



# **The York Colleges Guild of Bellringers**

## **Constitution**

### **1. Name**

The Society shall be known as the York Colleges Guild of Bellringers.

### **2. Purpose**

The York Colleges Guild of Bellringers shall exist to promote the ringing of bells by members of the further and higher education institutions in the York area. The definition 'bells' includes both tower (church) bells and hand bells. The guild should aim to recruit both those with prior experience of bell ringing, and those with no previous experience.

### **3. Membership**

It is envisaged that the majority of members will be students attending a further or higher education institution in the York area (primarily, but not limited to, the University of York and the University College of York St John). It is recognised that there may be others who wish to be members, particularly but not limited to former students who have remained in the area. It is perfectly acceptable for such people to be full members of the guild.

Members shall be required to pay an annual subscription, which shall be collected at the beginning of the academic year and shall entitle them to membership until the end of that academic year. A person is considered to be a member once they have paid their subscription. If they do not attend any guild events for a whole university term, they are considered to have resigned. If they subsequently attend at least three events in any one term, their membership is automatically reactivated.

### **4. Organisation**

As the ringing of tower and hand bells are two very different activities, requiring different skills and often involving different people, the guild shall be divided into two parts – one for tower bells, and one for hand bells. Members join the guild as a whole, and it is up to them to decide whether they wish to participate in both tower and hand bell ringing, or only one of these.

Given that the two groups exist as part of the same guild, there shall be one management committee which oversees the activities of both groups.

The management committee shall comprise the following officers:

**President** – this is an honorary position. The President shall chair the AGM and any EGMs which take place. Other than this, the President shall have little involvement in the day-to-day running of the guild.

**Chairperson** – who shall chair the meetings of the guild committee. The Chairperson shall also, in consultation with the two Ringing Masters, be responsible for recruitment.

**Secretary** – who shall handle the guild's correspondence, take minutes of meetings, maintain records of present and past members and keep such other records as are necessary. The Secretary shall also be responsible for ensuring that the annual Dinner Day Weekend, usually held in late June, is organised. They may co-opt others to assist with this if they wish.

**Treasurer** – who shall be responsible for looking after the monies belonging to the guild.

**Webmaster** – who shall maintain the guild's website. The Webmaster should have sufficient technical skills to be able to carry out this position adequately. It should also be recognised that the website will require a complete re-write every 4-5 years.

**Ringing Master (tower bells)** – who is responsible for the organisation and running of the regular weekly practices and for organising the teaching of learners. They shall also act as the tower bell ringers' representative on the management committee.

**Ringing Master (hand bells)** – who is responsible for the organisation and running of the regular weekly practices and other events, such as concerts. They shall also act as the hand bell ringers' representative on the management committee.

**Events Representatives (2 posts)** - who are responsible for organizing the Annual Dinner Day Weekend in the summer and other social events from time to time (and generally at least once in each term).

There shall also be two further officers who are not members of the committee, viz:

**Deputy Ringing Master (tower bells)** – who shall deputise for the Ringing Master in his/her absence, and assist them as and when required.

**Deputy Ringing Master (hand bells)** – who shall deputise for the Ringing Master in his/her absence, and assist them as and when required.

Either of the deputies may represent their respective Master at a management committee meeting if the Master is unable to be present.

The management committee shall have the power to co-opt other members of the guild as necessary.

The management committee also has responsibility for setting the annual subscription rate. Any increases which are agreed shall come into effect at the beginning of the next academic year.

If a post falls vacant within the year, an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held in order to elect a replacement. At least two weeks' notice shall be given of any such EGM.

## **5. Meetings**

The guild's Annual General Meeting shall be held in February each year. Not less than two weeks' notice shall be given, and all members will be invited to attend. Anyone wishing to stand for office must be proposed and seconded. If more than one nomination is received for any post, a secret ballot shall be held. So far as is possible, any one person should not hold more than one post at any given time. However, it is recognised that in certain circumstances (e.g. when there is a small number of members) it may be advisable or necessary for one person to hold more than one office. Should the situation occur where one person does hold more than one office, they shall only have one vote in any ballot which may take place.

The day-to-day running of the two discrete divisions within the guild shall be left to the respective Ringing Masters and their deputies. Any events which affect all of the guild (e.g. those involving the spending of the guild's funds) shall be referred to the

management committee. It is envisaged that the committee will meet as and when necessary, and not less than once in each university term. Meetings may be called by any member of the management committee, giving not less than a week's notice.

Extraordinary General Meetings of the whole guild may be called by any member of the management committee if they deem it necessary, giving not less than two weeks' notice. It is envisaged that such a meeting would only be called if absolutely essential – e.g. if a post fell vacant and it was necessary to elect a new officer.

Any major decisions affecting the administration of the guild and / or its property shall be made at the AGM or at an EGM.

With all meetings, at least two-thirds of the membership shall be present in order for them to be quorate. For meetings of the guild as a whole this means two-thirds of all current members; for individual committees it means two-thirds of the members of that particular committee. Any motions must be proposed, seconded, and voted on. In order for a motion to be carried, at least two-thirds of those present must vote, and the motion must receive at least a two-thirds majority in favour in order to be passed.

## **6. Property**

The guild owns several items of property. Most of these are records and other such items of little monetary value. However, the guild also possesses two sets of handbells; one of these sets has considerable financial value. Their safe-keeping is the responsibility of the current Ringing Master of the hand bell division of the guild. Should the hand bell division cease to function at any time, the hand bells shall be passed to the President for safe-keeping until such time as they are needed again.

The valuable set of hand bells should always be fully insured. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer and Secretary to ensure that the insurance is not allowed to lapse at any time. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the safe-keeping of insurance certificates and other relevant documentation. The insurance certificates shall be in the name of the President and registered at his home address.

## **7. Finance**

Monies belonging to the guild shall be administered by the Treasurer. The Treasurer may wish to keep a small amount in petty cash, but the majority should be deposited in the guild's bank account. So far as is possible, the Treasurer should always ensure that there are sufficient funds in the account to pay the insurance premium on the hand bells

for the following year. Any income, irrespective of which division of the guild is responsible for raising it, shall go into central funds.

Any decisions regarding the spending of money shall be agreed by a two-thirds majority of the management committee. Insurance of the hand bells is an ongoing obligation, but the committee is responsible for agreeing any other expenditure. Buying music for the hand bells and providing subsidies for outings and social events are the most likely reasons for additional spending.

Small amounts of under £5 per item (and not more than £10 per term) may be spent at the Treasurer's discretion without approval from the committee. Full accounts of all income and expenditure shall be kept by the treasurer and presented at the AGM each year. Prior to the AGM, the accounts shall be audited. It is acceptable for this to be carried out by another member of the guild.

The guild's bank account shall be set up so that two signatures are required on all cheques. The Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer shall all be registered as signatories. The account shall be registered at the President's home address.

### **8. Relationship with other ringers in the York area (tower bells only)**

The guild is slightly unusual amongst university ringing societies in that it does not have a 'home tower'. It therefore relies on being able to use other towers within the York area for its practices and other events. To this end, the guild should aim to foster good relations with other ringers in the area, and members of the guild should be actively encouraged to participate in other ringing in and around the city, particularly Sunday service ringing.

### **9. Amendments to this constitution**

Amendments to this constitution may only be made at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. The usual meeting rules (as stated in the section entitled 'Meetings', above) shall apply. Any proposed amendments shall be circulated to all members at least two weeks' in advance of the meeting.