

OXFORD UNIVERSITY SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS

CONSTITUTION

NAME AND OBJECTS

1. The Society is called the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers. The Society's objects are the promotion of the art of change ringing in the University of Oxford and the ringing for Sunday Services in Oxford in Full Term; and the income and property of the Society shall be applied solely to those objects.

COMPLIANCE

2. (a) The Society shall be administered in accordance with the regulations for University clubs which are published from time to time in the Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum ("the Proctors' Memorandum").
- (b) The activities of the Society will at all times be conducted in accordance with the following University policies and codes of practice in force from time to time: Integrated Equality Policy, Code of Practice on Harassment and Bullying, and Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.
- (c) If there is a national governing body for the Society's activities with which the Society is eligible to register, the Society shall effect and maintain such registration: purchase any insurance cover which the national body makes available unless the Insurance Section of the University's Central Administration ("the Insurance Section") agrees to or prescribes other arrangements; and make every effort to comply with all safety procedures which the national body prescribes, or recommends as good practice (but see Schedule 2 clause 2).
- (d) The Society shall observe the Code of Conduct on Safety Matters which is set out in the Schedule to this Constitution, ensure compliance with the Code by the members of the Society, and follow an appropriate procedure for risk assessment. Both the Code of Conduct and the procedure for risk assessment must be acceptable to the University's Safety Officer.
- (e) No member of the Society shall participate in any activity overseas organised by the Society, whether during term-time or vacation, unless the plans for such activity have been notified at least one calendar month in advance of the date of departure from the United Kingdom to the University Marshal. Each member participating in such activities overseas shall observe any conditions imposed by the Proctors on the recommendation of the University Marshal, e.g. relating to the deposit of contact addresses, fulfilment of health, safety and insurance requirements, and stipulation of Senior Members to accompany the trip.
- (f) The Society may apply to IT Services to use information technology ('IT') facilities in the name of the Society. Where relevant facilities are allocated by IT Services it is the responsibility of the Society:

- (i) to designate a member of the Society entitled to a University e-mail account (as defined by IT Services rules) to act as its IT Officer, whose duties shall include liaising with IT Services about the use of facilities allocated and passing on to his or her successor in office all records relating to the use of the facilities allocated;
- (ii) to designate one of its members (who may be, but need not necessarily be, the same as its IT Officer) or, exceptionally, a member of Congregation to act as its principal Webmaster, whose duties shall include maintaining an awareness of the University Guidelines for Web Information Providers and co-ordinating and regulating access to the web facilities use by the Society;
- (iii) to comply with regulations and guidelines relating to the use of IT facilities published from time to time by IT Services;
- (iv) to ensure that everyone responsible under (i)-(iii) is competent to deal with the requirements, where necessary undertaking training under the guidance of IT Services.

MEMBERSHIP

3. The members of the Society shall be those who are eligible and apply for membership of the Society, who are admitted to and maintained in membership by the Committee, and who have paid the relevant Society subscription.
4. All student members of the University, and all persons whose names are on the University's Register of Visiting Students, shall be eligible to become members of the Society. A member shall continue to be eligible until he or she is given permission to supplicate for his or her degree, diploma or certificate, regardless of whether or not he or she continues to be liable to pay fees to the University.
5. The Committee may also, at its discretion, admit to membership:-
 - (a) students registered to read for diplomas and certificates in the University;
 - (b) student members of Permanent Private Halls who are not student members of the University;
 - (c) members of Ruskin College; Ripon College, Cuddesdon and the Oxford Institute of Legal Practice;
 - (d) members of the Westminster Institute of Oxford Brookes University who are registered to read for degrees or other qualifications validated by the University of Oxford; and
 - (e) other persons not falling within paragraph 4 above or paragraphs 5(a) to (d) above, provided that such members shall not constitute more than one-fifth of the total membership.
6. The Committee may remove a person from membership for good cause. The person concerned may appeal against such removal to the Senior Member.

MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

7. There shall be an Annual General Meeting for all the members of the Society in Michaelmas Full Term, convened by the Secretary on not less than fourteen days' notice. (See Schedule 2 Clause 3)
8. The Annual General Meeting will:
 - (a) receive the annual report of the Committee for the previous year and the annual accounts of the Society for the previous year, the report and accounts having been approved by the Committee;
 - (b) receive a report from the Committee on the Society's compliance with paragraph 2 above;
 - (c) elect Members of the Committee in accordance with paragraph 19 below: the Committee's nominations for the Officers and the Senior Member shall be contained in the notice of the Meeting: any alternative nominations must be seconded and have the consent of the nominee, and must be received in writing by the Secretary not less than seven days before the date of the Meeting: nominations for the other Committee Members may be taken from the floor of the meeting;
 - (d) consider any motions of which due notice has been given, and any other relevant business.
9. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called in any Full Term; by the President (hereafter referred to as the Master), the Secretary or the Treasurer on not less than seven days' notice; or on a written requisition by seven or more members, stating the reason for which the meeting is to be called, and delivered to the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the date of the Meeting.
10. Prior to all General Meetings notice of the agenda shall be sent out with the notice of the Meeting. (See also Schedule 2 Clause 5)
11. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be six members present in person or by proxy, of whom three must be members of the Committee. When any financial business is to be transacted there must be present the Treasurer, or a member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent his or her views to the Meeting (provided that where it is a case of a deputy, the only financial business transacted shall be that which was set out in the agenda accompanying the notice of the meeting).

THE COMMITTEE

12. The affairs of the Society shall be administered by a Committee consisting of not more than eight persons, which shall determine the subscriptions payable by the members of the Society, and have ultimate responsibility for the activities of the Society. Members of the University shall at all times make up the majority of the members of the Committee. The Committee shall have control of the funds and property of the Society, and of its administration.

13. The quorum for a Committee meeting shall be three members present in person. When any financial business is to be transacted, there must be present either the Treasurer or a member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent his or her views to the meeting.
14. The Committee shall be made up of the Master, the Secretary, the Treasurer (together, the “Office Holders”); and their offices are referred to as “the Offices”), the Senior Member and four other persons who shall hold the offices of Librarian, Webmaster and Steeplekeepers (of which there may be two). The Master, the Secretary and the Treasurer shall each be either a member of the Society whose eligibility stems from paragraph 4 above or paragraphs 5(a) to (d) above, or (with the approval of the Proctors) a member of Congregation. If his or her eligibility stems from paragraphs 5(a) to (d) above, on election to office he or she must sign an undertaking to abide by the Proctors’ Memorandum, and to accept the authority of the Proctors on Society matters.
15. The Master shall have the right to preside at all meetings of the members of the Society and at all meetings of the Committee. Should the Master be absent, or decline to take the chair, the Committee shall elect another member of the Committee to chair the meeting.
16. The Secretary shall:
 - (a) maintain a register of the members of the Society, which shall be available for inspection by the Proctors on request;
 - (b) give notice of meetings of the members and the Committee;
 - (c) draw up the agendas for and the minutes of those meetings (unless another officer is given such responsibility in accordance with Schedule 2 clause 6);
 - (d) notify the Proctors promptly following the appointment and resignation or removal of Office Holders and other members of the Committee;
 - (e) advise the Proctors promptly of any changes in this Constitution;
 - (f) notify the Proctors not later than the end of the second week of every Full Term of the programme of meetings which has been arranged for that term (e.g. by providing them a copy of the term card);
 - (g) provide the Insurance Section with full details of any insurance cover purchased from or through a national governing body pursuant to paragraph 2(c) above; and
 - (h) inform the Proctors if the Society ceases to operate, or is to be dissolved, and in doing so present a final statement of accounts (the format of which the Proctors may prescribe).
17. The Treasurer shall:
 - (a) keep proper records of the Society’s financial transactions in accordance with current accepted accounting rules and practices;

- (b) develop and implement control procedures to minimise the risk of financial exposure, such procedures to be reviewed regularly with the University's Internal Audit Section ("Internal Audit");
- (c) ensure that bills are paid and cash is banked in accordance with the procedures developed under (b);
- (d) prepare an annual budget for the Society, and regularly inform the Committee of progress against that budget;
- (e) ensure that all statutory returns are made including VAT, income tax and corporation tax if appropriate;
- (f) seek advice as necessary on tax matters from the University's Finance Division;
- (g) develop and maintain a manual of written procedures for all aspects of the Treasurer's responsibilities;
- (h) make all records, procedures and accounts available on request to the Senior Member, the Proctors and Internal Audit;
- (i) forward to the Proctors by the end of the second week of each Full Term a copy of the accounts for the preceding term (the format of which the Proctors may prescribe) signed by the Senior Member, for retention on the Proctors' files; and
- (j) if the Society has a turnover in excess of £15,000 in the preceding year, or if owing to a change in the nature or scale of its activities, it may confidently be expected to have such a turnover in the current year, submit its accounts (the format of which the Proctors may prescribe) for independent professional inspection and report by a reporting accountant approved in advance by the Proctors. Accounts are to be ready for inspection within four months of the end of the Society's financial year and the costs of the inspection and report shall be borne by the Society. If requested by the reporting accountant, the Society shall submit accounts and related material as a basis for a review of accounting procedures, the cost likewise to be borne by the Society.

18. The Senior Member shall:-

- (a) hear appeals from removal from membership under paragraph 6 above;
- (b) following paragraph 17(i) above, consider the accounts of the Society and sign them if he or she considers them to be in order;
- (c) ensure that adequate advice and assistance is available to the Secretary and the Treasurer in the performance of their responsibilities under paragraphs 16 and 17 above; and
- (d) be available to represent and speak for the Society in the public forum, and before the Courts of the University and the University authorities.

19. The members of the Committee shall be elected by the members of the Society annually, and shall be eligible for re-election. The members of the Society shall not appoint several individuals jointly to hold any of the Offices, nor allow any individual

to hold more than one Office at a time. When electing other members of the Committee each year, the members of the Society shall also appoint a member of Congregation as the Senior Member, and he or she will then be a member of the Committee *ex officio*.

20. If during the period between the annual elections to offices any vacancies occur amongst the members of Committee, the Committee shall have the power of filling the vacancy or vacancies up to the next Annual General Meeting by co-optation.
21. Each Office Holder must, on relinquishing his or her appointment, promptly hand to his or her successor in Office (or to another member of the Society nominated by the Committee) all official documents and records belonging to the Society, together with (on request from the Committee) any other property of the Society which may be in his or her possession; and must complete any requirements to transfer authority relating to control of the Society's bank accounts, building society accounts, or other financial affairs.
22. Without derogating from its primary responsibility, the Committee may delegate its functions to finance and general purposes and other subcommittees which are made up exclusively of members of the Committee.
23. The Committee shall have power to make regulations and by-laws in order to implement the paragraphs of this Constitution, and to settle any disputed points not otherwise provided for in this Constitution. Any alteration to this Constitution shall require the approving vote of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting (but see also Schedule 2 clause 8).
24. No member of the Committee shall be removed from office except by the approving votes of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting.

INDEMNITY

25. So far as may be permitted by law, every member of the Committee and every officer of the Society shall be entitled to be indemnified by the Society against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred by him or her in the execution or discharge of his or her duties or the exercise of his or her powers, or otherwise properly in relation to or in connection with his or her duties. This indemnity extends to any liability incurred by him or her in defending any proceedings, civil or criminal, which relate to anything done or omitted or alleged to have been done or omitted by him or her as a member of the Committee or officer of the Society and in which judgement is given in his or her favour (or the proceedings are otherwise disposed of without any finding or admission of any material breach of duty on his or her part), or in which he or she is acquitted, or in connection with any application under any statute for relief from liability in respect of any such act or omission in which relief is granted to him or her by the Court.
26. So far as may be permitted by law, the Society may purchase and maintain for any member of the Committee or officer of the Society insurance cover against any liability which by virtue of any rule of law may attach to him or her in respect of any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust of which he or she may be guilty in relation to the Society and against all costs, charges, losses and expenses and

liabilities incurred by him or her and for which he or she is entitled to be indemnified by the Society by virtue of paragraph 25.

DISSOLUTION

27. The Society may be dissolved at any time by the approving votes of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting. The Society may also be dissolved (without the need for any resolution of the members) by means of not less than thirty days notice from the Proctors to the Secretary of the Society if at any time the Society ceases to be registered with the Proctors.
28. In the event of the Society being dissolved, its assets shall not be distributed amongst the members, but shall be paid to or at the direction of the University.

INTERPRETATION

29. Any question about the interpretation of this Constitution shall be settled by the Proctors.

SCHEDULE 1

Code of Conduct on Safety Matters

GENERAL STATEMENT

The ringing of bells is a potentially hazardous activity. This Code of Conduct, together with the Code of Practice and Risk Assessment, is designed to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety, and welfare of persons entering the ringing room or bell chamber for purposes of bellringing, instruction in bellringing, maintenance of the bells and associated equipment or as a general visitor.

With the exception of Article 11, this Code of Conduct applies to the towers at which the Society rings regularly for practices (St Mary Magdalen and St Thomas the Martyr).

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. All bellringers must understand and follow good practices for behaviour in the bell tower.
2. All bellringers must understand and follow the fire and general safety procedures in place.
3. All bellringers must understand and follow the procedures for securing and controlling access to the ringing room, bell chamber, and stairs.
4. All bellringers must understand and follow access requirements specific to visitors to the Bell Tower, including visiting bellringers, inexperienced bellringers, persons aged under 18, bellringing groups other than the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers and the Oxford Society of Change Ringers, and other visitors such as surveyors. These requirements may include making them aware of any relevant safety procedures.
5. Bellringers responsible for the safety of visiting bellringers must be satisfied with their competency.
6. Without the authorisation of the church, bellringers may only perform minor and routine maintenance work (which may include rope adjustment and replacement, muffle fixing, clapper tying, and inspection after any mechanical failure such as a broken stay or clapper). All bellringers undertaking maintenance work must understand and follow the relevant safety procedures, which are likely to require the bells to be in the “down” position while such maintenance work is carried out.
7. Bellringers must only leave the bells in the “up” position under special circumstances (for example, prior to a wedding). Bellringers must comply with the conditions for leaving the bells in the “up” position, which include following appropriate procedures for securing and controlling access to the ringing room and bell chamber.
8. Inexperienced bellringers must not ring unsupervised until the Master or nominated deputy has declared them to be of sufficient competence.
9. Inexperienced bellringers must follow the instructions given by their supervisor and the Master (or nominated deputy) so that they can endeavour to learn and follow as soon as possible good practices for behaviour in the bell tower and handling a bell in a safe manner.

10. Bellringers supervising inexperienced bellringers must give them appropriate instruction so that they can endeavour to learn and follow as soon as possible good practices for behaviour in the bell tower and handling a bell in a safe manner.
11. All bellringers must follow standard good practices and safety procedures when visiting other towers, including the towers at which the Society rings for services.

DEFINITIONS

a. Bellringers

Members of the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers.

b. Visiting Bellringers

Bellringers other than members of the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers.

c. Church

The authorising members of the Parochial Church Council for each church at which the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers rings regularly for practices (St Mary Magdalen and St Thomas the Martyr).

d. Ringing Room

The room from which the bells are rung.

e. Bell Chamber

The area of the tower in which the bell frame is located.

f. Bell Tower

That area of the church tower containing the ringing room, bell chamber, and associated connecting staircase.

g. “Up” Position

The bell, mouth upwards and at rest supported by the stay and slider mechanism in readiness for “full circle” ringing.

h. “Down” Position

The bell, mouth downwards and at rest.

SCHEDULE 2

Additional Matters in relation to this Constitution specific to this Society and forming part of its Constitution

1. The matters in this Schedule are specific to this Society, form part of its Constitution and have the same force and effect as if set out in the main body of the Constitution, save that if there is a conflict between the provisions of this Schedule and the provisions of the Constitution, the latter will take precedence.
2. The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers is a representative body which provides a technical framework for change ringing performances and guidelines on other matters. It is not a “governing body” for the purposes of Clause 2(c) of the Constitution and does not provide any of the insurance covers referred to in Clauses 2(c) and 16(g) of the Constitution.
3. The Annual General Meeting will normally be held on the last Monday of Michaelmas Full Term.
4. A General Meeting shall be held in each term, normally on the first Monday of Full Term.
5. If the Annual General Meeting or one of the Termly General Meetings is not held at the normal time as specified in the Constitution or this Schedule, notice shall be given in any appropriate manner, which may include notice in the "Ringing World" and email, at least seven days prior to the meeting.
6. In addition to having responsibility for maintaining the Society’s library, the Librarian shall have responsibility for taking and recording the minutes of meetings of the Society and of the Committee.
7. Where possible, at least two tower bell practices shall be held each week during Full Term.
8. No alteration shall be made to this Constitution or this Schedule 2 except with the approval of the Proctors and following the approval by a two-thirds majority of ordinary members present and voting at a general meeting. Notice of the intention to propose an alteration to the Constitution shall be given at the general meeting prior to that at which the proposal is to be made, and the Secretary shall notify members of any notice of proposal given in accordance with this paragraph in such manner as the Society may direct either generally or specifically or, in the absence of any such direction, as seems appropriate. Notwithstanding this clause and clause 23 of the Constitution, the Committee may make alterations to Schedule 1 provided such alterations are approved by the University Safety Officer.