

POLICY FOR THE USE OF THE BELLS ALL SAINT'S CHURCH BIDDENDEN (Approved by the PCC on 09/05/2017)

The purpose of ringing the bells in England

- a) At all times, to the glory of God; and as a reminder to the presence of Christ's Church, militant upon earth.
- b) At designated times, to call the congregation to worship.
- c) To celebrate and mark events of local or national note, whether joy or sorrow.
- d) To maintain in public performance the national musical heritage of English change ringing, to the highest standard of striking and musical performance.
- e) To teach and train all who wish to learn this historic national craft.

Policy Objectives

- a) To ensure that the bells are sufficiently available for ringing to fulfill the above purposes, while
- b) Ensuring that the bells are rung, in accordance with both law and normal custom, so as to avoid becoming an unreasonable nuisance to the community of Biddenden.

Responsibility

The Rector is responsible for giving, or withholding permission, for the bells to be rung, on other than routine weekly service ringing and practice for which no specific permission is required; and will exercise this power in accordance with this policy, adopted by the PCC, which may from time to time, in consultation with the Tower Captain, grant exceptions, or amend or update this policy, any such changes to be duly made public. In the absence of the Rector, the Church Wardens will exercise his powers in this respect. That a proposed session of ringing may be in accordance with this policy does not of itself guarantee that it will be granted, if in the Rector's judgment this would lead to an unreasonable amount of ringing within a short time period, or if it conflicts with other church or community activities, or for any other good and sufficient reason.

Service Ringing

- a) The bells may be rung for up to 1 hour before all services without further permission (general ringing or a quarter peal).
- b) Ringing will not commence before 8.45am.

Practice

- a) There may be a regular practice held each week to finish by 2115 hours.
- b) The Tower Captain may additionally authorize the use of a single bell, or pairs of bells, for the training of beginners in bell handling. Such sessions should normally not exceed one hour or two sessions per week, although the Rector in certain circumstances may permit additional sessions.
- c) The time allocated to service ringing shall not be used for the training of beginners.
- d) The Rector may grant permission for one additional evening practice per calendar month.

Quarter Peals/Peals

- a) The Rector may grant permission for two quarter peal per month to be rung, other than those rung for service.
- b) At the discretion of the Tower Captain, a quarter peal may be rung in place of the regular weekly practice.
- c) No more than three full peals per year shall be rung. There shall always be a minimum of 6 weeks between peals.
- d) Subject to any time restrictions such as the start of a service, any peal attempt, which breaks down before 30 minutes, may be restarted once only. Any attempt which fails up to halfway will not count as a peal and may be re-booked if the band so wish. Any peal, which fails after halfway shall count towards the total for the year.

Visiting Bands

The Rector may grant permission for visiting bands of ringers to use the bells in intermittent touches for up to one and a quarter hours and may also, once a year, permit a Saturday local district ringing meeting, with intermittent ringing in the afternoon of one and a half hours and with ringing in evening of up to two hours, to finish not later than 2100 hours.

Weddings and other special occasions

- a) The Rector may request the bells to be rung before and after any wedding, if a band can be raised.
- b) In accordance with immemorial custom, each New Year may be rung in before and after midnight on 31st December.

Conclusion

This policy will provide sufficient ringing time to train beginners, have adequate practice and performance time, and play a full role in the Kent County Association of Change Ringers, whilst avoiding any unreasonable nuisance to the community of Biddenden. A copy will be made available to any complainant.