St. Nicholas Marston 1122 - 2022

Church Bell Ringers

Financial Control Policy

created April 2024

The St Nicholas Society of Church Bell Ringers recognises the needs for its financial control processes to be clear and transparent in order to comply with necessary regulations, as well being accessible to all members and supporters.

1. Financial Records and Accounts

1.1) Financial records must be kept so that:
- The Society meets its legal and other statutory obligations, such as His Majesty's Revenue & Customs, and common law.
- The committee has proper financial control of the Society.
- The Society meets the contractual obligations and requirements of funders.

1.2) These regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Society and may only be amended or varied by majority vote of the Society at an AGM or EGM.

1.3) The Society is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Society has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the organisation's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

1.4) The Society's accounting control systems must include measures:
- for the timely production of accounts;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud;
- identifying the duties of officers.

1.5) This Financial Policy demonstrates how the Society meets these responsibilities and requirements.

1.6) At least once a year, the Society must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.

1.7) Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.8) Members of the Society are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice members to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the Society into disrepute.

1.9) The books of accounts must include:
- An analysis report (Profit and Loss) of all the transactions appearing on the bank accounts.
- A petty cash book if cash payments are being made, or other clear expenses process that records cash handling.

1.10) Accounts must be drawn up at the end of each financial year (31st December) and presented to the ensuing AGM, which will usually be held within 3 months of the financial year end, normally towards the end of February.

1.11) The officers will regularly review the financial position of the Society and take corrective action if appropriate, budgeting based on the previous years' income and expenditure, plus any urgent matters that have been flagged by the treasurer and or standing committee.

1.12) A report comparing actual income and expenditure with the budget should be presented to the officers every three months or whenever meetings take place.

1.13) The officers of the Society shall appoint a suitable auditor/independent examiner to audit or examine the accounts before presentation to the next AGM. The auditor/independent examiner shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Society;
- report to the Society in writing, or in person, a written report annually;
- demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, being free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships;
- have no involvement in the financial decision making, management, or control of the Society.

1.14) The treasurer shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Officers any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

2. Banking

2.1) The Society will bank with <Unity Trust Bank> and accounts will be held in the name of Old Marston Bell Ringers.

2.2) The bank mandate (list of people who can sign cheques on the organisation's behalf) will always be approved and minuted by the officers as will any changes to it.

2.3) The Society will require the bank to provide statements every month and these will be reconciled at least every three months and the treasurer will spot check that this reconciliation has been done at least twice a year, signing any reports accordingly.

2.4) The society will not use any other bank or financial institution or use overdraft facilities or loan without the agreement of the Officers.

2.5) All invoices for payments shall be examined, verified and certified by the treasurer to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the society.

2.6) The treasurer shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The treasurer shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, in a timely manner.

2.7) The treasurer shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only where a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the society, where the treasurer certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the society or the officers within two weeks of payment date.

2.8) In respect of grants, any two officers may approve expenditure within any limits set by the grant.

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3. Income

3.1) All monies received will be recorded promptly and banked expediently (this includes sundry receipts). The Society will maintain files of documentation to back this up.

4. Payments (expenditure)

4.1) The aim is to ensure that all expenditure is on the Society's business and is properly authorised and that this can be demonstrated. The latest approved budget provides the cheque signatories with authority to spend up to the budgeted expenditure, not beyond it.

4.2) The Treasurer will be responsible for holding the cheque book (including unused and partly used cheque books) securely so as to comply with GDPR principles.

4.3) Blank cheques will not usually be signed, but the Society understands in certain circumstances this is necessary due to availability of officers. In such circumstances, the Treasurer will hold records of the expected financial outgoing and this will be checked retrospectively.

4.4) The relevant payee's name will always be inserted on the cheque before signature (except in the circumstances above where a record will be kept and checked retrospectively) and the cheque stub will always be properly completed.

4.5) Payments shall only be made upon approval of two officers.

4.6) All payments shall be effected by cheque or BACS, unless agreed otherwise.

4.7) Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to the Society shall be signed by two registered officers.

4.8) Signatories cannot authorise payments due to themselves and authorisation must be provided by other signatories.

4.9) To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

4.10) The approval of the use of BACS payment must be supported by documented evidence that a minimum of two officers authorised the payment.

4.11) No officer shall disclose any PIN or password relevant to the working of the society's bank accounts, to any person not authorised to access these materials.

4.12) Regular back-up copies of financial records on any computer shall be made and stored securely away from the computer in question.

4.13) The society, and any members using computers for the society's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

4.14) Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the treasurer shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the society shall identify a number of officers who will be authorised to approve transactions on the account. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

4.15) Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link.

4.16) Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by two of the registered officers. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

4.17) Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the registered officers and will be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £150 unless authorised by the Society in writing before any order is placed.

4.18) The treasurer may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. A petty cash maximum of £30 is permitted to remain on site at any one time.

4.19) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked.

4.20) Every payment out of the Society’s bank accounts will be evidenced by an original invoice or a signed and dated expenses form. Original paperwork will be retained by the society and filed.

4.21) The only exceptions to cheques not being supported by an original invoice are items such as advanced booking fees for a future course, deposit for a venue, VAT, etc.

4.22) The Society will reimburse the members for all reasonable and approved expenses on submission of a completed expenses form.

5. Other rules

5.1) The society is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk.

5.2) The treasurer shall prepare, for approval by the committee, a risk management policy statement, which shall be reviewed annually.

5.3) When considering any new activity, the officers shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the society.

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6. Other rules

1) The Society does not accept liability for any financial commitment unless properly authorised. Any orders placed or undertakings given which are likely to cost the society in excess of £100 must be authorised in advance and minuted by the committee/officers/treasurer.

2) In exceptional circumstances, such undertakings can be made with the Treasurer or two officer's approval, who will then provide full details to the next meeting.

3) All significant fundraising (expected to raise more than £50) and grant applications undertaken on behalf of the organisation will be done in the name of the society with the prior approval of either the full committee, or with the approval of two officers. Full details of the fundraising will be provided to the next committee meeting or within two weeks, whichever is soonest. Fundraising expected to raise under £50 does not require approval but must still be reported back to the committee.

Signed on behalf of the Committee:

Name…… Chairperson

Signature……...

Date……

Name…… Treasurer

Signature……...

Date……

Name…… Registered Signatory

Signature……...

Date……

(This policy will be reviewed annually)

Document version history		**Author:** Roy Peach, Secretary	
Version	**Date**	**Amendments**	**By whom**