

Rules of the Association, revised April 2025 (Draft)

INTERPRETATION

In these Rules, except where the context otherwise requires:-

- the singular includes the plural and the masculine includes the feminine
- “The Kent County Association of Change Ringers” can be referred to as KCACR or the Association
- “Member” means a member of the Association in any category
- “Association Officer” means a member elected or appointed to any Association post
- “Principal Officer” means the Association Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer
- “District Officer” means a member elected or appointed to any District Committee post.

1. NAME AND OBJECTS

- 1.1 The Association shall be called “The Kent County Association of Change Ringers” and is a voluntary unincorporated association.
- 1.2 The Association shall operate in the geographical county of Kent and that part of London formerly in the county of Kent.
- 1.3 The aims of the Association shall be:-
 - the safety and wellbeing of its Members
 - the cultivation of the art of change ringing
 - encouraging the continuation of the art of bellringing
 - the establishment, maintenance and encouragement of service ringing in the churches in its area
 - the proper care and use of bells and belfries
 - the recognition of ringers as church volunteers.
- 1.4 The Association shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR).

2. PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENTS

- 2.1 The Archbishop of Canterbury shall be invited to become President. Should the Archbishop of Canterbury decline this invitation the General Committee shall invite either the Bishop of Dover or the Bishop of Rochester to fulfil this position.

- 2.2 The Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons who are officiating within the Association's area shall be invited to become Vice Presidents.
- 2.3 The Archbishop, the Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons who accept their invitation will be regarded as Ex-Officio Members of the Association for the duration of their time in tenure.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Any person whose name appears on the Sex Offenders Register is not eligible to become or remain a member of the KCACR in any category of membership.
- 3.2 In addition to the President and Vice Presidents, the Association shall consist of Practising, Associate, Honorary Life Members, Elected Vice Presidents and Non-Resident Life Members.
- 3.3 Following election at a District Meeting or as authorised in the section regarding Peals, registration for Practising and Associate membership may be made through the online membership registration system. Alternatively, a completed application form can be sent directly to the Association Membership Secretary.
- 3.4 The Membership Secretary shall maintain a list of all members.
- 3.5 The names of the current President, Vice-Presidents, Elected Vice-Presidents, Honorary Life Members, Practising Members and Associate Members recorded at the time of submission of the draft Association Handbook shall be printed in the Association Handbook.
- 3.6 Membership categories shall be:
 - a) Honorary Members (non-Life): the President and Vice Presidents shall be Honorary Members of the Association. They shall be Ex-Officio Members of the Association for the duration of their time in tenure and will not hold the same rights as a Practising Member.
 - b) Practising Members: a Practising Member shall be deemed to be a person who can, without assistance, ring rounds and lower a tower bell or can ring a plain course on 6 or more handbells in a method in the traditional way, two in hand. Such competency shall be confirmed by an Association Officer or a District Officer.
 - c) Associate Members: non-ringers may be elected as an Associate Member at a District meeting. Associate Members shall not hold the same membership rights of a Practising Member.

- d) Honorary Life Members: in recognition of services to ringing, a person may be nominated by the General Committee for election as an Honorary Life Member. The election of an Honorary Life Member must be approved by at least two thirds of the Members present and voting at an Annual General Meeting. Honorary Life Members shall hold all the membership rights of a Practising Member.
- e) Elected Vice Presidents: in recognition of outstanding services to the Association, a Practising Member may be nominated by the General Committee for election for life. They shall be known as “Elected Vice Presidents”. Their election must be approved by at least two thirds of the Members present and voting at an Annual General Meeting. Elected Vice Presidents shall enjoy Honorary Life Membership and shall hold all the membership rights of a Practising Member.
- f) Members who held the category of Life Member prior to the 2019 AGM retain this membership and are not required to pay further subscriptions. This category of membership is now closed to any new members. A Life Member shall hold all the membership rights of a Practising Member.
- g) Non-Resident Life Members:
 - i) a ringer not residing in the Association’s area may become a Non-Resident Life Member if elected at either a KCACR meeting or prior to a peal attempt (see the section on Peals).
 - ii) a Practising Member whose subscription is not in arrears may opt, on leaving the Association’s area, to become a Non-Resident Life Member without further payment by notifying the Membership Secretary. On return to the Association’s area Practising Membership may be resumed on payment of the appropriate subscription. Alternatively, that Practising member may continue to be a Practising Member living outside the area on continued payment of the appropriate subscription.

A Non-Resident Life Member shall not hold the same membership rights as a Practising Member.

4. ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE

- 4.1 Only Practising Members and those members who hold the rights of a Practising Member shall be eligible to vote at Association Annual General Meetings and Association Extraordinary General Meetings.

- 4.2 Only Practising Members and those members holding the rights of a Practising Member who are resident within a District, or recorded in the Handbook as a member of a tower in that District, shall be entitled to vote at meetings of that District.
- 4.3 Only Practising Members and those members who hold the rights of a Practising Members who serve on the General Committee may vote at meetings of the General Committee.

5. SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 5.1 The subscriptions for all categories of membership for the year beginning 1 January shall be agreed each year at the previous Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- 5.2 The amount to be allocated from subscriptions to the Association's Bell Restoration Fund and the Association's Training Fund for the current year of operation shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- 5.3 Subscriptions shall be due on 1 January.
- 5.4 Practising Members aged 18 years and below shall pay 50% of the annual subscription.
- 5.5 Any Member whose subscription is unpaid by 1st March of the year in which it is due, shall cease to be a member of the Association until the subscription for the year and any subsequent years is paid.
- 5.6 A lapsed Member may choose to be re-elected as a member of the Association at a District Meeting or prior to starting a Peal in which case their membership shall be deemed to have started from the date of re-application and any previous unpaid subscriptions shall no longer need to be paid.
- 5.7 All Members aged 80 years or over shall be entitled to free membership.
- 5.8 Practising Members joining the Association after 30 June shall be entitled to pay only half that year's annual subscription (25% for Practising Members aged 18 or under).
- 5.9 Any Practising Member who is entitled to free membership must confirm their intention to remain a member annually using the online membership registration system or by notifying the Membership Secretary.

6. GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 Governance of the Association shall be vested in a General Committee.
- 6.2 All Officers and District Officers must be Practising Members, or members who hold the same membership rights as a Practising Member, at the time of their election.
- 6.3 All Association Offices shall be open to election at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.
- 6.4 The General Committee shall have the power to co-opt Members if required to fulfil a specific task or provide a skill. Such an appointment shall only remain effective until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 6.5 The General Committee shall consist of the following Association Officers:-
 - Chairman
 - General Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Membership Secretary
 - Safeguarding Officer
 - Training Officer
 - Youth Officer
 - Bell Restoration Officer
 - Central Council Representatives (a maximum of 2 to attend any General Committee meeting in addition to any who may hold another position on the General Committee).
- 6.6 One District Representative for each District, appointed by that District, shall also be part of the General Committee.
- 6.7 Eight members of the General Committee shall form a quorum at any meeting of the General Committee (including those members who may be attending online).
- 6.8 Association Officers fulfilling other elected roles may be invited to attend General Committee meetings as observers.
- 6.9 Other Members or other individuals may be invited to attend a General Committee meeting as an observer/advisor, to support the work of the General Committee.

7. ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

- 7.1 The General Committee shall meet at least twice a year.
- 7.2 The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall take place between 21st March and 30th June.
- 7.3 At the Annual General Meeting the Principal Officers and other Officers forming the General Committee shall be elected.
- 7.4 The number of Representatives of the Association on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers as determined by the Central Council shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.5 The following additional necessary Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting:
- Peal Secretary
 - Publicity Officer
 - Quarter Peal Secretary
 - Librarian
 - Health and Safety Officer
 - Handbook Editor
 - Webmaster.
- 7.6 A Registered Auditor or Independent Examiner will be elected at the Annual General Meeting to verify the accounts at the end of the current year.
- 7.7 Reports of Activities of the Association in the preceding year and a Statement of Accounts shall be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.8 An Extraordinary General Meeting can be convened following a written request signed by either:
- a) 20 Practising Members in total from at least four different Districts of the Association. This includes those Members who hold the same membership rights as a Practising Member.
- or
- b) at least 8 members of the General Committee.
- 7.9 Upon receipt of a written request for an Extraordinary General Meeting, the General Secretary will convene the meeting at the soonest opportunity but not less than 28 days after receipt of a written request and within 8 weeks of receiving the request.

- 7.10 Notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be published as soon as possible after receipt of the written request, and at least 21 days before the meeting, on the KCACR website and shall be notified to all District Secretaries. The Association will also attempt to notify by email all those Members who have consented to receive email communications from the Association.
- 7.10 No business shall be transacted at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting unless a quorum of 25 Practising Members, including those Members who hold the same membership rights as a Practising Member, is present.

8. DISTRICTS

- 8.1 The Association shall operate in six Districts as determined by the General Committee and known as the Ashford, Canterbury, Lewisham, Maidstone, Rochester and Tonbridge Districts.
- 8.2 No tower shall be transferred from one District to another without the approval of the General Committee.
- 8.2 A meeting shall be held quarterly in each District to discuss Association business.
- 8.3 The quarterly meeting of each District immediately before the General Committee meeting in November or December shall be the Annual District Meeting.
- 8.4 At the Annual District Meeting, a District Secretary shall be elected. The District Secretaries (or other nominated District Officers where applicable) shall:-
- Disseminate communications from the Association to District members
 - Make annual reports to the General Secretary for presentation to the General Committee at the November or December meeting.
- 8.5 At the Annual District Meeting, one District Representative to serve on the General Committee for the ensuing year shall also be elected. The District Representative shall:-
- Inform District meetings of matters discussed and approved by the General Committee
 - Bring appropriate District matters to the General Committee for discussion.

8.6 Other District Officers may be elected at the discretion of District members. If a District committee is convened the District Secretary and District Representative shall automatically be members of any such committee.

9. FINANCES

- 9.1 The Principal Officers shall be the Trustees of the Association's General Fund.
- 9.2 The Trustees shall have the power to invest or otherwise deal with such sums as the General Committee of the Association may place in their hands in such manner as the General Committee or any subcommittee appointed for the purpose by the General Committee shall direct.
- 9.3 Any two of the Trustees may sign cheques drawn on the Association's General Fund.
- 9.4 The Treasurer may also make payments drawn electronically on this fund up to the value of £1500 as required with the agreement of at least one other Trustee in writing or email.
- 9.5 The Treasurer may only make payments of amounts greater than £1500 with the agreement of the General Committee.
- 9.6 A monthly up-to-date balance sheet of the General Fund will be given to the other two Trustees.
- 9.7 In the event that the Treasurer be unable to administer the fund, e.g. through incapacitation, the remaining Trustees may administer the account or appoint another person to administer it under their direction, pending the return of the Treasurer.
- 9.8 The Treasurer shall prepare a Balance Sheet as at 31 December in each year and an Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending on that date.
- 9.9 The Association Accounts shall be examined each year by a Registered Auditor or Independent Examiner.
- 9.10 In the event of the dissolution of the Association, following the settlement of any debts owed by the Association, the assets of the Association shall be distributed equally between the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and the Association of Ringing Teachers with the express direction that the funds are used towards the furtherance of change ringing.

10. EXPENSES

10.1 Reasonable expenses as detailed in the Expenses Policy shall be available to Members.

11. PEALS

11.1 Peals rung by bands made up entirely of Members of the Association shall be credited to the Association and printed in the Handbook only if the details of compositions on seven bells and above are received by the Peal Secretary within two months of the performance or by 31st January of the following year, whichever is the sooner.

11.2 Prior to starting for a peal to be credited to the Association and including non-members of the Association and provided the majority of the band have rights as Practising Members, those Members must invite the remainder to become Members of the Association.

a) Non-Members resident within the Association's area may be elected a Practising Member by those Members participating in the peal and must register using the online membership facility as a Practising Members following ratification at the next meeting in the District in which the Member resides.

b) Non-Members not resident within the Association's area may be elected a Non-Resident Life Member by those Members participating in the peal and must register using the online membership facility. Subscriptions must be completed within 1 month of the peal being rung.

c) The names of new Members shall be collected at the time of the election and passed to the Peal Secretary within two months of the performance or by 31st January of the following year, whichever is the sooner.

12. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS / TERMINATION / SUSPENSION FROM OR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

12.1 All Members are expected to follow all such local guidance and safeguarding policies as required by any towers where they ring and, where appropriate, to adhere to the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures of the respective diocese in which they ring. Failure to do so, even in the context of non-KCACR ringing activities, may result in termination of membership.

- 12.2 Any Member may be suspended or have their membership terminated on the grounds that they have by word, action or negligence brought the Association into disrepute. This covers all activities conducted by Members, either associated with the KCACR, or which might be reasonably considered to affect their membership of this territorial ringing Association.
- 12.3 If, in the unanimous opinion of all the Principal Officers, any Officer or District Officer of the Association is found unfit to hold office or fails to carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the Principal Officers, the Principal Officers shall have the power to suspend the Officer or District Officer immediately, advising them of the reasons for suspension and confirming these in writing within seven days.
- 12.4 If, in the unanimous opinion of the remainder of the General Committee, any Principal Officer of the Association is found unfit to hold office or fails to carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the remainder of the General Committee, the remaining Principal Officers shall have the power to suspend that Officer immediately, advising them of the reasons for suspension and confirming these in writing within seven days. The decision of the remaining Principal Officers must be unanimous.
- 12.5 The procedures by which a Member may be suspended or removed from either elected office or membership, shall be as follows:
- a) If in the unanimous opinion of the Principal Officers a Member has committed acts which have or are likely to damage the reputation of the Association, then their membership may be suspended with immediate effect, advising them of the reasons for suspension and confirming these in writing within seven days.
 - b) All suspensions shall be reviewed and confirmed or rejected at a meeting of the General Committee, which shall be convened within 2 months of the suspension, whose decision shall be final.
 - i) Members and Officers who are suspended may lodge an appeal and shall be invited to this meeting and given the opportunity to make representation to the General Committee either in person or through an intermediary (who shall not be a member of the General Committee) prior to the General Committee making their determination on termination or reinstatement.

- ii) In the event of the suspension on the grounds that an Officer is failing to carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the Principal Officer being upheld by not less than three quarters of the General Committee, that Officer will be required to relinquish the post that they held and a record to that effect shall be added to the record of the suspension in the confidential Minutes of the General Committee.
 - iii) In the event of the suspension on the grounds that a Member has committed acts which have or are likely to damage the reputation of the Association, Membership or Office shall be terminated if not less than three quarters of the General Committee members present vote in favour of the termination. Terminated members shall forfeit any payment(s) made to the Association.
 - iv) All suspensions, terminations and re-instatements shall be recorded in confidential Minutes of the General Committee.
- c) Terminated members may not seek readmission to the Association until at least three years after the date of termination of membership or, in the case of conviction and a custodial sentence, three years after their release, and then not until a formal application supported by at least two members has been considered by the General Committee and approved by not less than three quarters of the Committee members present.
- d) Those terminated members whose application to re-join has been approved must present themselves at a District Meeting for re-election and may not be re-elected by any other form (i.e. by Belfry election prior to a peal).
- e) Where an Officer or District Officer has had their office terminated under these rules, they shall not be eligible to stand for election to office for at least two years after termination, and then not until a formal application supported by at least two Members has been considered by the General Committee and approved by not less than three quarters of the General Committee members present. The consideration should include a review of their conduct in relation to the original causes of concern.
- f) Where an Officer or District Officer has had their office suspended under these rules, they shall not be eligible to stand for election to office for at least two years after termination, and then not until a formal application supported by at least two Members has been considered by the General Committee and approved by not less than three quarters of the General Committee members present.

13. AMENDMENTS TO RULES

13.1 No alteration to these Rules shall be made except at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association.

13.2 Notice of any proposed alteration to these Rules must be received by the General Secretary in writing signed by either:

a) 20 Practising Members in total from at least four different Districts of the Association. This includes those Members who hold the same membership rights as a Practising Member.

or

b) at least 8 members of the General Committee.

13.3 Upon receipt of a written request for an alteration to these Rules, the General Secretary will either:

a) if the request is received less than 8 weeks but more than 4 weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting, publish details as soon as possible after receipt of the written request and at least 21 days before the Annual General Meeting in order that the rule change can be discussed at this meeting.

Notice shall be posted on the KCACR website and shall be notified to all District Secretaries. The Association will also attempt to notify by email all those Members who have consented to receive email communications from the Association.

or

b) if the request is received more than 8 weeks prior to or within 4 weeks of the date of the Annual General Meeting, follow the guidance in these rules for the convening of an Extraordinary General Meeting.

13.4 When a rule has been discussed and voted upon at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting it will not be discussed and voted on again for a minimum of three years unless proposed by either, at least twenty Practising Members in total from at least four different Districts, or at least a quorum of the General Committee.

14. REVIEW OF RULES

14.1 The rules will be formally reviewed by the General Committee at least every five years and the results of this review shall be reported, together with any proposed updates or amendments, at the following AGM.

END