Dorset County Association of Church Bell Ringers

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Dorset County Association of Church Bell Ringers
Bell Restoration Fund is a registered charity. Charity number 294239

Safeguarding Policy

Version History

Version	Approved by	Date Approved	Minute Ref	Latest Review By	Review Date	Minute Ref
1.0	DCA Committee	2/6/2018	8	DCA Committee	2/6/2018	8
2.0	DCA Committee	31/10/25	7 para 4	DCA Committee	31/10/25	7 para 4
3.0	DCA Committee	28/06/26	8	DCA Committee	28/06/26	8

Next Review Due by July 2027.

1. Statement of Commitment

The Dorset County Association of Church Bell Ringers ("the Association") is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, caring and inclusive environment for all who participate in bell ringing and Association activities.

The Association recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to protect them from harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All members, officers, volunteers and participants are expected to share this commitment and to act appropriately whenever concerns arise.

All safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.

This policy has been developed having regard to the safeguarding requirements of the Church of England and relevant diocesan safeguarding procedures[1]. Where Association activities take place within a parish or church setting, members shall also comply with any safeguarding requirements applicable to that venue.

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to:

- All members of the Association.
- All Association officers and volunteers.
- Visitors attending Association activities.
- Individuals involved in teaching, training, supervising or organising ringing activities.

[1] Dioceses which have churches in Dorset can be found at:
Diocese of Salisbury: http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/parishes/safeguarding
Diocese of Winchester: https://winchester.anglican.org/safeguarding
Diocese of Bath and Wells: https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/parish-support/safeguarding

This policy applies to all Association activities, including:

- Ringing meetings and practices.
- Training sessions and courses.
- Outings and visits.
- Social events organised by the Association.
- Any activity undertaken in the name of the Association.

3. Safeguarding Principles

The Association is committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of all members.
- Concerns must be acted upon without delay.
- Safeguarding arrangements should be proportionate, practical and effective.
- The Association will work cooperatively with diocesan safeguarding teams and statutory agencies where appropriate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Association Safeguarding Officer

The Association shall appoint a Safeguarding Officer who will:

- Promote good safeguarding practice throughout the Association.
- Provide safeguarding guidance and support to members and towers.
- Maintain records relating to safeguarding compliance.
- Liaise with diocesan safeguarding teams and other appropriate bodies.
- Support officers and members in understanding safeguarding requirements.
- Monitor compliance with this policy.
- Verify safeguarding training and DBS evidence where required by this policy.

Committee Members

Committee members are responsible for:

- Promoting a safe and inclusive culture.
- Ensuring safeguarding considerations are reflected in decision-making.
- Supporting compliance with this policy.
- Maintaining any safeguarding training and DBS requirements applicable to their role.

Parish Safeguarding Officers

Each tower remains responsible for safeguarding within its own parish and diocesan structures.

Parish Safeguarding Officers remain the first point of contact for local safeguarding matters and should be consulted regarding safeguarding arrangements within their tower.

All Members

All members must:

- Act responsibly and appropriately at all times.
- Comply with this policy.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Cooperate with safeguarding investigations and enquiries where appropriate.

5. Safeguarding Training Requirements

The Association recognises the importance of safeguarding training and requires training appropriate to the responsibilities undertaken.

Safeguarding training referred to in this policy shall be the training provided by the Church of England and available through the Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal, or any successor system recognised by the Church of England.

The Association shall recognise the safeguarding training levels defined by the Church of England from time to time.

Minimum Training Requirements

Level 1 – Basic Awareness

Required for:

- Committee members.
- Any member regularly involved in Association activities.

Level 2 – Foundation

Required for:

- Ringing Master.
- Chairman.
- Vice-Chairman.
- Ringing and Training Support Officers.
- Training Officer.
- Any member undertaking teaching, training, supervision or leadership responsibilities on behalf of the Association.

Level 3 – Leadership

Required for:

- Association Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding training must be renewed at least every three years or sooner if required by the Church of England.

6. DBS Requirements

Where a role requires a DBS check, the office holder must obtain and maintain the appropriate level of clearance applicable to that role.

Enhanced DBS clearance is required for:

- Ringing Master.
- Chairman.
- Vice-Chairman.
- Ringing and Training Support Officers.
- Training Officer.
- Association Safeguarding Officer.

The Association Safeguarding Officer shall maintain records confirming DBS compliance where applicable.

7. Compliance and Evidence Requirements

Where safeguarding training or DBS clearance is required, compliance shall not be considered complete until appropriate documentary evidence has been provided to and verified by the Association Safeguarding Officer.

Verification by any other individual, officer, committee member or body shall not constitute compliance for the purposes of this policy.

The Association Safeguarding Officer shall maintain records of:

- Safeguarding training completion.
- DBS status where applicable.
- Renewal dates.

Evidence must be provided:

- Before appointment to a role takes effect.
- Upon renewal.
- Whenever reasonably requested for compliance purposes.

8. Appointment to Office and Compliance Enforcement

Where safeguarding training, DBS clearance, or documentary evidence is required under this policy, compliance shall not be regarded as complete until the required evidence has been provided to and verified by the Association Safeguarding Officer.

Where the Association Safeguarding Officer determines that an office holder has failed to provide the required evidence, or has allowed required safeguarding training or DBS clearance to lapse, that office holder shall be automatically suspended from office with immediate effect.

The Safeguarding Officer shall notify:

- The office holder concerned;
- The Chairman;
- The Secretary;

that the suspension has taken effect.

The suspension shall not require approval by the Committee and shall not be subject to variation, postponement, cancellation or override by the Committee.

The suspension shall remain in force until the Association Safeguarding Officer has verified compliance and confirmed in writing that the suspension may be lifted.

No office holder shall be exempt from the safeguarding requirements applicable to their role.

9. Operational Safeguarding Arrangements

At Association activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- At least two responsible adults should normally be present.
- At least one responsible adult must hold the safeguarding training and DBS clearance required by this policy.
- Where this arrangement is not possible, appropriate risk mitigation measures must be implemented.

Members should avoid situations where they are alone with a child or vulnerable adult wherever reasonably possible.

10. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

A safeguarding concern may include:

- Suspected abuse.
- Neglect.
- Bullying or inappropriate behaviour.
- Situations where a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm.

If a concern arises:

- Take the concern seriously.
- Do not investigate the matter yourself.
- Make a factual record of what was observed, disclosed or reported.
- Report the matter promptly through the appropriate safeguarding channels.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, contact the emergency services without delay.

11. Reporting Procedures

Safeguarding concerns should normally be reported to:

- The relevant Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- The appropriate Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Where the concern involves any of the above individuals, the matter should be reported directly to the next appropriate safeguarding authority.

The Association Safeguarding Officer may provide advice and support but is not a substitute for diocesan safeguarding procedures.

12. Good Practice Guidelines

Members should:

- Ensure appropriate supervision of children and young people.
- Maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
- Obtain appropriate consent before taking or publishing photographs.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe and appropriate to do so.
- Promote a culture in which safeguarding concerns can be raised openly.

13. Managing Risk

Safeguarding considerations should form part of planning for:

- Training activities.
- Outings and visits.
- Transport arrangements.
- Events involving children or vulnerable adults.
- Access to towers and ringing chambers.
- The introduction and supervision of new learners.

14. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Safeguarding information shall be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Records shall be stored securely and in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

Safeguarding compliance records held by the Association shall be retained only for as long as necessary to demonstrate compliance and fulfil legal or governance obligations.

15. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed by the Committee at least annually and whenever required following:

- Changes in legislation.
- Changes in Church of England safeguarding requirements.
- Changes in diocesan safeguarding guidance affecting Association activities.
- A safeguarding incident or significant safeguarding concern.

The Committee may amend this policy at any time to ensure that it remains effective, compliant and consistent with current safeguarding requirements.

The current version of the policy shall be published to members and made available through the Association's normal communication channels.

16. Final Statement

The Dorset County Association of Church Bell Ringers is committed to fostering a culture in which safeguarding is embedded throughout all aspects of Association life, ensuring a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all.