

# Llandaff & Monmouth Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers



Updated Guidelines for Association members concerning:

- Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults
- Health and Safety in the tower

## Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults

In April 2016 the Church in Wales produced a new Safeguarding Policy which supersedes the previous guidance on Young People (2007) and Vulnerable Adults (2011) and contains several points which are relevant to members of the Association. The full documentation is available on the Church in Wales website at:

<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/representative-body/publications/downloads/safeguarding-policy-2016/>

The key points arising from the new Policy are as follows:

- All PCCs are required to adopt the new Policy;
- All PCCs are required to appoint a Parish or Ministry Area safeguarding co-ordinator;
- Section 6 of the Policy includes guidance specifically concerning ringing which states that "Bell ringers should adhere to the same principles of good practice as outlined in Section 1 [of the Policy]. The tower captain should have a current DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate and should take responsibility for the safety and well-being of any children and young people in the bell ringing team both at services and practices."

The teaching of young people is vital to the long-term of health of ringing in South Wales and the Association. Therefore, the Association Management Committee (AMC) recommends that:

- Tower Captains work closely with their local Parish or Ministry Area safeguarding co-ordinator regarding the local adoption of the new Policy and obtain a DBS certificate in line with the guidance above if one is not in place already. This should be undertaken regardless of whether there are any young people or vulnerable adults in the band at the immediate time in order that future possibilities are covered.
- Tower Captains, Branch and Association Officers and those involved in working with young people and/or vulnerable adults familiarise themselves with the principles of good practice contained within the new Policy and consider the applicability of that good practice when organising events at local, Branch and Association level. In particular the guidance detailing the procedures should concerns be raised should be carefully noted.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) Tower Stewardship Committee also has several guidance notes relating to safeguarding and these are available here:

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/towerstewardship/#guidance>

In addition the AMC recommends the following as examples of good practice, noting that these may be amended to take account of local situations in consultation with Parish or Ministry Area safeguarding co-ordinators:

- The parents or guardians of the young person should complete a consent form when the young person starts to learn to ring. This form should be updated annually and should set out the necessary rules for safe practice. Examples of consent forms are available on the CCCBR website.
- The parents of young people already engaged in ringing should be asked to complete a consent form at the earliest opportunity. The parents should be encouraged to come to an early lesson to see what is involved.
- The Tower Captain (or delegated teacher) should endeavour to establish that the young person has no known medical conditions that may affect safety.
- The Tower Captain should make sure that the parents are aware of and content with arrangements for young people travelling to and from ringing activities.
- The young people should undertake to ensure that suitable clothing is worn for all ringing activities. It should be loose under the arms to allow freedom of movement and not overtly provocative. These requirements should also be made clear to parents at the outset.
- The parents should be informed that to act with sufficient speed in an emergency or when learning to control a bell, it may be necessary to raise one's voice, or make physical contact (e.g. by taking hold of the learner's hand to take control of the bell rope). This can be demonstrated to the parents during their early visit to a practice. Procedures for acting in an emergency should be rehearsed, e.g. following the instruction 'Let Go' if the bell gets out of control.
- If an outing is planned, parents should sign a detailed permission form. Transport arrangements should be made so that young people do not travel in a car with just one adult. In the event of this being necessary as an exception, the young person should sit in the back.
- No adult drivers should drink and drive whilst responsible for young ringers.
- Where a parent is always present during ringing, e.g. as a member of the band, the parent is responsible for the young person's welfare. However, it is important to bear in mind that there may be occasions when a parent cannot be there or the young person is taken out by other members of the band (e.g. to another tower). As with other aspects, it is advisable to follow the standard procedure in all cases so as not to make an issue of any changes in routine.
- Two adults (if possible of different sexes) should normally be present whenever young people are taking part in ringing or being transported to or from ringing events. The Tower Captain should endeavour to ensure that at least two adults arrive at the start of any planned ringing.
- The Tower Captain and any deputies who may run the practice or any ringing sessions where young people are present will be responsible for ensuring that local safeguarding policies are followed. It is likely that it will be these people who will need to undergo a DBS check in accordance with the Church in Wales Safeguarding Policy 2016.
- It is always good practice for an attendance register to be kept and completed, including the recording of the names of any visitors.
- Young people should not be allowed into a potentially hazardous situation unaccompanied.
- Normal Health and Safety issues should always be taken into consideration, and if possible a trained first aider should be present. A first aid kit should be available and an accident logbook kept.

## **Health & Safety in the tower**

The notes of April 2016 meeting between CCCBR officers and representatives of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group has prompted the AMC to remind members of their responsibilities concerning Health & Safety in the tower. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group is keen that ringers take a common sense approach to risk, health and safety but suggests that these are considered particularly when opening the tower for visitors e.g. at an open day or recruitment event. The CCCBR has also recently produced comprehensive guidance on Health and Safety and Risk Assessment which is commended to all towers in the Association.

The AMC recommends that:

- A risk assessment is carried out, in consultation with those responsible for health and safety at a local (Parish or Ministry Area) level for “normal” ringing activities e.g. regular service and practice ringing, welcoming visiting bands etc. When special events, particularly those involving the public, are planned then consideration should be given to completing a specific risk assessment for that event.
- A first aid kit is kept in the tower and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is complete and items are in date.
- That an accident logbook is kept in the tower.
- That a notice is clearly displayed in the tower which notes that address and postcode of the church in case of use by emergency services.
- That there is a clear evacuation plan in case of emergencies.
- If ringing at a church where the bells have been out of use for any length of time, sensible precautions are taken to ensure that the bells are ringable, and there is no risk of personal injury or damage to bells, frames or the church building.
- The guidance note on ringing produced by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group is consulted and, where appropriate, the recommendations are implemented.
- The guidance note on Tower Safety and Risk Assessment produced by the CCCBR is consulted and, where appropriate, the recommendations are implemented

The guidance note on ringing produced by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group is available here:

<http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/images/bell-ringing-guidance.pdf>

The CCCBR guidance note on Tower Safety and Risk Assessment is available at:

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/towerstewardship/notes/GN4v9.pdf>

Template risk assessments have been produced by the CCCBR and these are available at:

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/towerstewardship/notes/risk-assessment-examples.pdf>

Version 1.0  
Association Management Committee  
December 2016