

Breadsall Church Health and Safety Policy

Conditions of Use Applying to Change-Ringing Bells

1. Introduction

This document sets out the responsibilities, guidelines and control measures to ensure the safe use of the Bell Tower and the ringing of bells. The policy is designed to help to avoid any potential hazards and reduce risks.

2. Responsibilities of the Tower Captain

- The Tower Captain will be appointed and approved by the Rector/PCC. He/she will conform to the current Safeguarding procedures of the church and diocese.
- The Tower Captain will sign a working policy agreement drawn up by the PCC.
- The Tower Captain will be responsible to the PCC.
- The Tower Captain will report to the PCC any hazards/damage to the Bell Tower, Bells, stairwell and to report these to the Church Wardens and ensure that they are recorded in the Church Log Book.
- The Tower Captain will be responsible for ensuring that any heating used in the Bell Tower is safe and has passed a current PAT test. It will be kept at safe distances from any flammable materials.
- The Tower Captain will be responsible for on-going Risk Assessments and these will be reviewed annually and a copy given to the Health and safety Committee
- The Tower Captain is responsible for the safety of all using the Tower, including any visitors
- The Tower Captain will review each activity from a Health and Safety point of view, e.g. length of Bell Ropes, putting on muffs, bell maintenance, bell handling for beginners
- The Tower Captain will ensure that no-one is allowed to be alone in the Bell Tower.
- The Tower Captain must take reasonable steps to ensure that they are satisfied that all ringers, including visiting ringers, are competent, in good health and are of suitable height and build. "Competent" means that the ringers have sufficient experience or are in the process of being trained
- The Tower Captain must warn visiting ringers of any particular circumstances attached to the Tower.

3. Junior Ringers

Junior ringers must be at least eight years old. Written consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian for each child to ring or to be taught to ring. Children must be in good health and of suitable height, build and temperament. It is at the discretion of the Tower Captain as to whether or not a child is suitable. At least one other responsible adult other than the Tower Captain must be present when children are in the Bell Tower. A register should be kept of attendance and a record of their instruction, training and level of competence.

4. General

There should be an indication at ground level, i.e. the entrance to the Tower stairs, to show when any persons are in the tower at higher levels. At Breadsall Church this is a notice on the door.

The Church authorities, the Rector and Church Wardens carry the overall responsibility for the Bells and the Tower so it is important that all matters of significance are reported to them.

The entrance to the ringing room and bell chamber should normally be kept locked.

Adequate lighting should be available for any tasks performed in the Tower, including the provision of emergency lighting in case of mains failure.

Non-ringers in the Tower must always be accompanied by a competent ringer.

There should be a Fire Plan for the church, including the Tower, and the person in charge of the ringers must ensure that all persons in the tower are aware of it. Fire extinguishers in the Tower should be in agreed fixed locations and checked annually.

5. Working at Height

The Working at Height regulations came into effect in April 2005. The regulations apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury.

The Tower Captain must be familiar with the Working at Height policy for Breadsall Church

6. The Bells

The Bells should be kept mouth downwards when the Tower is vacated and there should be a notice to this effect in the Tower.

Entry to the bells and bell frame should not be permitted when the bells are ringing.

Safe access should be available to every part of the bell equipment that needs to be maintained, including the application of muffles.

All bell maintenance should be undertaken with the bells “down” either by, or under the direction of, the Steeple Keeper (person designated for maintenance of bells). A second person should be present during maintenance operations.

Health and Safety Committee, May 2017

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