



St James' Society of Change Ringers

Barrow-in-Furness

Constitution & Rules

1 Name

The Society shall be known as the **St James' Society of Change Ringers** as established in 1877 and identified on page 92 of the original 1877 tower log book.

The Society shall also be known as St James Barrow Bellringers, or Barrow Bells for brevity (e.g. in the tower website and bank accounts).

2 Objectives

The aims of the Society shall be:

a) **To ring the bells of St James the Great:**

- For regular church services especially the main Sunday service;
- For special church services such as weddings and funerals;
- To advance the quality of ringing at St James the Great, including a regular weekly evening practice, and occasional additional special training sessions.
- For secular occasions of national and local importance, such as significant royal events, national celebrations, and town & local community festivities;
- For demonstration and accessibility following the restoration of the bells in 2014, through public open days, and at the request of local institutions and organisations such as schools & colleges, scout/guide association, arts and other organisations.

b) **To protect young and other vulnerable persons** through safeguarding in accordance with rules of the Carlisle Diocese and guidance and policies from affiliated change ringing associations and guilds (see section 4) with the active support from the church.

c) **To protect ringers and visitors** to the tower through

- Maintenance of the bells of St James the Great, and associated frame and fittings.
- Health & safety measures (training/education, use of signs, risk assessments).

d) **To recruit and welcome new ringers** to strengthen the Society and enable all 8 bells to be rung regularly for church services.

e) **To provide a warm welcome and friendly atmosphere** at all times in the tower and on events organised by the Society.

f) **To organise and encourage participation in other social activities** such as meals, walks, visits to other places and towers.

g) **To work with the church and be considerate for the local community**, maintaining reasonable regular ringing times, openly communicating when all ringing takes place, and being considerate to local residents by self-regulation (see section 3)

h) **To promote and foster the English tradition and art of change ringing** in Barrow-in-Furness and the local area by example, and through local media, tower website, and direct engagement (e.g. open days, weddings, baptisms etc.)

i) **To preserve the history and heritage** of the bells and ringing at St James the Great

j) **To grant the requests and support affiliated change ringing associations and guilds** (see section 4) for ringing meetings and other association/guild events where they comply with restrictions outlined in section 3.

k) **To grant the requests of other visiting ringers** to ring the bells for up to 1 hour, and peal requests or other extended ringing where they comply with restrictions outlined in section 3.

l) **Consider the future possibility of restoring the collection of handbells** at St James the Great, and using them for tune or change ringing.

3 Rules and Regulation

This section describes the rules governing the regulation of ringing and how the Society communicates the ringing events at St James the Great with the local community and others. These self-imposed restrictions are intended to ensure the level of ringing is reasonable and not considered excessive, and is in keeping with the ringing at St James since 1877 and other towers across the country.

Regular ringing by members of the Society includes the main Sunday morning service, and practice on Wednesday evening between 7.30pm and 9pm. The church may also use the chimes for additional services. Occasionally the Society will ring the bells for the regular service of Sunday evensong in place of the chimes. The clock chimes hourly between 8am and 8pm with Angelus at noon. See http://www.barrowbells.org.uk/StJames_RegularRinging.html on the tower website.

Additional ringing for weddings and other special services, visiting ringers and other occasions are announced on the tower website events page http://www.barrowbells.org.uk/StJames_events.html

Requests for extended ringing on open bells (in excess of 2 hours without interval) will not normally be granted if there has been another extended ringing session within a month either side.

Peal requests which can take over 3 hours to complete will be restricted to a maximum of 3 in a single year and at least 3 months apart, unless there are exceptional circumstances or significance (such as a royal wedding) that are approved by the church PCC and vicar.

For all non-regular ringing that exceeds 1 hour, houses immediately facing the church (Blake Street, Adelaide Street, Hartington Street) will be leafleted in advance of the ringing to inform them when the ringing will take place and for how long. Houses may decline to be leafleted by contacting the tower captain or by clearly displaying they not want any unsolicited mail.

4 Affiliation

The tower/Society shall be affiliated to the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers, and also the Carlisle Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers and shall support their objectives. Where there is any conflict between the objectives of these affiliated organisations, the Society shall decide which objective to support, or derive a substitute objective at an AGM or EGM.

5 Officers

The Tower Captain is the officer that is appointed (and dismissed) by the PCC. The tower captain is trusted to discharge the duties and responsibilities of the church and incumbent to the best of their personal ability, as a volunteer and with the support of other members of the church including the incumbent, safeguarding officer, and PCC.

The tower captain will be supported in their safeguarding duties for the tower by a minimum of one other tower member (preferably two or more) that where possible will assist or be present during training sessions, meetings, and activities organised by the Society that involve young or other vulnerable persons. When the tower captain is not present, the safeguarding assistant(s) will assume responsibility for safeguarding in place of the tower captain.

The tower captain and all safeguarding assistants shall be DBS cleared, and should have the training in accordance with Carlisle Diocese rules (and in line with the policies and guidance of the central council of church bell ringers and affiliated association/guild). Where this training has not been done, or has expired, the training shall be undertaken at the first possible opportunity, and supported by guild/association and church safeguarding officer.

There are no other formal officers of the Society at this time.

The tower captain may from time to time co-opt member(s) with their consent to carry out a specific task, such as deputising in their place at a ringing practice, organising a social or ringing event, meeting and letting in a visiting band, or organising work on the bells.

6 General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held early in the New Year, and will be chaired by the Tower Captain or his/her nominee. The incumbent and church treasurer will also be invited.

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called upon 7 days notice by any member.

7 Membership

Membership is open to both those who are already able to ring and those who wish to learn. Tuition will be provided free to anyone wishing to learn to ring.

Members include all persons that are:

- Members of LACR or CDGCBR that are attached to St James the Great,
- Persons that are not members of either guild/association but whose home tower is recognised as being St James the Great, Barrow-in-Furness by themselves and the tower captain (e.g. due to their place of residence/proximity to St James, or that they attend tower practices or ringing for services at St James more than other towers).

Members of the Society that can ring safely unassisted are strongly encouraged to ring for Sunday service, although this is not mandatory. Members of the Society are under no obligation to attend services for which they ring at St James the Great; this is a matter for their own personal choice.

Members will be encouraged to consider membership of LACR and/or CDGCBR when they reach a standard of ringing where they are capable of ringing unassisted for service ringing. Membership of either organisation is optional.

The Society should present the learner that reaches this 'Sunday service' standard of ringing with a copy of The New Ringers Handbook (a Central Council of Church Bell Ringers publication) or other suitable bellringing educational publication in recognition of their achievement and to support them in their continued journey and advancement in the art of church bell ringing.

There are no membership fees, but each member is encouraged to consider occasional donation in the tower collection jar to help with maintenance and incidental expenses. For more significant and expensive projects, members will be asked to help with a specific fundraising campaign.

Membership of the Society shall be free and open to all, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, wealth, faith/religion (or none), and all ages that are physically able to ring a bell safely (typically from about 11 years old). We also welcome people with disabilities and will strive to understand what they are capable of achieving and teach them safely. We regret there are some impediments to access to the ringing chamber for traditional English church bell ringing where a person is unable to climb a spiral staircase, but creation of a handbell ringing group may be possible.

Members of the Society shall conduct themselves respectfully and in a manner to enhance the life of the band and the reputation of the art. The Tower Captain shall take appropriate disciplinary action against any member who fails to do so. Any such disciplinary action may be appealed to the Vicar and Churchwardens whose decision shall be final.

Membership shall terminate:

- a) Upon a member giving written notice to that effect to the tower captain
- b) Upon ceasing to be eligible – eligibility for membership is described in the first two paragraphs of this membership section.

8 Finance

CHURCH BELLS BANK ACCOUNT

The church has a bank account specifically for the bells at St James, which it reports along with its other accounts at the annual meeting of the PCC. This account is tax exempt and the church may be able to claim back Gift Aid for qualifying donations to that account. An online donation facility through MyDonate has been set up during the restoration of the bells, and remains available.

Requests for expenditure from the Church Bells Account must be submitted to the church treasurer for consideration and approval of the vicar and PCC.

SOCIETY PETTY CASH

The Society shall hold and maintain its own petty cash funds independently of the church but keep a petty cash ledger, and report the income and expenditure (with receipts) to the church treasurer annually. A copy of the ledger submitted should be made available on the noticeboard in the tower ringing room.

Income will typically be generated through voluntary donations (including donations from visiting ringers), surplus wedding fees, and member fundraising. Annual subscriptions for individuals membership of LACR/CDGCBR will also be deposited, and then collectively paid from the petty cash.

Expenditure will be restricted to those expenses directly incurred in the operation of the Society in line with its objectives (section 2), and including (but not restricted to) costs associated with:

- tower website, domain and email
- tower mobile phone (used solely for purpose of Society business)
- attendance on safeguarding courses (cost of fuel/public transport/any course fees)
- postage, stationery
- teaching materials
- publicity and public events promoting the tower bells and bellringing (such as open days)
- copies of The New Ringers Handbook for reaching Sunday service standard
- maintenance of bells, frame and fittings, and contents of ringing room and new/old belfry
- improvements for access, sound control,
- research and recording/capturing the heritage of the bells and ringing at St James.
- annual contribution to church for electricity

Note: social events organised by the Society should be self-financing and should not be subsidised from petty cash.

Where expense is too large to be covered by the petty cash, the expense will need to be presented to the church treasurer, vicar and PCC for consideration to be paid or reimbursed from the church bells account.

A separate bank account will be opened and used to help manage petty cash and payment of expenses by cheque/card and bank transfer. The tower captain and the church treasurer will be signatories, with an optional additional member of the Society added as signatory to support the tower captain should this be needed. A single signatory is required to operate the account.

When the total funds in the petty cash bank account grow to exceed £500 for an extended period of 3 months or more (without expectation of a reduction through payment of an expense), a transfer of money to the church bells bank account should be made to reduce the sum below £500.

9 Dissolution:

Should the Society cease to exist then all assets, records and property shall be given to the PCC to protect and use for the upkeep and maintenance of the bells, and in order that supporting towers in south Cumbria and visiting ringers may continue to make use of the bells of St James the Great until the Society is reformed.

Advice will also be available to the PCC through liaison with affiliated association/guild for maintenance and safe operation of the bells.

In the event of extended or permanent termination of the Society, records such as the tower log books should be lodged with the local archive and record office on condition that they are returned when/if the Society reforms.

10 Rule Changes

The constitution shall only be changed by vote at an AGM or EGM, and shall require a two thirds majority of members present and a quorum of half of the eligible members in attendance.

Adopted at the EGM on Wednesday 1st November 2017
(with amendment to v1.1 for spelling correction of 'CHURCH' at start of section 8)

J Andrew Pollock
Tower Captain
St James the Great
www.barrowbells.org.uk

