Charity Governance Code assessment – smaller charities 2020 edition
Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

For Executive Approval – 23rd July, 2023

Principle 1 – Organisational Purpose: The board is clear about the charity's aims and ensures that these are being delivered effectively and sustainably.	
Rationale Charities exist to fulfil their charitable purposes. Trustees have a responsibility to understand the environment in which the charity is operating and to lead the charity in fulfilling its purposes as effectively as possible with the resources available. To do otherwise would be failing beneficiaries, funders and supporters. The board's core role is a focus on strategy, performance and assurance.	**Key outcomes** The board has a shared understanding of and commitment to the charity's purposes and can articulate these clearly. See 1.4.1 below The board can demonstrate that the charity is effective in achieving its charitable purposes and agreed outcomes. See 1.4.2 below.

Recommended Practice	**Evidence of application / explanation**	**Areas for improvement / implementation**
1.3 Determining organisational purpose		
1.3.1 The board periodically reviews the organisation's charitable purposes, and the external environment in which it works, to make sure that the charity, and its purposes, stay relevant and valid.	Under Council rules, the Trustees are required to review its objects each 3 years (this review). The Trustees have reviewed the objects as part of this review and have concluded that they continue to reflect the Council's purposes and are aligned with the external environment in which the Council works.	As with all charities, the Council's object is to deliver *public* benefit (as required by its Objects and the Charity Commission). Structurally, the Council is comprised of ringing associations, which could result in unintentional conflict between its duty to member ringing associations and the public benefit. STRATEGY 1 - Making the Council's charitable purpose more prominent on its website. - Including an explicit "public benefit test" in major Trustee decisions.
1.3.2 The board leads the development of, and agrees, a strategy or plan	The Trustees have developed a set of Strategic Priorities, published in 2020. These Strategic Priorities have guided decision-making on new	Whilst the Strategic Priorities have been transformative, there is no formal procedure to review them. The Strategic Priorities are published on the Council's website, but their location is not prominent.

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that aims to achieve the organisation's charitable purposes and is clear about the desired outputs, outcomes and impacts.	initiatives, including the establishment of a new residential ringing course courses and the "Cast of 1,000" project. They have in particular highlighted the Council's role in promoting the advancement of ringing at all levels, and not merely at the recruitment and basic training stage.	STRATEGY 2 – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – Review the Strategic Priorities at least each 3 years and assess progress against them annually. They have been reviewed during 2022/23. – Publish the Strategic Priorities more prominently on the Council's website.
1.4 Achieving the purpose		
1.4.1 All Trustees can explain the charity's public benefit.	There is generally good awareness of the Council's charitable purpose, the external environment and consequently those areas where it should act, where it should not and where it should seek partnerships with other ringing organisations.	The "public benefit" test applied by the Charity Commission differs from a 'layman's' interpretation in some areas and excludes some purposes which are commonly regarded as 'not-for-profit' or for the community's benefit. STRATEGY 3 – DEFINITION OF PUBLIC BENEFIT – Publish the Charity Commission's public benefit test more prominently on the Council's website and include it at the end of each annual report.
1.4.2 The board evaluates the charity's impact, outputs and outcomes on an ongoing basis.	Oversight is provided through the system of executive sponsorship, where each Workgroup's activities are sponsored by a named trustee. The Council reviews its performance annually when producing its annual Trustees report and its report to members.	The risk register is not subject to a formal process of review. STRATEGY 4 – RISK REVIEW – Formalise the process by which each section of the Risk Review register is revised, perhaps assigning specific sections to nominated pairs of Trustees, to ensure that review of the full register takes place annually. Note on day-to-day management

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
	The Council has a risk register and performs a governance review each 3 years.	The Council is a small charity which is wholly reliant on volunteer effort, meaning that Trustees often become actively involved in initiatives rather than restrict their role to an oversight function. As a result there is no institutional division between management and oversight. Large charities enforce a clear distinction by establishing separate boards of Trustees and management, each with its own leadership. However, this structure does not always work well and there are well-publicised cases where boards of charity Trustees have become remote from operational detail and ineffective in maintaining oversight over their organisation. Charitable companies will typically have a range of both executive and non-executive directors serving on a single board. Given the Council's size and income, the current structure is regarded as sufficient to meet the organisation's needs for the following reasons: **1.** there are eight Trustees, all of whom are elected rather than appointed (meaning they come from a range of backgrounds). **2.** all material spending or risk decisions require the approval of a trustee meeting and cannot be taken by individual trustees **3.** no single initiative involves the active engagement of more than one or two Trustees at any time, meaning that a significant amount of peer review and scrutiny over decisions is provided by the other, unconnected trustees. **4.** the Trustees have the power to appoint additional Trustees if additional expertise is required

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		5. an increasing workload is being performed at Workgroup level, with the establishment of additional workgroups and task-focused teams. Workgroup Leaders meet informally as a team to discuss operational issues and this approach is encouraged.
1.5 Analysing the external environment and planning for sustainability		
1.5.1 The board regularly reviews the sustainability of its income sources and their impact on achieving charitable purposes in the short, medium and longer term.	The Council has a small sustainable source of operating income through its membership subscriptions and return on investment which, as a wholly volunteer organisation, is sufficient to meet its core operating costs. Project funding is generated through specific appeals, stakeholder relationships (such as CCT) and grant applications.	The Council's forecast annual income stream is not sufficient to fund any paid resource, and comes solely from membership fees. Lack of a core admin /technical team has long been a key constraint. Ultimately it is for the Trustees to strike the right balance between the Council's ambition and its funding needs. STRATEGY 5 – RECURRING EXPENSE - Consider whether there is a need to develop an increased core operating income stream through regular giving or monetisation of existing services to supplement membership income.
1.5.2 Trustees consider the benefits and risks of partnership working, merger or dissolution if other organisations are fulfilling similar charitable purposes more effectively and/or if the charity's viability is uncertain.	Strong relationships exist with the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART), the Ringing World, and other organisations providing services to ringing (such as the Bradfield and Hereford courses). The Council's president and/or deputy president attend ART management committee meetings. The Council also maintains close partnerships with other organisations working in the same field (such as CCT and the Association of Festival Churches). The Council recognises those areas where individual ringing associations should lead	

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	and those where the Council can add value as a national and international body	
1.5.3 The board recognises its broader responsibilities towards communities, stakeholders, wider society and the environment, and acts on them in a manner consistent with the charity's purposes, values, and available resources.	Trustee meetings are attended by the Council's Public Relations Officer to help ensure that trustee decisions are mindful of the needs of church, civil society and government. The Council's charitable objects encourage the place of ringing in communities, with the result that recent projects have included: • work with the Big Ideas Company to promote ringing among urban and disadvantaged communities • work to promote good safeguarding practices across ringing through partnerships with the Church of England SCIE, ThirtyOne:Eight and Ann Craft Trust. • the Women in Ringing project. • work with schools to develop an appreciation and interest in bell ringing • work with the Churches Conservation Trust to support alternative uses for redundant churches • the Ringing Remembers project The Council has an equality and diversity statement	The Council's website and publications could do more to emphasise its values and the place of ringing in wider society and to reach out to all communities. STRATEGY 6 – SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - Development of the Council's website to highlight ways in which ringing inspires and is appreciated by people of all communities - Strengthen the Council's policy framework to include a code of conduct and additional policies which make clear its stance on matters of bullying, safeguarding, discrimination, complaints and whistleblowing.

Principle 2 – Leadership: Every charity is headed by an effective board that provides strategic leadership in line with the charity's aims and values.	
Rationale Strong and effective leadership helps the charity adopt an appropriate strategy for effectively delivering its aims. It also sets the tone for the charity, including its vision, values and reputation.	**Key outcomes** • The board, as a whole, and trustees individually, accept collective responsibility for ensuring that the charity has a clear and relevant set of aims and an appropriate strategy for achieving them. • The board agrees the charity's vision, values and reputation and leads by example, requiring anyone representing the charity reflects its values positively. • The board makes sure that the charity's values are reflected in all of its work, and that the ethos and culture of the organisation underpin the delivery of all activities.

Recommended Practice	**Evidence of application / explanation**	**Areas for improvement / implementation**
2.1 Leading the charity		
2.1.1 The board and individual trustees take collective responsibility for its decisions.	Decisions are made collectively at Executive meetings, notes of which are published and circulated to Council Members.	Busy agendas can lead to restrictions on time, especially for strategic decisions. STRATEGY 7 – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - Use of strategies to improve collective decision-making, such as collaborative working among Trustees, circulation of papers for comment ahead of Executive meetings, structured agendas highlighting key points for decision-making and organisation of meeting agendas to give priority to key decisions.
2.1.2 The chair provides leadership to the board and takes responsibility for ensuring the board has agreed priorities, appropriate structures, processes and a productive culture	The Council currently has a highly visible and active President, who has played a key role in the development of the Council's Strategic Priorities 2020, their agreement by the Executive and presentation to Council Members.	The Council is a small charity, reliant on the effort of a small group of volunteers, including its Trustees. The drive and engagement of the President is important in the work of most Workgroups and Trustees, creating a

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and has trustees who are able to govern well and therefore add value to the charity.	The President provides appropriate focus and challenge to the Trustees, both at monthly Executive meetings and through one-to-one conversations. He supports Trustees by investing in specific decisions or projects within their areas of responsibility where help is needed. .	higher degree of dependency than would be typical in larger organisations with the associated risk of over-commitment or burn-out. STRATEGY 8 - DELEGATION - Develop greater capacity within Workgroups to enable Trustees to reduce their management responsibilities and focus more time on their governance role.
2.1.3 If the charity has staff, the board makes sure that there are proper arrangements for their appointment, supervision, support, appraisal, remuneration and, if necessary, dismissal.	N/A	
2.1.4 If the charity has volunteers, the board makes sure there are proper arrangements for their recruitment, support and supervision.	Volunteers are sought via *The Ringing World*, social media, a Volunteering section on the Council's website plus its network of contacts. The 'Presidents Blog' brings in potential volunteers and a wider range than previously. The structure of Workgroups with named Executive Sponsors and regular meetings attended by Workgroup Leaders encourages volunteers to connect with Executive members and other Workgroups. As a volunteer organisation, the Council offers considerable scope to volunteers to create or	Success in attracting volunteers remains patchy and the volunteer pool needs to be expanded and refreshed. The Council's small size and dependence on its volunteer-base mean that there is not always an exact match between its resource needs and the skillsets of available volunteers. STRATEGY 9 – VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT - Recruit more strategically, giving greater prominence to areas of work where additional volunteer support is needed, and being as clear as possible about the existing skills gaps.

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	shape initiatives which are aligned with their own strengths and interests, where these help deliver the Strategic Priorities.	
2.1.5 The board's functions are formally recorded. There are role descriptions that define trustees' responsibilities for all trustees that differentiate clearly between the responsibilities those of the chair and other officer positions and outline how these roles relate to staff or volunteers where they exist.	Role descriptions exist for all Trustee roles and define the officers and ordinary Trustees differently. All are published on Council's website. A published organisation structure shows Executive sponsorship roles. The Council's Rules and Standing Orders define the functions and accountability of the Executive and of individual Workgroups.	The Council's small size means that there is not a strong institutional division between management and oversight and varying degrees of blurring exist between being Trustee and working roles. Whilst a degree of overlap is inevitable in a small organisation, this can cause individual Trustees to give less priority to their strategic and oversight roles and to overlook rather than work through established Workgroup structures. Refer to Strategy 8 – Delegation above.
2.1.6 Where the board has agreed to establish a formally constituted subsidiary organisation/s, it is clear about the rationale, benefits and risks of these arrangements. The formal relationship between the parent charity and each of its subsidiaries is clearly recorded and the parent reviews, at appropriate intervals, whether these arrangements continue to best serve the organisation's charitable purposes.	The Council does not currently have any subsidiary organisations and operates as an unincorporated association. Its role is to act as an enabler and to offer strategic direction rather than to operate services directly.	.
2.2 Leading by example		

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2.2.1 The board agrees the values, consistent with the charity's purpose that it wishes to promote and makes sure that these values underpin all its decisions and the charity's activities (see also Principle 1).	The Executive Board has a strong sense of accountability to and shares the values of the Council Members who elect it and through them the ringing associations which they represent. Meetings and discussions reflect the Council's position as a volunteer-driven organisation in which the Trustees rely on the confidence and support of Council Members and ringing societies, from whom they are generally recruited. A number of policies have been developed to underpin the Council's values, including a policy on Conflict of Interest, which requires Trustees and Workgroup Leaders to make an annual declaration and Trustees to consider the potential for conflict of interest at the start of each meeting.	Refer to Strategy 6 – Social Responsibility above
2.2.2 The board recognises respects and welcomes diverse, different and, at times, conflicting trustee views.	The Executive is a group with more diverse ringing experiences than has hitherto been the case and differing views are heard. While individual Trustees lead on some areas, challenge from "non-experts" in the areas under discussion is respected. The President encourages all Trustees to speak.	The diverse ringing and professional backgrounds of the Executive are published at the time they are elected by Council Members, but do not appear on the Council's website. STRATEGY 10 – TRUSTEE BACKGROUNDS - Publish biographies of trustees on the Council website. There have been no face to face Executive meetings for two years due to the COVID pandemic with the result that opportunities for collaborative working and informal

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		discussion among Executive members have been more limited. Refer to Strategy 7 – Executive Decisions above..
2.2.3 The board provides oversight and direction to the charity and provides support and constructive challenge to the organisation and where they exist staff and volunteers.	The Executive sponsorship of Workgroups helps to make sure that the Strategic Priorities flow down into Workgroup activities.	As the Council is a wholly volunteer organisation, the role of the Trustees tends towards guiding and encouraging rather than directing or challenging volunteers .
2.2.4 The board supports any staff or volunteers to feel confident and able to provide the information, advice and feedback necessary to the board.	The Executive sponsorship system ensures that each Workgroup Leader communicates regularly with a named Trustee and can use this route to inform board decisions. Further interaction with Workgroup Leaders takes place through quarterly Executive meetings with workgroup leads.	Quarterly meetings tend to focus on the priorities of the Trustees rather than candid feedback from Workgroup Leaders. There is no formal mechanism by which Workgroup Members and other volunteers can speak up where they feel something should be improved. Volunteers may not be certain about the degree to which the Trustees will be receptive to feedback. STRATEGY 11 - FEEDBACK - The Trustee board would benefit from more regular feedback from Workgroup leaders on the support they receive from the Trustees, the frequency and format of the existing quarterly meetings with the Executive.
2.3 Commitment		

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2.3.1 All trustees give sufficient time to the charity to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This includes preparing for meetings and sitting on board committees and other governance bodies where needed. The expected time commitment is made clear to trustees before nomination or appointment and again on acceptance of nomination or appointment.	Trustees are generally well prepared before Executive meetings and prompt meeting/action notes have improved follow up.	Trustee Role Descriptions do not currently indicate the expected time commitment. STRATEGY 12 – TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTIONS - Enhance Trustee Role descriptions to indicate the expected time commitment. The Microsoft Teams platform employed by the Council is designed for use in a corporate environment where all resources, including email, workflow and documents are held and managed centrally. Some Trustees and volunteers find it difficult to run the tools available within Teams alongside their personal business and/or volunteering for other organisations. STRATEGY 13 – TEAMS PLATFORM - Develop additional training on the way in which Trustees and volunteers use the Teams platform to collaborate.
2.3.2 Where individual board members are also involved in operational activities, for example as volunteers, they are clear about the capacity in which they are acting at any given time and understand what they are and are not authorised to do and to whom they report.	Where Trustees work directly on initiatives, the small size of the Council and the requirement for Executive approval of key decisions, including expenditure commitments over £1,000, ensures that information is routinely shared with other Executive members.	Refer to Strategy 8 – Delegation above.

Principle 3 – Integrity: The board acts with integrity. It adopts values, applies ethical principles to decisions and creates a welcoming and supportive culture which helps achieve the charity's purposes. The board is aware of the significance of the public's confidence and trust in charities. It reflects the charity's ethics and values in everything it does. Trustees undertake their duties with this in mind.

Rationale

Delivering the charity's purposes for public benefit should be at the heart of everything the board does. This is true even when a board's decision might be unpopular. Everyone who comes into contact with a charity should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. Charity leaders should show the highest levels of personal integrity and conduct.

To achieve this, trustees should create a culture that supports the charity's values, adopt behaviours and policies in line with the values and set aside any personal interests or loyalties. The board should understand and address any inappropriate power dynamics to avoid damaging the charity's reputation, public support for its work and delivery of its aims.

Key outcomes

- The board acts in the best interests of the charity's purposes and its beneficiaries, creating a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for those who come into contact with it.
  - The board makes objective decisions about delivering the charity's purposes. It is not unduly influenced by those who may have special or personal interests. This applies whether trustees are elected, nominated, or appointed. Collectively, the board is independent in its decision making.
  - No one person or group has undue power or influence in the charity. The board recognises how individual or organisational power can affect dealings with others.
  - The board safeguards and promotes the charity's reputation by living its values and by extension promotes public confidence in the wider sector.
  - Trustees and those working for or representing the charity are seen to act with honesty, trustworthiness and care, and support its values.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
3.1 Upholding the charity's values		
3.1.1 The board ensures that all of its decisions and actions are consistent with the charity's values.	Development of the Strategic Priorities enables major spending and strategic decisions to be connected more easily with Charity's objects. Refer to 1.3.2 above.	Refer to item 1.3.1
3.1.2 Trustees regularly check whether there are inappropriate power	The Council has an established Conflict of Interest Policy. Trustees submit annual declarations and	Whilst they work well, the existing checks and balances are not supported by a Code of Conduct or

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imbalances in the board or charity. Where necessary, they address any potential abuse of power to uphold the charity's purpose, values and public benefit.	consider the potential for conflict of interest at the start of each Trustee meeting. The composition of the Trustee board (comprising eight people from diverse backgrounds who are each elected to the board in their own right) creates a counterbalance against the risk of inappropriate influence from one individual. The Council's constitution provides a number of checks and balances, requiring that significant financial and governance decisions must be presented to and ratified by Council members. A system of authorisation limits is applied over financial decisions. The Council's rules require the Trustees to obtain the endorsement of the Council's Members for key financial decisions.	Whistleblowing Policy which would support an individual Trustee taking action in the unlikely event that the normal decision-making process failed. Refer to Strategy 6 – Social Responsibility
3.1.3 Trustees adopt and follow a suitable code of conduct that reflects the charity's values and sets out expected standards of ethics, probity and behaviour.	All trustees complete Charities Act and Conflict of Interest declarations and consider any potential conflicts of interest at the start of each Executive meeting.	Other stakeholders and potential funders wishing to assess the Council's reliability as a partner may seek evidence of the Council's values through the presence of a Code of Conduct and other policies. An initial discussion with Chris Sharp of Lincoln DG took place during 2021 to help address this area. Refer to Strategy 6 – Social Responsibility
3.1.4 The board considers how the charity is seen by the people and organisations who are involved in its work and by the wider public.	The Council has historically had a low profile "tower" level, but this has changed in recent years thanks to advice role during COVID-19 pandemic and liaison work with CofE and other external groups.	The Council has commissioned a project supported by an external marketing organisation to assess and improve its communication with the wider public and stakeholders and to foster greater public appreciation of bell ringing.

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	The Council's Public Relations Officer attends all Trustee meetings.	
3.1.5 The board ensures that the charity follows the law. It also considers following non-binding rules, codes and standards, for example regulatory guidance, the 'Nolan Principles'[1] or *Charity Ethical Principles*[2] and other good practice initiatives that promote confidence in charities and create a supportive environment.	The Council has developed policies dealing with Conflict of Interest and Processing of Personal Data together with an Equality and Diversity statement. Its accounts are prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP FRS102 and are reported on by its Independent examiner(s).	Refer to item 1.5.3 regarding strengthening of the Council's Policy Framework. STRATEGY 14 – POLICY FRAMEWORK - Consider measuring the Council's policy framework against the legal requirements set out by the Charity Commission.
3.2 Ensuring the right to be safe		
3.2.1 Trustees understand their safeguarding responsibilities and meet the legal minimum to promote a culture in which everyone feels safe and respected.	A lead Trustee on safeguarding has been appointed. The Council has two Safeguarding Officers, who are periodically invited to Trustee meetings. The Safeguarding section of the Council's website has been expanded with additional guidance.	
3.2.2 Where appropriate:	In pursuing its object to promote the art of church bell ringing, the Council does not routinely conduct events which involve the training or supervision or care of children or adults at risk, meaning that the	

1 www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2

2 www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/ethics/Charity-Ethical-Principles.pdf

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
■ the board makes sure that there are appropriate and regularly reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures ■ as part of a charity's risk-management process, the board checks key safeguarding risks carefully and records how these are managed ■ all trustees, staff, volunteers and people who work with the charity have information or training on the safeguarding policy, so they understand it, know how to speak up and feel comfortable raising concerns.	safeguarding risk inherent in the Council's day-to-day work is small. Safeguarding is nevertheless regarded a key operational risk in the risk management system. The Council liaises with the Church of England on Safeguarding and produces guidance to bell ringing societies on Safeguarding policy. A Safeguarding Mission Statement and Safeguarding Policy have been published. In 2021 the Trustees approved an engagement with the Social Care Institute of Excellence, who reviewed the scope of the Council's safeguarding function and its policy framework. A named trustee has lead responsibility for the Council's Safeguarding in addition to its two Safeguarding Officers. The Council is about to take up membership of Thirtyone:eight.	
3.3 Identifying, dealing with and recording conflicts of interest/loyalty		
3.3.1 The board understands how real and perceived conflicts of interests and conflicts of loyalty can affect a charity's performance and reputation.	The Council has developed a Conflict of Interest Policy. All Workgroup Leaders and Trustees complete annual Conflict of Interest declarations. Any potential Conflicts of Interest are declared at the start of each Trustee meeting.	

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	Annual Conflict of Interest declarations are published on the Council's website.	
3.3.2 Trustees disclose any actual or potential conflicts to the board, and deals with these in line with the charity's governing document and a regularly reviewed conflicts of interest policy.	Refer to 3.3.1 above.	
3.3.3 Registers of interests, hospitality and gifts are kept and made available to stakeholders in line with the charity's agreed policy on disclosure.	Refer to 3.3.1 above.	There is no tradition of gifts or hospitality to individuals but sponsorship of some workgroup and whole Council activities does occur from time to time. STRATEGY 15 – GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY - Record and publish details of hospitality, sponsorship and gifts to any part of the Council, its Executive and workgroups.
3.3.4 Trustees keep their independence and tell the board if they feel influenced by any interest, or may be perceived as being influenced or to having a conflict.	Refer to 3.3.1 above.	

Principle 4 – Decision making, risk and control: The board makes sure that its decision-making processes are informed, rigorous and timely, and that effective delegation, control and risk-assessment, and management systems are set up and monitored.

Rationale

The board is ultimately responsible for the decisions and actions of the charity but it cannot and should not do everything. The board may be required by statute or the charity's governing document to make certain decisions but, beyond this, it needs to decide which other matters it will make decisions about and which it can and will delegate.
Trustees delegate authority but not ultimate responsibility, so the board needs to implement suitable financial and related controls and reporting arrangements to make sure it oversees these delegated matters. Trustees must also identify and assess risks and opportunities for the organisation and decide how best to deal with them, including assessing whether they are manageable or worth taking.

Key outcomes

- The board is clear that its main focus is on strategy, performance and assurance, rather than operational matters, and reflects this in what it delegates.
- The board has a sound decision-making and monitoring framework which helps the organisation deliver its charitable purposes. It is aware of the range of financial and non-financial risks it needs to monitor and manage.
- The board promotes a culture of sound management of resources but also understands that being over-cautious and risk averse can itself be a risk and hinder innovation.
- Where aspects of the board's role are delegated to committees, staff, volunteers or contractors, the board keeps responsibility and oversight.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
4.1 Delegation and control		
4.1.1 The board regularly reviews which matters are reserved to the board and which can be delegated. It collectively exercises the powers of delegation to committees or individual trustees, or staff and volunteers if the charity has them.	The Council's constitution sets out categories of decision which require Trustee approval including a system of expenditure limits. It likewise sets out the Terms of Reference for each of the Council's Workgroups, to which most of the Council's operations are delegated. Operation of a number of bank accounts are delegated to treasurers of specific Council funds and in each case the scope of authorisation has	The various financial delegations are held in separate letters of authority and other documents and have not been brought together into a single Financial Control policy. STRATEGY 16 – FINANCIAL CONTROLS - Seek Trustee approval for a single Financial Control policy, which consolidates records of expenditure limits, delegations and financial approvals across all Council bank accounts.

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	been confirmed in writing through a letter of authority and appears on a published document setting out the Sources and Application of all Council funds.	
4.1.2 The board describes its 'delegations' framework in a document which provides sufficient detail and clear boundaries that the delegations can be clearly understood and carried out.	None	Refer to item 4.1.1 above.
4.1.3 The board makes sure that its committees have suitable terms of reference and membership and that: ■ the terms of reference are reviewed regularly ■ the committee membership is refreshed regularly and does not rely too much on particular people ■ committee members recognise that the board has ultimate responsibility.	There are no formal Board committees but subgroups of the Executive are set up from time to time to progress pieces of work, reporting back to the full Executive. Workgroup Terms of Reference are approved by the Executive and appear in the Council's Standing Orders. The Workgroup structure is subject to continued monitoring by the Trustees and in 2020/2021 four new Workgroups were established and one was retired. A 6-year maximum term of office applies to all Workgroup Leaders.	The Council does not maintain a central list of its Workgroup members and those who act on its behalf, meaning that there could be confusion as to who is and is not an authorised volunteer. STRATEGY 17 – VOLUNTEER REGISTER - Maintain and review a list of authorised volunteers.

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4.1.4 Where a charity uses third party suppliers or services – for example for fundraising, data management or other purposes – the board assures itself that this work is carried out in the interests of the charity and in line with its values and the agreement between the charity and supplier. The board makes sure that such agreements are regularly reviewed to make sure they are still appropriate.	The Council's suppliers fall into two categories: 1. Purchase of packaged website, internet and enterprise software services. Typical suppliers are established corporations who supply the same services to many thousands of customers globally and in the UK. 2. Supply of specific print or engineering services related to the Council's work . Services in the second category are provided either by Council Members or by recognised suppliers and bell founders who have been established for long periods of time.	Whist the Council's Conflict of Interest policy is regarded as robust, there is no formal policy on tendering or procurement which would allow the Trustees to demonstrate that contracts for supply or project funding were agreed fairly and in a way which was not partial to the interests of one or more individual suppliers. Refer to Strategy 16 – Financial Controls.
4.1.5 The board regularly checks the charity's key policies and procedures to ensure make sure that they still support, and are adequate for, the delivery of the charity's aims. This includes: policies and procedures dealing with board strategies, functions and responsibilities, finances (including reserves), service or quality standards; where needed, good employment practices and encouraging and using volunteers; key areas of activity such as fundraising and data protection.	Most of the policies in this list are more relevant to larger charities who may employ staff. The Council has an established Reserves Policy and its designated and restricted funds are clearly identified in annual trustee reports. The role of the Council's trustees and the system of checks and balances governing their decisions is set out in the Council's rules.	.
4.2 Managing and monitoring organisational performance		
4.2.1 The board makes sure that operational plans and budgets are in line with the	The Trustees prepare an annual budget which is presented to each year's Council Meeting.	

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charity's purposes, strategic aims and resources.	The Treasurer reports year-to-date actuals against both budget and prior year run rate to the Trustees on a monthly basis.	
4.2.2 The board regularly monitors performance using a consistent framework and checks performance against the charity's strategic aims, operational plans and budgets.	The Strategic Priorities are reviewed each year. The majority of the Council's work is project-based. Whilst it offers some routine advice and support to its member societies, the volume of enquiries is not sufficient to justify the maintenance of specific operational KPIs.	The Strategic Priorities, which cover a number of years, are not explicitly linked to each year's forward plan and budget, meaning that it is more difficult to assess the degree to which the various projects included in annual budgets are being used to drive the Council's fundamental objectives. STRATEGY 18 – ANNUAL PL;AN - Explicitly link each year's objectives and budgets with the Council's strategic priorities to show how the priorities are being advanced through each year's projects.
4.2.3 The board agrees what information is needed to assess delivery against agreed plans, outcomes and timescales. Trustees share timely, relevant and accurate information in an easy to understand format.	The Council's small size and reliance on volunteers, who give what time they have, means it is not in a position to enforce formal service levels, KPIs or project targets. Trustees and Workgroup Leaders endeavour to agree clear and realistic expectations of project work, whilst avoiding behaviours which would put undue pressure on volunteers.	
4.2.4 The board regularly considers information from other similar organisations to compare or benchmark the organisation's performance.	This has been considered, but no organisations have been identified whose scope of work, finances and volunteer organisation are equivalent to the Council. Most similar organisations such as the Royal College of	Refer to 1.5.1 above.

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	Organists or the Royal School of Church Music operate direct membership schemes and/or provide revenue-generating services, which in turn fund the employment of a permanent base of employees.	
4.3 Actively managing risks		
4.3.1 The board retains overall responsibility for risk management and discusses and decides the level of risk it is prepared to accept for specific and combined risks.	A risk register is published on the Council's website.	There has been no structured discussion on risk appetite. This is sometimes a complex area to understand and will need time and space to focus on it. Refer to Strategy 4 – Risk Review
4.3.2 The board regularly reviews the charity's specific significant risks and the effect of these risks added together. It makes plans to mitigate and manage these risks appropriately. Trustees consider risk that relates to their situation and where they work, for example charities working with children or vulnerable adults will probably look at risks relating to safeguarding.	Regular discussions of risk now take place in Exec meetings.	The risk register focuses on operational, financial and some reputational risks, but does not cover strategic risks and important external factors which may significantly impact the Council's ability to achieve its charitable objects. STRATEGY 19 – STRATEGIC RISK - See 4.3.1 and use the Charity Commission document CC26: Charities and Risk Management to include a broader view of risk.
4.3.3 The board puts in place and regularly checks the charity's process for identifying, prioritising, escalating and managing risks and, where applicable, the charity's system of internal controls to manage these risks. The board reviews the effectiveness of the	The Trustees completed a full risk review in 2021 which has been published and is due for review annually. A statement on risk is included in the Trustees' Annual Report.	A formal review of risk is not integrated in the Trustees' annual calendar. Refer to Strategy 4 – Risk Review

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
charity's approach to risk at least every year. The board describes the charity's approach to risk in its annual report and in line with regulatory requirements.		
4.4 Appointing external examiners or auditors		
4.4.1 The board agrees and oversees an effective process for appointing and reviewing its external examiners or auditors if they are required.	The Council's constitution requires that one or two independent examiners are elected annually by the Council's members). The Trustees actively identify suitably qualified candidates and encourage them to put their names forward. The Council's rules allow the Independent Examiner(s) to receive professional help where appropriate, minimising any key person dependency.	

Principle 5 – Board effectiveness: The board works as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.

Rationale	**Key outcomes**
The board has a key impact on whether a charity thrives. The tone the board sets through its leadership, behaviour, culture and overall performance is critical to the charity's success. It is important to have a rigorous approach to trustee recruitment, performance and development, and to the board's conduct. In an effective team, board members feel it is safe to suggest, question and challenge ideas and address, rather than avoid, difficult topics.	• The board's culture, behaviours and processes help it to be effective; this includes accepting and resolving challenges or different views. • All trustees have appropriate skills and knowledge of the charity and can give enough time to be effective in their role. • The chair enables the board to work as an effective team by developing strong working relationships between members of the board and creates a culture where differences are aired and resolved. • The board takes decisions collectively and confidently. Once decisions are made the board unites behind them and accepts them as binding.

Recommended Practice	**Evidence of application / explanation**	**Areas for improvement / implementation**
5.1 Working as an effective team		
5.1.1 The board meets as often as it needs to be effective.	There are monthly meetings of the whole board with additional email chat and Zoom meetings of sub-groups. The schedule of meetings is decided well in advance and is also posted on website.	
5.1.2 The chair, working with board members and where they exist staff, plans the board's work and meetings, making sure trustees have the information, time and space they need to explore key issues and reach well-considered decisions.	The agenda and relevant documents are usually provided in adequate time.	Refer to Strategy 7 – Executive Decisions.
5.1.3 The board regularly discusses its effectiveness and its ability to work	The board is relatively small and most issues are resolved between individuals informally.	There have been some occasions where communication has not worked well enough and trustees have only been able to

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
together as a team, including individuals' motivations and expectations about behaviours. Trustees take time to understand each other's motivations to build trust within the board and the chair asks for feedback on how to foster an environment where trustees can constructively challenge each other.	There has been useful discussion about board effectiveness and relationships during the production of this review.	raise concerns relatively late in some cases. Implementation of previously-agreed Trustee actions is not formally monitored. STRATEGY 20 - TRUSTEE MEETINGS - Consider a fixed agenda item for all trustees to mention concerns about their own or other areas of work. - Consider a fixed agenda item to cover previously agreed trustee actions, mentioning if they are on-going or completed or stalled
5.1.4 Where significant differences of opinion arise, trustees take time to consider the range of perspectives and outcomes, respecting all viewpoints and the value of compromise in board discussions.	Disagreements are generally further discussed outside the formal full meetings, either by subgroups or by personal exchange of views. As above, this works in most but not all situations.	As above (*5.1.3*)
5.1.5 The board collectively can get independent, professional advice in areas such as governance, the law and finance. This is either on a pro-bono basis or at the charity's expense if needed for the board to discharge its duties.	During 2021 advice was obtained on a pro-bono basis to assist with Risk Management and insurance matters and paid-for advice was received on the development of the Council's safeguarding policy framework. A wide range of professional skills is available to the Trustees from among the Council's members and within the ringing community.	
5.2 Reviewing the board's composition		

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
5.2.1 The board has, and regularly considers, the skills, knowledge and experience it needs to govern, lead and deliver the charity's purposes effectively. It reflects this mix in its trustee appointments, balancing the need for continuity with the need to refresh the board.	The board is an elected body so itself is constrained by the range of volunteers willing to stand for election. The Council's rules do however allow for the board to appoint up to two other trustees specifically where necessary to secure an appropriate balance of skills. Workgroup leaders and members are chosen on the basis of their skill set and interests, although the pool of potential volunteers is limited.	
5.2.2 The board is big enough that the needs of the charity's work can be carried out and changes to the board's composition can be managed without too much disruption. A board of at least five but no more than twelve trustees is typically considered good practice.	The current size of the board (8 with the potential to appoint two additional trustees where additional skills are required) fits this good practice.	
5.3 Overseeing appointments		
5.3.1 There is a formal, rigorous and transparent procedure to appoint new trustees to the board, which includes advertising vacancies widely.	Vacancies and forthcoming elections for trustees are well advertised on the Council website, in *The Ringing World* and on social media. All appointments to data have been by election.	
5.3.2 The search for new trustees is carried out, and appointments or nominations for election are made, on merit, against objective criteria and considering the benefits of diversity. The board regularly looks at what skills it has and needs, and this affects how new trustees are found.	Nominees are required to provide a short biographical statement for consideration by Council Members and each individual Each Trustee role is covered by its own role description which clearly sets out the demands of the role and the skills and expertise needed.	The small number numbers willing to stand for election to the Trustee board creates a restriction. Since 2018 no contested elections have occurred. STRATEGY 21 – TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT - Seek additional ways to publicise the work of trustees and opportunities to serve.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
	An Equality and Diversity Statement has been published and the question of diversity has been covered in a number of blogs and updates issued by the President. In 2020 the Board supported Women in Ringing initiative which encouraged more women to put themselves forward for leadership roles.	
5.3.3 Trustees are appointed for an agreed length of time, subject to any applicable constitutional or statutory provisions relating to election and re-election. If a trustee has served for more than nine years, their reappointment is: • subject to a particularly rigorous review and takes into account the need for progressive refreshing of the board • explained in the trustees' annual report.	The Council rules have strict limits on maximum lengths of service in trustee roles. A maximum term of 6 years applies to all Trustees, unless approved on an individual basis by resolution of Council Members.	
5.3.4 If a charity's governing document provides for one or more trustees to be nominated and elected by a wider membership, or elected by a wider membership after nomination or recommendation by the board, the charity supports the members to play an informed role in these processes.	The role of Council Members in determining the composition of the Executive is made clear in the meeting notes issued before each Annual Council Meeting and in communications issued by the President. As a matter of good practice individual trustees encourage nominations to be made and seconded by Council Members who are not trustees.	.
5.4 Developing the board		

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
5.4.1 Trustees receive an appropriately resourced induction when they join the board that includes meetings with other members and staff (if the charity has staff) and covers all areas of the charity's work.	The present board was elected following significant constitutional change so few have reached the end of their terms of office.	Feedback from both new Trustees who have joined the Executive since 2018 indicates that more information for new trustees would be beneficial. STRATEGY 22 – TRUSTEE INDUCTION - Develop a set of resources on being a trustee, available to candidates before each Annual Council Meeting. - Induction for successful candidates should include meetings with other trustees, training in the IT tools used such as Zoom, MS Teams and MS 365 as well as an introduction to key policies and procedures.
5.4.2 The board reviews its own performance, including that of the chair. These reviews might consider the board's balance of skills, experience and knowledge, its diversity, how the board works together and other factors that affect its effectiveness.	The Trustees considered the Executive's effectiveness when completing this Governance Review. Individual Trustees have felt able to raise concerns at Executive meetings, including where these relate to the chair.	The Trustees do not seek structured feedback on their effectiveness from Workgroups and other Council officers. RECOMMENDATION – see 2.2.4 above.
5.4.3 Trustees can explain how they check their own performance	The Trustees give one another informal peer-to-peer support and feedback. .	Executive Sponsors do not seek structured feedback on their own effectiveness from their Workgroup Leaders. Refer to Strategy 11 – Feedback.

Principle 6 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: The board has a clear, agreed and effective approach to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation and in its own practice. This approach supports good governance and the delivery of the organisation's charitable purposes.

Rationale

Addressing equality, diversity and inclusion helps a board to make better decisions. This requires commitment, but it means that a charity is more likely to stay relevant to those it serves and deliver its public benefit. Recognising and countering any imbalances in power, perspectives and opportunities in the charity, and in the attitudes and behaviour of trustees, staff and volunteers, help to make sure that a charity achieves its aims.

All trustees have the same responsibility for the charity, so they must have equality of opportunity to contribute to decision making. Board diversity, in the widest sense, is important because it creates more balanced decision making. Where appropriate, this includes and centres those communities and people the charity serves. This increases the charity's legitimacy and impact. Equality and diversity are only effective and sustainable if the board works to be inclusive, ensuring that all trustees are welcomed, valued and able to contribute.

Boards that commit to equality, diversity and inclusion are more likely to set a positive example and tone for the charity by following an appropriate strategy for delivering its purpose and setting inclusive values and culture.

Key outcomes

- The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the organisation and help to deliver the charity's public benefit.
- Obstacles to participation are reduced, with the organisation's work designed and open for everyone included within its charitable purposes. This supports the charity to challenge inequality and achieve improved equality of outcomes.
- The board is more effective because it reflects different perspectives, experiences and skills, including, where applicable, from current and future beneficiaries

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
6.1 Assessing understanding of systems and culture		
6.1.1 The board analyses and can define how equality, diversity and inclusion are important for the charity, its context and the delivery of its aims.	Diversity and equality are considered specifically in the Council's Strategic Priorities 2020. An Equality and Diversity Statement was published in 2021. .	

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
6.1.2 The board assesses its own understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. It considers how this happens in the charity and identifies any gaps in understanding which could be filled by discussion, learning, research or information	The Trustees sought advice from Chris Sharp of Lincoln DG when developing the Council's Equality and Diversity statement in 2021,	
6.1.3 The board regularly assesses: • the charity's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, using available data and, where applicable, lived experience • its own practice including: ○ the diversity of trustees' backgrounds and perspectives in its regular board skills audit to identify imbalances and gaps ○ any bias in trustee recruitment and selection ○ where applicable, how the communities and people that the charity serves are included and centred in decision making ○ how meetings and board information can be made more accessible and how to provide resources to support this ○ how to create a meeting environment in which behaving inclusively is the norm, all voices are equal and trustees can constructively challenge each other ○ how the board demonstrates inclusive behaviours in its decision making and how it engages with staff (where they exist), volunteers, members, service users and beneficiaries.	The makeup of the Executive largely reflects the ringing population so that improving the diversity within ringing as a whole is necessary to improve the diversity of the Council and its trustees. During 2020 and 2021 the Council both supported and publicised initiatives to encourage younger ringers and to help identify gender bias in ringing leadership – both practical ringing leadership and those holding office in ringing societies. Papers presented at Trustee meetings are always available electronically and meeting arrangements facilitate attendance via Zoom and other online tools where this will assist individual Trustees. The Council's expenses policy supports reimbursement of all reasonable expenses incurred by trustees and volunteers in connection with their work.	More work needs to be done to raise the public awareness of ringing as an enjoyable and fulfilling hobby and to promote it as an activity for all irrespective of age, gender, cultural or racial background. STRATEGY 23 – INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY - Further develop the Council's work to promote diversity through: ○ marketing and recruitment campaigns that cross gender, ethnic and generational boundaries ○ research into strategies to overcome differential retention and attainment between different gender and age groups ○ encouragement to under-represented groups to get involved in both local societies and in the Council's work. ○ re-engagement with Chris Sharp to develop recent work on equality and diversity ○ Promoting a target of racial and. cultural diversity in recruitment of new ringers.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
		○ Developing one or more seminars for ringing societies to discuss ways of encouraging under-represented groups to consider ringing as a pursuit.
6.1.4 The chair regularly asks for feedback on how meetings can be made more accessible and how to create an environment where trustees can constructively challenge each other and all voices are equally heard.	Refer to 6.1.3 above.	Refer to 2.1.1 on Trustee working practices.
6.2 Setting context specific and realistic plans and targets		
6.2.1 The board sets a clear organisational approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the charity's aims, strategy, culture and values. This is supported by appropriate plans, policies, milestones, targets and timelines.	A clear Equality & Diversity statement has been published and its message promoted in a number of communications from the President. .	Refer to 1.5.3 on strengthening the Policy Framework.
6.2.2 The board uses the findings from its assessments to make context-specific and regularly reviewed plans and targets for: • equality, diversity and inclusion training for board members • inclusive boardroom culture, practices and behaviours • removing, reducing and preventing obstacles to people being trustees • attracting a diverse group of candidates for new trustee roles and providing an inclusive induction for new trustees	During 2021 the Trustees engaged with Chris Sharp of Lincoln DG to better understand the range of ways in which diversity could be promoted in the Council's work. Considerable focus has been placed on securing candidates for Trustee roles from as wide a pool as possible.	The Trustees recognise that the pool of potential trustees inevitably reflects the demographic of bell ringers and have therefore concluded that efforts should focus on the strategies to increase diversity within ringing and broaden its demographic. Refer to Strategy 23 – Inclusivity and Diversity

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
• recruiting a diverse board that addresses imbalances and any gaps that have been found • promoting inclusive behaviours and cultures to the wider organisation		
6.3 Taking action and monitoring performance		
6.3.1 The board ensures that there are appropriate arrangements and resources in place to monitor and achieve the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets, including those relating to the board.	E&D data are not maintained on Council Members, who are elected by their constituent societies, or on volunteers. Constituent societies go not generally monitor diversity in their membership or in ringing generally.	STRATEGY 24 E&D DATA - Collect and analyse E&D data on new Council Members
6.3.2 The board creates and maintains inclusive cultures, practices and behaviours in all its decision making. It promotes and demonstrates inclusive behaviours and cultures to the wider organisation. **6.3.3** The board regularly monitors and actively implements its plans and targets established under 6.3.2.	The Equality and Diversity statement sets out clear standards and a significant amount of work has been done to promote inclusive cultures and behaviours	The effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity statement and the Council's performance in demonstrating inclusive behaviours and cultures is not routinely monitored. STRATEGY 25 – E&D MONITORING - Introduce annual monitoring by the Trustees of the effectiveness of its measures to promote Equality and Diversity.
6.3.4 The board leads the organisation's progress towards achieving its equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets and discusses updates on this.	Refer to 6.2.1 above..	RECOMMENDATION: Refer to 6.3.1/6.3.2 above (dealing with the Council's progress) and 6.1.3/6.2.2 above (dealing with progress across the wider ringing community).

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
6.3.5 The board periodically takes part in learning and/or reflection about equality, diversity and inclusion and understands its responsibilities in this area. It acts on any gaps in its understanding and looks at how board practice, culture and behaviour are affected by these gaps	Refer to 6.2.2 above.	RECOMMENDATION: Refer to 6.3.1 and 6.3.3 above.
6.4 Publishing performance information and learning		
6.4.1 The board regularly publishes: • information on its progress towards achieving its equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets, including challenges, opportunities and learning. • its plans to tackle any organisational or board inequalities and gaps that have been identified.	-	E&D Data are not maintained on Council members or volunteers. RECOMMENDATION: Refer to 6.3.1 and 6.3.3 above.

Principle 7 – Openness and accountability: The board leads the organisation in being transparent and accountable.	
Rationale The public's trust that a charity is delivering public benefit is fundamental to its reputation and success, and by extension, the success of the wider sector. Making accountability real, through genuine and open two-way communication that celebrates successes and demonstrates willingness to learn from mistakes, helps to build this trust and confidence and earn legitimacy.	**Key outcomes** • The organisation's work and impact are appreciated by all its stakeholders. • The board ensures that the charity's performance and interaction with its stakeholders are guided by the values, ethics and culture put in place by the board. Trustees make sure that the charity collaborates with stakeholders to promote ethical conduct. • The charity takes seriously its responsibility for building public trust and confidence in its work. • The charity is seen to have legitimacy in representing its beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Recommended Practice	**Evidence of application / explanation**	**Areas for improvement / implementation**
7.1 Communicating and consulting effectively with stakeholders		
7.1.1 The board identifies the key stakeholders with an interest in the charity's work. These might include users or beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, members, donors, suppliers, local communities and others.	The Trustees have maintained key working relationships with the Church of England, the Churches Conservation Trust, the Church Buildings Council, the Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust, Chamborough Trust, DCMS and other government organisations.. Relationships with equivalent bodies in overseas countries where ringing has a presence are led by the relevant national ringing guild.	.
7.1.2 The board makes sure that there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with these stakeholders about the charity's purposes, values, work and achievements, including information that enables them to measure the charity's success in achieving its purposes.	Communication to Council Members, ringing societies and the Ringing Community is achieved through articles in *The Ringing World,* regular emails to Council Members, weekly email updates to ringers subscribing via the Council's website, a regular presidential blog, social media updates and a set of new online Forums. A publication targeted specifically at Church of England diocesan and parish safeguarding teams is under preparation. The	STRATEGY 26 –COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS - Consider production of a quarterly or biannual newsletter aimed at external stakeholders.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
	dates of monthly Executive meetings are scheduled in advance and the notes of each meeting are published and circulated to Council Members within 14 days of each meeting.	
7.1.3 As part of this strategy, the board thinks about how to communicate how the charity is governed, who the trustees are and the decisions they make.	The Council's website includes a governance section containing a list of all Trustees with contact details. The calendar of Trustee Meetings is published in advance. The Council's rules, standing orders and policies are published in the governance section. A dedicated web page containing an updated list of decisions (including policy positions) is now available as a result of a decision made by the 2021 AGM.	RECOMMENDATION: - Trustee Biographies - refer to 2.2.2
7.1.4 The board ensures that stakeholders have an opportunity to hold the board to account through agreed processes and routes, for example question and answer sessions.	The Council's constitution requires the Trustees to report to Council Members at its Annual Council Meeting on the Council's financial results, financial forecast and activities, including the work of each workgroup. Its rules provide a number of means by which Council Members can hold the Trustees to account, and the Trustees make themselves available for informal conversations throughout the annual Council weekend, of which the Council Meeting forms part.	The opportunities provided at annual Council weekends are largely restricted to Council Members only (the representatives of the Council's affiliated societies). External stakeholders (other than the Chair of the Ringing World Ltd.) do not generally receive invitations and events are not planned with the interest of external stakeholders and the general public in mind. STRATEGY 27 – ANNUAL COUNCIL WEEKENDS - Consider making greater use of Open Meetings (at the Council Weekend and at other times) on subjects of interest to both external stakeholders and the ringing community.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
7.1.5 The board makes sure it speaks to stakeholders about significant changes to the charity's services or policies.	Major changes are publicised through President's Blog and articles in *The Ringing World*. In 2020 the Trustees and volunteers participated in the Church of England's Covid Recovery group to ensure the needs of bell ringers were fully understood. In 2021 the Council's Safeguarding Officers engaged directly with the Church of England's Safeguarding Training and Development Manager on the implementation of a new training framework within the Church of England and its application to bell ringers. .	A more proactive relationship with leaders of ringing societies would be valuable. STRATEGY 28 – ASSOCIATION LEADERS - Consider establishing a forum for Assn leaders.
7.2 Developing a culture of openness within the charity		
7.2.1 The board gets regular reports on the positive and negative feedback and complaints given to the charity. It demonstrates that it learns from mistakes and uses this learning to improve performance and internal decision making.	As a small, volunteer-run charity with no direct beneficiaries the number of complaints is very small. Contact details for all trustees are published on the website and the President (and other trustees) receive feedback direct. "Complaints" where they are received generally relate to disagreement with the Council's public stance on a specific issue or the conduct of other organisations, rather than defects in the Council's own services, Feedback is reviewed by the President and passed on to the team concerned or discussed at Trustee meetings.	There is no structured process for assessing feedback received directly by Workgroups, but the number of complaints received by the President and Trustees, who are very accessible, is sufficiently small that formal measures are not considered necessary.

Recommended Practice	Evidence of application / explanation	Areas for improvement / implementation
7.2.2 The board makes sure that there is a transparent, well-publicised effective, and timely process for making and handling a complaint, and that any internal or external complaints are handled constructively, impartially and effectively.	Refer to 7.2.1 above.	Refer to Strategy 6 – Social Responsibility
7.2.3 The board keeps a register of interests for trustees and agrees an approach for how these are communicated publicly in line with Principle 3.	The Register of Interests is published on the Council's website and update annually.	
7.2.4 If a charity has staff, the trustees agree how to set their remuneration, and they publish their approach.	N/A	
7.3 Member engagement		
7.3.1 In charities where trustees are appointed by an organisational membership wider than the trustees, the board makes sure that the charity: • has clear policies on who can be a member of the charity • has clear, accurate and up-to-date membership records • tells members about the charity's work • looks for, values and takes into account members' views on key issues • is clear and open about the ways that members can participate in the charity's governance, including, where applicable, serving on committees or being elected as trustees.	The criteria for membership in all categories are clearly set out in the Council's constitution. A full list of members is published on the Council's website and updated when changes to representative members are notified to the Secretary. Contact details for all Trustees are shown on the Council's website. Communication to Council Members, is achieved through regular emails, including a fortnightly President's blog.	