

**THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST**  
**CODE OF PRACTICE RELATING TO THE CARE AND USE OF BELLS IN**  
**TRUST CHURCHES**

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1. The Churches Conservation Trust is very pleased when bells within its churches are rung. We will seek to be as helpful as possible with all requests. However, some of our towers and their bells are fragile and these guidelines offer important advice. This tower and these bells are part of the church building. Although the church is not in regular use it remains consecrated to the service of God, and we aim to ensure that its use is appropriate.

**A. Background**

2. The church and its bells are the responsibility of the Trust. Whenever we can we are happy to encourage occasional ringing, consistent with the use of the church building for worship and other suitable events (see ‘Services in Trust Churches’). In certain cases this will not be possible, for example where the bells are considered unsafe for ringing or where the structure of the tower is considered unfit for the bells to be rung. In such cases the Trust’s decision must be complied with for the safety of the bells and all concerned.

There will also be occasions when unavoidable work to the church/tower will necessitate the bells not being rung for the duration of the works or longer. The Trust will, whenever possible, give reasonable notice of occasions which necessitate silencing the bells. As a general rule the Trust does not undertake significant programmes of repair to the bells in its churches. However, there may be cases where it will consider undertaking minor repairs where the installation as a whole is in good order.

**B. Permission to Ring**

3. The Trust will appoint a Custodian to regulate the ringing of the bells and to maintain the installation in good order, for example to lubricate the bearings and other frictional parts; the adjustment of ropes and the replacement of stays and the checking of installation generally, paying particular attention to the tightness of nuts and bolts. No other work must be undertaken without the prior permission of the Trust. Any necessary work must, in the first instance, be referred to the relevant Field Officer of the Trust at: 1 West Smithfield, London, EC1A 9EE. Tel: 020 7213 0660.
4. Where possible and when requested by the incumbent of the parish, the Trust may give permission for the bells to be rung for occasional services. However, jurisdiction over the bells or when they shall or shall not be rung is a matter for the Trust and instances of doubt or dispute must be referred to the Trust. As a matter of courtesy the incumbent should be advised of all occasions on which ringing is to take place.
5. The Custodian may include his/her name and address in the local ringing association report so that a point-of-contact may be established within the ringing fraternity. The Custodian is expected to take reasonable steps to accommodate visiting ringers where the bells can be safely rung, having been satisfied that visiting ringers are suitably competent and experienced. (It should be borne in mind that bells in Trust churches, many of which are not hung on modern bearings, can be difficult to handle.)

6. The frequency of ringing will depend on local circumstances. However, it is generally accepted that this will be less than at churches in regular use. The Custodian should seek the views of those living near to the church, especially when the bells are to be used for full peals and extended ringing. e.g. an association meeting or other ringing likely to be in excess of one hour in duration.

### **C. Ringling the Bells Safely**

7. All ringing that takes place on bells in a Trust church is undertaken at the individual ringer's risk. A competent member of the band of ringers should satisfy himself/herself that the bells are safe to be rung. In cases of doubt the bells must not be rung and the matter referred to the Trust. Under certain insurance provisions some bands of ringers belonging to an active church are covered for ringing in other churches; this is not always the case and should be established by the ringers beforehand.
8. All avoidable damage to the bells and fittings must be made good at the expense of the ringer or ringers responsible for such damage.
9. The bells must never be left in the 'UP' position.
10. Where ringing takes place in the church, the ropes must be pulled up and secured out-of-reach of unauthorised persons. Rope spiders, where these exist, must be anchored within the security of the locked tower so that they cannot be lowered when the Custodian or other authorised person is not present.

### **D. Donations**

11. We invite all visiting ringers and those ringing peals and quarter peals to leave a donation. The Custodian will receive such money, which will be used by the Trust at churches in our care to benefit the maintenance and repair of Trust bells and their fittings. Donations will vary from the number of ringers in each party and the length of ringing but it is expected that a minimum donation of £1 per bell is made. Please make cheques payable to "Central Board of Finance".
12. A copy of this Code of Practice must be displayed in a prominent position within the ringing chamber.

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