

SUSSEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS

Registered Charity No. 268588

Rules (updated May 2025)

In all cases where the rules read 'he' this should be deemed to mean 'he' or 'she'

- 1) The Association shall be called 'The Sussex County Association of Change Ringers' (SCACR) and shall be registered as a charity and comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 or any other statutory modifications for the time being in force.

The Association shall be affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and abide by the Rules of the Council.

- 2) The Aims of the Association are to be of service to the Church in Sussex within the Diocese of Chichester by:
 - promoting the ringing of church bells to call people to worship
 - encouraging the recruitment and training of all ringers and advancing the art of change ringing
 - supporting the proper care and use of church bells and belfries
 - providing support to projects to restore, maintain or improve existing bells and the towers and belfries housing them, and seeking the preservation of bells from redundant churches for the purpose of ringing in churches.

Membership of the Association

- 3) Membership is open to all bell ringers in Sussex. Ringers may apply to join the Association subject to submission of a completed application form and payment of the annual subscription.
- 4) A Ringing Member pays an annual subscription and resides in the county, or is a regular ringer within Sussex although residing outside the county.
- 5) A Long Service Member is a Ringing Member with 50 years uninterrupted paid membership of the Association. He will be listed as such on the annual subscription form and in the Annual Report. Such members shall not be required to pay an annual subscription.
- 6) An Honorary Life Member, not necessarily a ringer, may be elected at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for outstanding or distinguished service to the Association or to the art of ringing in general. Such members shall not be required to pay an annual subscription.
- 7) A Non-Resident Member is not resident nor a regular ringer within Sussex. Any non-member attempting to ring a peal for the Association must become a member, by submission of a completed application form and payment of the Non-Resident Member subscription (membership application to be approved and payment to be received within 14 days of the peal, from 1st January 2026). Any Ringing Member with five years membership will, on leaving the county, automatically become a Non-Resident Member without further payment.
- 8) An Associate Member is a non-ringer with a connection to the Association or any tower within the county and pays an annual subscription equal to that of a Ringing Member.
- 9) The Bishop of Chichester shall be invited to be President.
- 10) The Bishops of Horsham and Lewes, the Dean of Chichester and the Archdeacons within the Diocese of Chichester shall be invited to be Vice Presidents. Other Vice Presidents may be elected for life at an AGM.
- 11) Nominations for Vice Presidents and for Honorary Life Members must be submitted to the General Secretary by the March General Committee Meeting. Election will be by ballot at the AGM and requires a majority of two thirds of the voting members present.

Subscriptions

- 12) Annual subscription fees shall be determined by the Finance Committee and ratified at the AGM.

- 13) Annual subscriptions become due on joining the Association and thereafter on 1st January of each year. If a subscription remains unpaid for 3 months after the due date, membership will lapse.
- 14) Any member aged under 18 on 1 January will pay 50% of the annual subscription for that year.

Association Structure

- 15) The Association will be formed into four Districts (Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western) whose purpose will be to:

- a) Organise activities and business which achieve the Aims of the Association
- b) Encourage and support the development of ringing networks and network leaders

Each District shall annually in February elect a District Secretary, and may elect additional members to form a District Committee to assist the District Secretary. Each District shall also elect two representatives to attend the General Committee meetings.

- 16) The work of the Association will be supported by four teams, convened by the General Committee and meeting as required throughout the year:

- a) Training and Recruitment
- b) Communication and Events
- c) Bell Maintenance and Restoration
- d) Administration, Records and Library

Each Annual District Meeting shall appoint at least one but not more than three representatives to each team.

- 17) The General Committee, to which the affairs of the Association are entrusted, shall consist of:

- a) Master
- b) General Secretary
- c) Treasurer
- d) Bell Restoration Fund Secretary
- e) Safeguarding Officer
- f) Trustees
- g) A representative from each Association team (if not listed in a-e above)
- h) Two representatives from each of the four Districts
- i) Central Council Representatives

Association Business

- 18) An AGM will normally take place on the second Saturday in May (or as arranged at the previous AGM) and shall be advertised at least fourteen days in advance. The quorum shall be twenty voting Members. Only Ringing, Long Service and Honorary Life Members are entitled to vote. The purpose of the meeting shall be to:

- a) attend worship as an Association
- b) receive reports on the affairs, and the finances of the Association
- c) elect any Vice-Presidents and Honorary Life Members
- d) elect from the Ringing, Long Service and Honorary Life Membership a Master, General Secretary, Treasurer, Bell Restoration Fund Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, each of whom will retire annually but remain eligible for re-election. The Master shall not hold office for more than three consecutive years. No officer may hold more than one Association position.
- e) elect three Trustees, each of whom holds office for three years. One Trustee shall retire annually by rotation but remain eligible for re-election. If for any reason the number of Trustees falls to two, the position shall remain open until the next AGM, when the vacancy shall be filled. If for any reason the number of Trustees falls to one, the Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting, in accordance with Rule 20, to elect replacement Trustees.
- f) elect representatives to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. Each District shall be entitled to nominate one Central Council representative.
- g) transact any relevant business as communicated to the General Secretary.

- 19) Nominations for all offices and propositions for ordinary business, including changes to rules, for consideration at the AGM must be submitted to the General Secretary, in writing, prior to the March General Committee meeting. Nominations may not be made at the AGM unless no nominations have been received for any particular office, or all nominations for any particular office are subsequently withdrawn by the candidate(s).
- 20) A Special General Meeting of the Members may be convened at any time by direction of the General Committee, the Master, the General Secretary, the Bell Restoration Fund Secretary, or upon written request to the General Secretary, signed by not less than twelve Ringing, Long Service or Honorary Life Members. Within fourteen days the Secretary shall advertise the meeting and it will take place within fourteen days of the notice. The quorum shall be twenty voting Members. Only Ringing, Long Service and Honorary Life Members are entitled to vote.
- 21) The General Committee shall meet at least twice a year, normally on the first Saturday in March and the second Saturday in November and the quorum shall be ten, to include at least one Trustee. Additional General Committee meetings may take place at the discretion of the Master and General Secretary and shall be advertised at least fourteen days in advance.
- 22) The General Committee maintains the overall management of the Association within the framework of the rules.
 - The Committee has power to co-opt
 - The co-opted members do not have the power of vote.
- 23) The Finance Committee, comprising the Master, General Secretary, Treasurer, Bell Restoration Fund Secretary, District Secretaries and Trustees meets at least once a year, and is responsible to the General Committee. The quorum shall be six, to include at least two Trustees.
 - a) The Committee has power to co-opt
 - b) The co-opted members do not have the power of vote.
- 24) The Association communicates with each Tower in the Association via a locally appointed Tower Correspondent whose responsibilities include:
 - providing information for the Annual Report of the Association, website and tower database
 - sharing information from the Association with the members at their tower.
- 25) A peal will be recognised by the Association if it complies with the Central Council's 'Framework for Method Ringing', and if all participants are members of the Association. In order for a non-member to become a member, at least 50% of the band must be Resident Members. The conductor of the peal shall pay the peal fee (as determined by the Finance Committee and ratified at the AGM) within two weeks of the peal.
- 26) These Rules may not be amended in any manner which would cause the Association at any time to cease to be a charity in law.
- 27) Any alteration or addition to these Rules may be made only at a General Meeting of the Association, and requires a two-thirds majority of those Ringing, Long Service and Honorary Life Members present.
- 28) Any decision to dissolve the Association may be taken only at a General Meeting, two months prior notice having been given in writing by the General Secretary to Tower Correspondents of such intent, in addition to such notice as is required in accordance with Rule 20. The assets shall be disposed of to either, or between both, of the following:
 - a) such other charitable Association of Change Ringers as the Association shall select
 - b) the Diocese of Chichester for the religious and charitable purposes of the said Diocese.
- 29) In the event of the Association becoming defunct, it shall be allowed for the Registrar of Charities after five years of non-working of the Association to cause it to be dissolved and its assets applied under Rule 28 above.

Document Control

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Initially proposed: General Committee, 1 March 2025

Approved by and date: AGM, 10 May 2025

Notes and latest changes:

Rule 1 - reference to Central Council's "Decisions" removed and replaced with "Rules of the Council";

Rule 7 - clarification of how a non-member becomes a non-resident member (for peal-ringing purposes), and addition of 2-week period in which to do this (from 1st January 2026);

Rule 18 - removal of "triennially" for Central Council Rep elections (to reflect updated Central Council rules);

Rule 25 - reworded to simplify and remove procedural description from rules