

## Bellringing Risk Assessment

### October 2023

Area of Risk	Risk identified	Actions to take to mitigate risk	Notes
External pathways	Slips, Trips, Falls Abduction/Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ringers to not enter church alone at night.</li> <li>First ringers present to ensure all external lights are working. This includes porch.</li> </ul>	The condition of paths and lighting is the responsibility of the church. Report defects in lighting or path condition as soon as possible to Churchwardens.
Low lighting level in church	Slips, Trips, Falls Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First ringers to check lighting is on before allowing other ringers/visitors entry.</li> </ul>	Lighting is checked regularly as part of buildings check. Report any defects as soon as possible to the Churchwardens.
Carpets and flagstones	Slips, Trips, Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all visitors are aware that surfaces are uneven.</li> </ul>	It is the responsibility of the church to ensure any appropriate signage is in place notifying of uneven surfaces. Report any defects to the Churchwardens.
Emergency exits	Exit during emergency evacuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure front door opens and closes with ease.</li> <li>Unlock internal vestry door at every ringing session. External door to remain closed. It can be opened in an emergency.</li> <li>Ensure all ringers, visitors, and contractors are made aware of emergency exits from the church, and the tower in particular.</li> </ul>	<p>It is the responsibility of the church to ensure all doors can be opened in an emergency and any signage is in place. Report any defects to the Churchwardens.</p> <p>The only emergency exit from the tower is via the staircase leading to the balcony.</p>
Stairs	Slips, Trips, Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stairs are steep and should be noted to all visitors and contractors prior to attending the church.</li> <li>Handrails in place either side should be noted to all.</li> </ul>	It is the responsibility of the church to ensure any appropriate signage is in place notifying of steep stairs. Report any defects to the Churchwardens.

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Balcony safety	Slips, Trips, Falls. Fall from height. Crushing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No attempts to stand or climb on any furniture on the balcony should be made.</li> <li>Keep all throughfares clear and free of personal possessions and bellringing equipment.</li> <li>Close the balcony gate whenever anybody is present on the balcony, no matter for what length of time.</li> <li>As a rule, the balcony can comfortably accommodate six persons. If this number is likely to be exceeded, the Tower Captain, or their designate in their absence, should ask others to wait downstairs until space becomes available .</li> </ul>	
Ringing Chamber safety	Injuries including death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apart from training or in the case of an emergency, only one ringer shall ring per bell rope.</li> <li>Unless absolutely necessary (i.e.: a ringer is supporting another ringer through 'over the shoulder' coaching), no other persons should be present in the chamber during a ringing session.</li> <li>All bells shall be left in the down position at the end of each ringing session. Ropes must be returned to the spider, except from the 'two' which shall be tied as a 'sanctus'</li> </ul>	<p>Bells may be left in the up position in extreme circumstances, such as when it is not appropriate to ring up between the end of one ringing session and the beginning of the next occasion. In this instance, all ropes must be pulled up into the belfry.</p> <p>The ringing chamber can be a dangerous place and cannot be locked. Extreme caution must be taken at all times.</p>

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		<p>bell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All personal possessions and equipment shall be safely stowed so as not to cause injury by creating trip hazards or being caught by a rope.</li> <li>• The number of keys for accessing the belfry shall be limited.</li> <li>• Curtains to be closed when ringing sessions are not in progress.</li> </ul>	<p>Whilst the closing of curtains does not prevent access to the chamber, it can act as a deterrent.</p>
<p>Access to second floor of tower and belfry (storage and clock areas included)</p>	<p>Injuries including death</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the belfry and storage areas limited and authorised by Tower Captain or Vicar only (or appropriate designate).</li> <li>• Areas should only be accessed by those with a genuine need to and extreme caution taken on ladders.</li> <li>• Ensure trapdoor to belfry is locked at all times apart from when access is required.</li> </ul>	<p>Where access to the belfry is required it is normal practice to have two ringers present. The padlock must not be left unlocked if both ringers enter the belfry.</p>
<p>Removing and replacing resources on upper floors of tower</p>	<p>Injuries including death</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caution should be taken when transporting resources and materials between the ground floor and upper floors due to the steepness of the stairs and ladders.</li> <li>• Share lifting duties where necessary.</li> <li>• Between the chamber and belfry/storage area items two persons should be present to lift and receive the items.</li> </ul>	

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<p>General safety and security</p>	<p>Slips, Trips, Falls Unwarranted access. Electrocution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all doors are secured at the end of each ringing session and the lights are turned off.</li> <li>• Keys shall be limited to key personnel.</li> <li>• Any and all items of electrical equipment in the tower shall be included on the church's PAT testing annually.</li> <li>• Ensure all storage areas are kept tidy with ropes and handbells in particular locked away so as to avoid trip hazards during but not exclusively for maintenance periods.</li> </ul>	<p>Responsibility for communication of PAT testing and similar matters lies between Tower Captain and Churchwardens.</p>
<p>Safeguarding and Child Protection</p>	<p>Inappropriate relationships being established between young person and adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Permission to learn to ring' form signed by parent, giving details of medical conditions and emergency contacts. A copy of details shall be held securely in the tower.</li> <li>• During tutoring sessions, a minimum of two adults shall be present at all times, one of each gender, and/or one tutor and a parent/guardian.</li> <li>• Central Council Guidance notes available and guidance notes printed in the back cover of the Ringers' Diary.</li> <li>• Central Council information leaflet 'Protecting Young Ringers' is displayed in ringing room which lists</li> </ul>	

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		<p>the responsible person for safeguarding at this tower.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A copy of the church safeguarding policy is displayed with contact details.</li> <li>• A designated safeguarding officer is identified.</li> <li>• A register is kept of all adults present during any ringing sessions where young people are present.</li> </ul>	
Behaviour	<p>Horseplay Disagreements Challenging behaviour</p> <p>All resulting in negative atmosphere and potential injury.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults are expected to behave appropriately at all times.</li> <li>• In circumstances where behaviour is not deemed appropriate, a ringer can be asked to sit out for a period of ringing or be asked to leave the ringing session.</li> <li>• For any workshops with young people, clear guidelines will be explained prior to the session. Any poor behaviour will result in a first warning, then a request to sit out, then removal from the session. In extreme circumstances, an immediate removal will be actioned/authorised by the Tower Captain.</li> </ul>	<p>It is the responsibility of the Tower Captain to maintain a calm, positive, safe, and supportive atmosphere.</p>

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Fire	Danger of death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the fire extinguisher for the chamber/balcony is in place and not tampered with.</li> <li>• All adults should familiarise themselves with the location of fire fighting equipment.</li> <li>• Smoking is not permitted in the building nor immediately outside.</li> <li>• A register shall be held in case of an emergency.</li> </ul>	<p>Appropriate fire fighting equipment is provided throughout the premises and serviced regularly. It is the responsibility of the church to ensure all equipment is maintained. Any defects to be reported to the Churchwardens immediately.</p>
Medical emergency	Injuries or death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A stocked and regularly maintained first aid kit shall be held and accessible during ringing sessions.</li> <li>• An accident shall be held in line with GDPR rules.</li> <li>• Emergency contact details for the church shall be prominently on display at all times.</li> <li>• A minimum of one working mobile phone must be present at all times in order to call emergency services.</li> <li>• New ringers and visitors shall be made aware of any necessary details relevant to this risk assessment and their time in the tower in order to best safeguard them.</li> </ul>	<p>Equipment should be checked regularly. The Tower Captain is responsible for this but may delegate as appropriate.</p> <p>Serious accidents and injuries shall be reported to the church's representative.</p>

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<p>Moving ropes</p>	<p>Injury or death</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors and non-ringers instructed not to touch the ropes.</li> <li>• All persons present in the ringing chamber who are not ringing to be instructed to keep feet firmly on the floor.</li> <li>• Removal of loose clothing such as ties, scarves etc prior to ringing.</li> <li>• Learners are closely supervised by a competent instructor.</li> <li>• Care taken when standing on a box to ensure box is correctly positioned and ringers feet are centrally placed on box ensuring toes do not overhang the front of the box.</li> <li>• Ropes to be maintained to minimize the risk of a broken rope.</li> <li>• All ringers to be instructed on the discipline of remaining still whilst ringing and not crossing the chamber whilst ringing is in progress.</li> <li>• All learners to be properly supervised.</li> <li>• All ropes to be tied after each ring when a ringer steps away from the rope.</li> <li>• Keep rope paths clear of furniture and personal belongings.</li> <li>• Tie all ropes to the spider at the end</li> </ul>	
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		of the ringing session, except the two which will be tied as a sanctus bell. Where bells are left up, bells to be hoisted to the belfry.	
Mechanical failures	Injury including death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stays to be checked regularly for incipient cracking and maintained as necessary.</li> <li>• Ropes to be checked regularly for wear and tear. Appropriate records kept with remedial actions noted.</li> <li>• Learners to be instructed in the correct action to take in the event of a broken rope, stay, or missed sally.</li> </ul>	
Handbells rehearsals, performances, and Outreach workshops	Injury from bell cases Injury from bells Injuries to self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure user is able to carry equipment and where extra support is required, request it.</li> <li>• Loading and unloading vehicles must be exercised with extreme caution to avoid dropping the bells or overstretching.</li> <li>• Bells should be placed on a stable table on firm ground.</li> <li>• To avoid damage to the bells and prevent them rolling off the table, a padded cushion should be in place before the bells are laid out.</li> <li>• All users must be instructed on the careful handling of the bells and</li> </ul>	





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		<p>appropriate striking method prior to use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seating should be made available if the band are to be ringing for lengthy periods.</li><li>• Sufficient breaks should be included and/or extra ringers available if ringing sessions are extended in order to avoid RSI.</li><li>• For workshops notably with children and young people, behaviour expectations shall be made clear prior to their handling of any equipment.</li></ul>	
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Signed:

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Hugh Deam  
Tower Captain

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Skye Denno  
Vicar, Chair of Bellringers

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Date