

## **TROYTE RINGING CENTRE:**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY:**

Health and safety become issues when people interact with the spaces, equipment and other people available to the Troyte Ringing Centre. The spaces available to us are the meeting rooms and public facilities, the ringing chambers and bell chambers and their means of access and egress. The equipment available to us include, bells and bell ropes and their ancillary equipment, practice bells and simulators, tables and chairs and simple catering equipment. The people interacting with these spaces and equipment include visitors, learners, helpers and our trustees..

### **THE SPACES AVAILABLE TO TRC:**

The spaces available to us within the churches of Bampton and Huntsham are the responsibility of the appropriate Parochial Church Council. The Troyte Ringing Centre uses those spaces and their means of access and egress within the terms of written agreements with each PCC. TRC undertakes detailed written risk assessments associated with each of the spaces available to us and has identified the levels of risk associated with the activities undertaken within each space. Where TRC considers that risk levels could be reduced written reports are made to the appropriate PCC with suggested actions aimed at reducing the risk in each case. TRC will undertake such actions as the appropriate PCC considers necessary provided appropriate permission is given and the necessary funds are available.

When TRC uses spaces in other buildings we undertake risk assessments of those spaces to which we are given access. For example it is unlikely that TRC would be given access to bell chambers in towers other than Bampton and Huntsham which are made available to us for specific ringing events. Thus it would not be possible for us to undertake risk assessments in those spaces.

### **LONE WORKING:**

As a general principle TRC does not approve of lone working in any of the spaces available to us. However there will be times when access is required by competent individuals without the presence of a second person. The following lone working procedure has been agreed. It is permissible for a person considered competent by a TRC trustee to:

- unlock and make ready a ringing chamber for visiting ringers. In this case making ready involves putting on electric lights, heaters and de-humidifiers as appropriate. It also involves pulling off clock chimes and closing louvres and ensuring that bell ropes are ready for visitors to ring.
- visit a bell chamber for the purpose of making a visual check of the bells and their ancillary equipment, or to make a simple adjustment to the length of a bell rope, provided there is another competent person present in the ringing chamber below.
- prepare tea and coffee making equipment for use by visitors

In each of these cases the individual concerned shall have given prior notice to another person of their intentions and an indication of the time the tasks are likely to take. The individual will as soon as is reasonably practical inform that other person that they have completed the appropriate tasks safely and are now accompanied by other competent persons. It is anticipated that these simple tasks will not involve finding or using specialist equipment, and will be completed within one hour.

### **THE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO TRC:**

Tower bells and their ancillary equipment are located within each bell chamber. Access to these bell chambers, the bells and their ancillary equipment is restricted. TRC will use a competent person to inspect the equipment within these bell chambers not less frequently than once every six calendar months. Written reports of these inspections are kept and filed. These written reports identify the simple cleaning and maintenance work required which are the responsibility of TRC and these tasks are then undertaken by persons considered by TRC trustees to be competent to complete such tasks. These competent persons, normally referred to as “steeple keepers”, receive such training as TRC trustees consider appropriate for the tasks identified. Tasks which are beyond the capabilities of steeple keepers are contracted out to appropriate commercial bell hangers and the work allocated to them is completed within the term of written contracts.

The ringing chambers are the spaces which are occupied when the bells are rung. The equipment contained within these spaces includes the lower ends of bell ropes, wires which control the clock chimes, the means of opening and closing sound controls systems where these are fitted, switches which operate electric lights, heaters and de-humidifiers, warning lights regarding the access to and use of other spaces, including staircases and clock and bell chambers, simulators and computers linked with practice bells when these are located within the ringing chambers. The person supervising the ringing on each occasion is responsible for checking that all equipment within the ringing chamber is operational and safe to use. Persons appointed by TRC trustees shall keep the ringing chambers clean and tidy and ensure that written reports are made of any equipment which is in need of replacement, maintenance or repair.

The base of each tower contains simple catering equipment used by TRC including electric kettles, water boilers and microwave ovens. This equipment receives annual portable appliance tests as part of the appropriate PCC’s PAT programme. TRC has agreed that if for any reason this equipment has not been tested within the last twelve months TRC will arrange appropriate tests.

### **THE PEOPLE USING THESE SPACES AND EQUIPMENT:**

The people who will occupy these spaces and will expect to use the equipment within the ringing chambers, fall within the following categories: visitors, learners and their carers or friends, users, helpers, instructors, and trustees. Each of these groups has different needs and responsibilities as defined below:

## **Visitors:**

Visitors are people who hear the bells ringing and/or seek to enter the ringing chamber with the intention of finding out what is happening or why it is happening at this particular time. They may or may not have knowledge or experience of tower bell ringing. Their visit may or may not have been arranged in advance. They should be met and escorted to a safe place and if necessary ringing should cease whilst this action is safely completed. Visitors should always be accompanied by a competent person until it is clearly established that they are competent ringers and understand the risks associated with ringing tower bells full circle. Their visit and the reasons for it should be recorded in the attendance book together with their name and address if considered appropriate.

Visitors with limited prior knowledge of tower bell ringing should be advised of the risks associated with the activities taking place during their visit and of the actions they should take to minimise the risk of accidents.

## **Learners and their carers or friends:**

Learners should be introduced to tower bell ringing through demonstrations by competent ringers and an induction programme describing what is involved in ringing a tower bell full circle and how the learning process will be organised. Where parents, carers or friends are present during these demonstrations and induction programmes it should be made clear who is responsible for giving permission for the learner to receive instruction and copies of the appropriate forms handed out and explained. Instruction should not start until the appropriate responsible person has given written permission and invited to attend training sessions.

The early stages of learning to handle a bell will include detailed guidance of the health and safety issues associated with ringing a bell full circle. Individual training records will highlight areas where health and safety issues require remedial action and will state the actions taken to develop safe and healthy practices.

## **Users:**

Users are those ringers who have been accepted for attendance at TRC group practices and practical ringing events. It is recognised that some of these users will have bell handling difficulties which influence their performance and which raise specific problems regarding personal health and safety and the safety of equipment and other users ringing in close proximity to them. Those users present who are not well known to instructors and helpers, should have their performance carefully monitored during the early stages of each event and major handling problems highlighted and discussed as soon as possible. These are sensitive issues which require careful and sympathetic management. The existence of gross handling difficulties is often the result of poor prior instruction and many users are not aware that their performance is being marred by the way in which they were taught to ring.

**Helpers:**

TRC uses a significant number of helpers each with their own particular skills and abilities. The skills and abilities required will vary according to the content of the event. Helpers need to pay particular attention to users attempting to increase their skills and abilities without having sufficient awareness of the challenges they will face. The person responsible for designing and running the event may need to describe in some detail the role of the helpers during the event and be satisfied that the helpers understand their role before the event starts.

**Instructors:**

The event documentation should highlight the role of helper and participant. It should also identify the prior knowledge and experience required of each. Where participants are not known to the instructor or the helpers, care should be taken to ensure that each participant and their relevant helpers understand the risks and the skills required to minimise the hazards associated with the event. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that the ringing chamber is not overcrowded and the number of participants and helpers is appropriate for the safe use of the required equipment.

**Trustees:**

At least one of the TRC trustees should attend each event in order to evaluate the health and safety procedures in place during the event. Special requirements should be highlighted in the event documentation and a written evaluation made of any particular health and safety issues that arise during the event. Where specific health and safety issues have been identified these should be highlighted in the appropriate Accident and Incident book and event documentation revised before the event is repeated.

Trustees should report any accident or incident occurring during a TRC event at the next TRC trustees meeting and ensure that any remedial action required has been identified and appropriate action taken.