

Tower & Belfry Access Policy



This document is to be circulated to all tower keyholders, bell ringers, the incumbent, churchwardens, PCC and verger.

Anyone with access to, or requiring access to, the tower and belfry should be given this policy in advance of their visit. This includes contractors and other outside parties.

Note: 'tower captain' refers to the official tower captain or their nominated assistant.

Safeguarding:

All adults are expected to be aware of the safeguarding guidelines on the Old Brampton Church website: oldbramptonchurch.org.uk

All adult ringers are also expected to be aware of the safeguarding guidelines on the Derby Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers website: derbyda.org.uk

Normal Bell Ringing Sessions:

- Bell ringing normally takes place for Sunday services, weddings, Monday evening practices and ad-hoc training sessions.
- For all ringing sessions organised by and for Old Brampton ringers, the tower captain is responsible for access, security, safety, safeguarding and the ringing.
- Every ringer and non-ringer attending should sign the attendance register on entering the ringing chamber.

Access to the Tower and Belfry:

Hand sanitizer gel is provided in the ringing chamber.

Face masks/coverings may be worn or to protect persons who are more vulnerable.

Anyone with a potentially infectious illness should not enter.

Other Bell Ringing – including **peals, quarter peals, other ringing events** and **visiting bands**

- The tower captain should be the first point of contact.
- The tower captain will then seek permission from the incumbent for the bells to be rung.
- Other bell ringing is permitted only at the discretion of the incumbent and tower captain.
- The organiser of visiting ringers will be sent relevant instructions and information from the tower captain.
- The tower captain will make the necessary arrangements for access and inform the verger and churchwardens of the ringing times.
- For bands of visiting ringers, their organiser/leader/conductor is responsible for safety and safeguarding during their ringing session.

- For ringing association meetings, their nominated ringing master is responsible for safety and safeguarding during their ringing session.

Tower Tours – normally for non-ringing visitors

- A risk assessment will take place in good time before the event.
- The event will be managed by bell ringers.
- The number of visitors permitted in the tower at any one time will be controlled, especially if bell ringing demonstrations are to take place.
- Before entering the tower visitors will be briefed on safety on the stairs and in the ringing chamber.
- Visitors **MUST** always be accompanied by a bell ringer.
- Visitors under 16 year of age **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.
- Visitors should enter the tower following a bell ringer and followed by a steward.
- Visitors **MUST** not touch the bell ropes without permission from a bell ringer.
- Some visitors might be invited to chime a bell which is down, or have a go at a few backstrokes on a bell which is up, **ONLY** with the assistance of, and under the strict supervision and guidance of, an experienced ringer.
- Visitors **MUST NOT** enter the bell chamber.
- Visitors **MUST NOT** operate the rope spider, CCTV or simulator.

Work in the Tower

- Any bell emergency remedial work (e.g. slipped wheel, broken stay, broken rope) must be carried out by an experienced ringer.
- Routine belfry maintenance is carried out by Old Brampton bell ringers.
- For all other work or maintenance checks, permission must be granted by the incumbent, PCC, churchwardens or vergers as appropriate.
- Non bell-related work must not result in any damage to the bells and bell mechanisms nor interfere with them, nor affect the ability for the bells to be rung.
- The vergers must be informed of the times when work will take place in the tower.

Work and Inspections by Contractors or other Outside Parties

- No non-ringer should enter the tower alone.
- These requests must be directed through the incumbent, churchwardens, PCC or vergers as appropriate.
- The tower captain must be consulted to check the suitability of the proposed work as it could affect the bells, safety or the ringing environment.
- The tower captain must be consulted before anyone is permitted access to the tower.
- The tower captain will ensure that the bells will be safely in the down position at the time of the visit.
- Non-ringers **MUST** not touch the bell ropes or rope spider without permission from a bell ringer, and **NEVER** when someone is in the bell chamber above.
- The vergers must be informed of the times when work will take place in the tower.
- The contractor or outside party must visit only at the agreed time.

Access to the Bell Chamber (where the bells swing)

- Non-ringers should be accompanied by an experienced ringer.

- The clock hammer **MUST** be pulled off before anyone enters the bell chamber. Clear instructions are provided to the right of the clock case.
- **HARD HATS/BUMP CAPS** and stout footwear **MUST** be worn at all times in the bell chamber. Contractors should supply their own protective headgear and PPE.
- When someone is in the bell chamber another person **MUST** be present either in the bell chamber or the ringing chamber (where the ropes hang).
- When in the bell chamber, the bell fittings or bells **MUST NOT** be used to pull yourself up or to steady yourself. Please use the bell frame to help you move around.
- When someone is in the bell chamber, those in the ringing chamber **MUST NOT** touch the bell ropes.
- It is essential that **NOTHING** is left behind or moved to a different position in the bell chamber.
- Do not touch anything that you do not need to touch to carry out your work.
- Ensure that the access hatch is shut and bolted and the bell chamber light turned off when leaving the bell chamber.
- Release the clock hammer carefully before you leave.
- Ensure that the tower is locked and the lights turned off when you leave.

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Tower Captain

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Policy adopted by the PCC on	Date	3 September 2025
	Time	
Signed	Incumbent	
	Tower Captain	
	Churchwarden	
Due for review on	Date	September 2027