
- **Leadership** - Ringing master / tower captain
  - competent, confident to run sessions
- **Organisation** – effective, no lock outs!

# Who rings with whom?

- What standards? Complex methods or good striking, both or neither!
- Does the band get on well as friends?
- How do people fit in?
- Some people only ring at “home tower”
- Some ring widely – why?
- Welcoming visitors - Musicians don’t walk into any rehearsal and expect to be invited to join in. Ringers usually do!



# We can't just rely on the family!



# External environment

- **Getting there** - Parking, transport, signage, lighting, safe paths and access, known key holders, security
- **Neighbours** – Good adjustable sound control, published ringing times, informed of extras and why, visible, audible, appreciated
- **Community engagement** – Schools, colleges, local clubs, societies

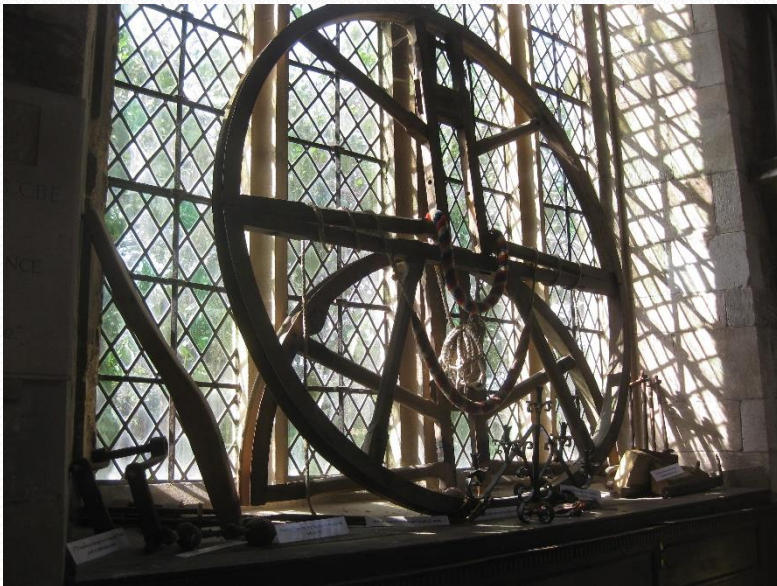
# Integrated

Church integration - Clergy, ringers on PCC, choir, scouts, guides, mothers & toddlers.....

Services, weddings, funerals, church and national events

Annual ringers' service

Tower / church website, church news sheets, ....





# Community integration

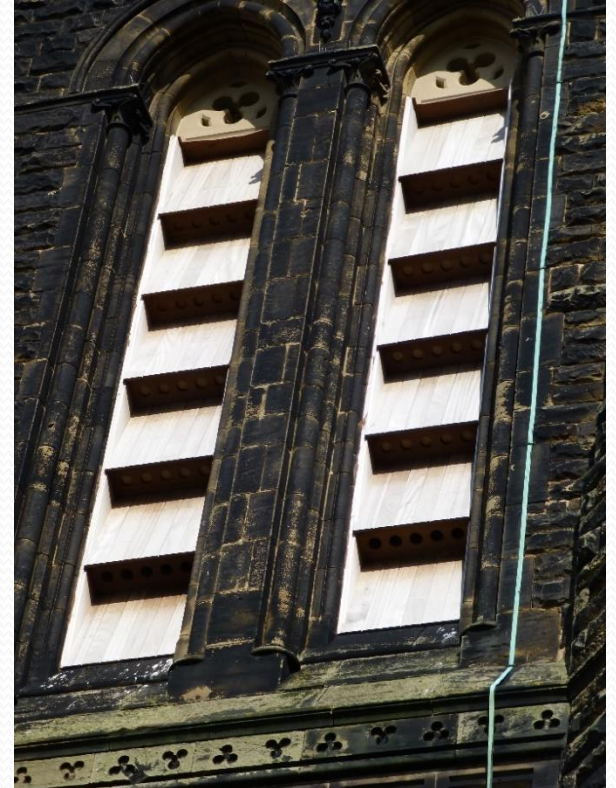
- **Joint events and activities** - *With clergy and PCC, church schools, church groups (choir, scouts & guides, mothers & toddlers), ringers' service, magazine articles*
- **Profile** - *Tower / church website, church news sheets, regular and special ringing notified to local communities*



# All open ringing is a public performance!

Noise nuisance is a matter for Environmental health

- Louvre sound control
- Regular practices
- Ringing times publicised
- Good striking, homework!
- Silence bells for handling practice



# What about the bells?

- Basic - *“Taylors, 1896, 21cwt 8 in E”*
- Condition - *“Last maintenance in 1998, for the Millennium”*
- What is rung?
- Technical inspections - Regular competent inspections, planned and recorded
- History - interesting information

# Nice Bells?

## Advise visitors and plan to fix

*"The trebles  
are flighty"*

*"The 3<sup>rd</sup> slips  
wheel"*

- "I can't hear the calls,  
the bells are too loud"*

*"The stay on the  
2<sup>nd</sup> is cracked"*



*"The 5<sup>th</sup> is  
odd-struck"*



# ... and how do they go?

- Slips wheel
- Need to pull through
- Difficult to set
- Odd struck
- Hard work for its weight
- Can't hear the calls
- Trebles are inaudible
- Stiff ropes
- Ropes too close together / to wall
- Strange clunk!

Have you tried to fix these? Usually easy to resolve!

# And when are they rung?

- Every church service – weekly, am / pm
- Weddings, funerals
- Other church events
- National events
- Outings, quarters, competitions
- Teaching sessions, targeted practices
- Recruiting events, open days...
- Visiting bands welcome

# Facilities

- **Ringling room** - Temperature, clean, tidy, well lit, good seating, storage space, safe, secure
- **Other space** - Refreshment facilities etc
- **Handbells** – Good condition, for changes and / or tune ringing
- **CCTV** – Shows the bells in the ringing room (and church!)

# Accessible?



Guildford - St Mary

# Funeral bier – history or junk?





# Comfortable seating?



## The only coat hook!



# Emergency Lighting for Power Cut?

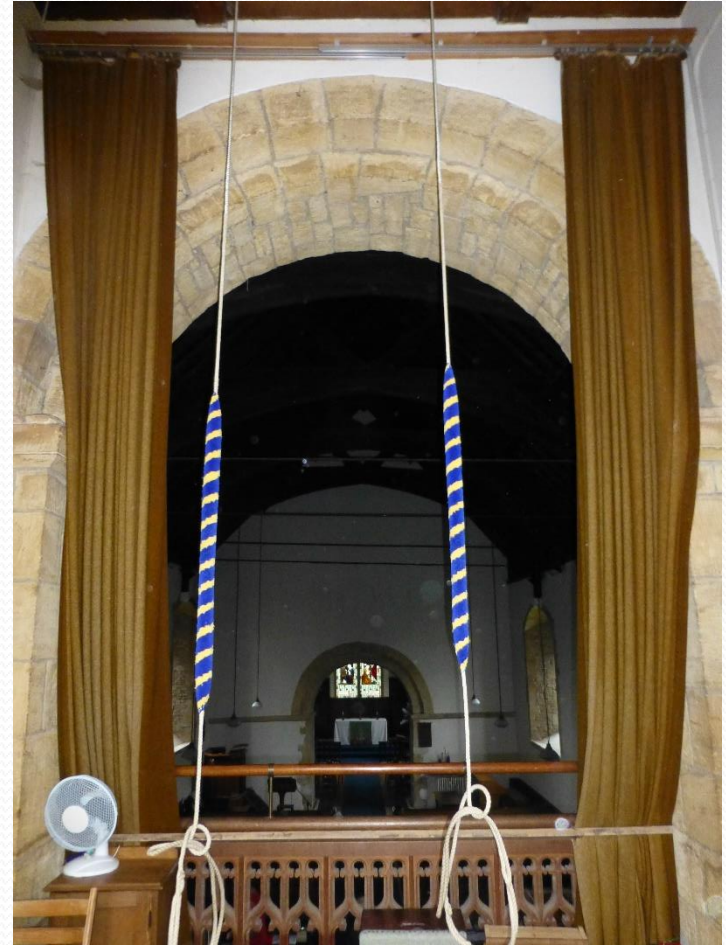


Safe new ladder but .....





# Winter heating – how?



# Facilities for a quick break!



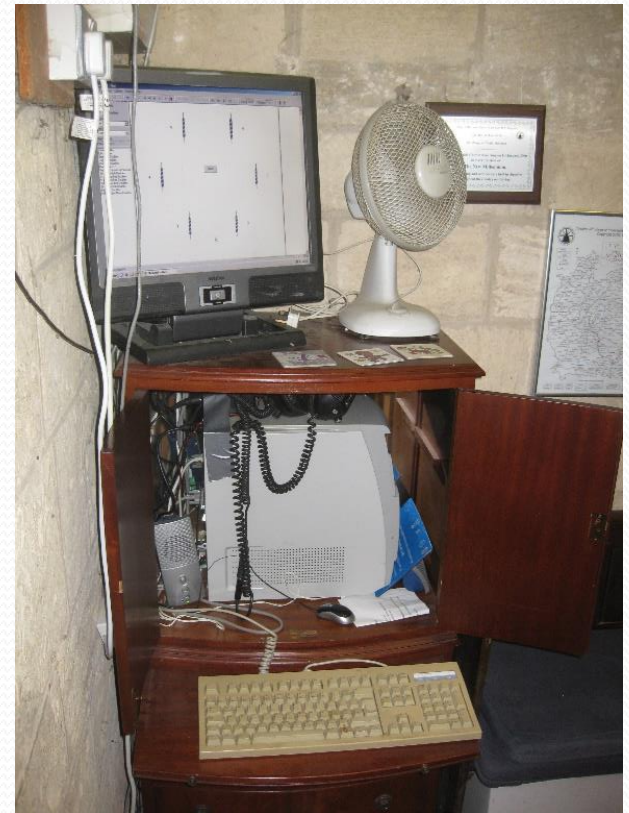


# Kitchen facilities .....



# Additional facilities

- Teaching – *computer (DSE?), whiteboard, books, clapper ties*
- Handbells –  
*Tunes and changes*





*“Ah! That nice big storage space upstairs” – says the Church warden!*



# Tower organisation

- **Safety / risk assessments** – Inspections and assessments recorded, up to date
- **Teaching** – Structured programmes, good teachers and helpers. Theory and practical sessions – table space, whiteboard, books, clapper ties and/or dumb bell, simulator...
- **Processes** - Safeguarding, GDPR, insurance, defined responsibilities, AGM

# Ringling organisation .....

- **Leadership** – Committee responsibilities, tower meetings, communication with members
- **Tower finances** – maintenance, projects
- **Socials** – pub, dinner, skittles, holidays
- **Events** - foundry visits, carillons, handbell concerts...
- **Online** – RingingRoom, Handbell Stadium



# ... and not just home tower

- Handbell ringing
- Wider interactions, not just the pub!
- Guilds / Associations
- Central Council conference, ITTS, ART, Ringing World
- Social media
- Personal / group projects - history, engineering, people, architecture

## Further Advice?

- Local Guild or Association
- CCCBR Stewardship & Management Workgroup (see website)
- Advice and training - professional help may be needed alongside competent volunteers