



The Worcestershire & Districts Change Ringing Association

Founded 10th April 1882 – Branches formed 1911

Minutes of the Special General Meeting held on Saturday 18th October 2025, commencing at 4.05pm – **DRAFT 3**

Present in person – the following 42 people:

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| Diane | Awkati | Kinver |
| Mo | Awkati | Kinver |
| Eleanor | Baber | Shrawley |
| Amelia | Birks | Coseley |
| Charli | Birks | Coseley |
| Gordon | Birks | Coseley |
| Joseph | Birks | Coseley |
| Olivia | Birks | Coseley |
| Alex | Byrne | Hallow |
| Nina | Byrne | Hallow |
| Andrew | Evans | Unattached (S) |
| Martin | Fessey | St Johns, Worcester |
| Maxine | Goodhead | Brierley Hill |
| Andrew | Gray | Cookley |
| Helen | Hancox | Stoke Prior |
| Katie | Hancox | Stoke Prior |
| Sarah | Haynes | St John's, Worcester |
| David | Hildred | Chaddesley Corbett |
| Hilary | Hildred | Chaddesley Corbett |
| Martyn | Hills | Claines |
| Christine | Hurst | St Stephen's, Worcester |

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| Alison | Hodge | Unattached (W) |
| Laura | Homer | Halesowen |
| Sam | Homer | Halesowen |
| Will | Homer | Halesowen |
| David | Jones | Pershore |
| Freya | Mills | Kempsey |
| Paul | Mills | Kempsey |
| George | Morris | Malvern Link |
| James | Mort | Worcester Cathedral |
| Lizzie | Mort | Unattached (W) |
| Helen | Normington | Great Malvern Priory |
| James | Normington | Malvern Link |
| Rachel | Page | Pershore |
| Nicola | Piper | Chaddesley Corbett |
| Stuart | Piper | Pershore |
| Darran | Ricks | Worcester Cathedral |
| Paul | Smith | Powick |
| Alan | Roberts | Rowley Regis |
| Beryl | Thorp | Barbourne |
| Merlyn | Wilcox | Bewdley |
| Leonie | Woodward | Pershore |

Present on-line - the following 5 people:

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| Andreina | Benigno-Thomas | Belbroughton |
| Rose | Humphrey | Ipsley |

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| Richard | Hurst | Stourbridge |
| Kim | McDonald | Stoke Prior |
| Catherine | Taylor | Hanley Swan |

The meeting was therefore quorate (quorum of 25)

Apologies for absence had been received from:

| | | |
|---------------|---------|-------------|
| Bishop Martin | | |
| Dean Stephen | | |
| Sheila | Andrews | Hanley Swan |
| Dave | Andrews | Wolverley |

| | | |
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| Mike | Brown | Halesowen |
| Jane | Chapman | Chaddesley Corbett |
| Kate | Collingwood | Great Comberton |
| Jude | Deakin | Bewdley |

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|---------|-----------|---------------|
| Ruth | Etheridge | Earls Croome |
| David | Flint | Smethwick |
| Dave | Franklin | Stoke Prior |
| Tony | Hickman | Pensnett |
| Tim | Hughes | Bewdley |
| John | Lawley | Stone |
| Clare | Lyon | Kingswinford |
| Ruth | Morris | Malvern Link |
| Judy | Mountain | Stone |
| Martyn | Palmer | Bishampton |
| Roger | Gurney | Powick |
| Beryl | Pritchett | Brierley Hill |
| Lyril | Rawlins | Bromsgrove |
| Richard | Scarth | Hagley |

| | | |
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| Ivor | Shilvock | Halesowen |
| James | Stanton | Stourbridge |
| Trevor | Still | Great Malvern |
| Chris | Tennant | Ipsley |
| Lizzy | Tennant | Ipsley |
| Steve | Townsend | Hanbury |
| Robin | Walker | Worcester, All Saints |
| Jenny | Walton | Unattached (W) |
| John | Westwood | Shrawley |
| Martin | Whittaker | Clent |
| Mark | Wilson | Worcester, All Saints |
| Gary | Wright | Old Hill |

The Bishop asked the Secretary to convey his warm greetings to all who attend the meeting.

The meeting was recorded on Teams to assist the Secretary in writing the minutes, but will be deleted after 3 months and not be used for any other purpose.

1. Opening prayer – led by Revd David Hildred
2. Chairman for the meeting – In the absence of the President, Vice-President Alan Roberts Chaired the meeting.
3. Proposal to amend Rules 7 and 8 of the Association Rules
Proposed by James Mort and seconded by Alison Hodge

James Mort explained the background to the proposed Rule changes. He summarised each sub-section, then explained the implications of the changes proposed. Discussion followed each section.

Section iii. Terms of Membership

Section iii. c. Leonie Woodward suggested that the word ‘discrimination’ should be changed to ‘equality’. She also suggested that the word ‘reputation’ should be changed to ‘disrepute’. James Mort explained that the word ‘discrimination’ is used in other WDCRA documents referenced so the wording would be considered when updating those documents.

Section iv. Suspension

Section iv. a. David Jones questioned the wording ‘bring the reputation of the Association into disrepute’, saying that safety of members was more important. James Mort explained that suspension of a member may be considered for reasons other than safety, so a broader term was needed.

Alex Byrne suggested that the words ‘.... the reputation of the....’ be deleted, leaving ‘bring the Association into disrepute’. This was put to a vote and agreed.

Kim McDonald was concerned that there may be disagreement amongst Diocesan clergy as to whether a ringer should or should not ring at a tower. James Mort and Di Awkati confirmed that the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers will make the decision about individuals ringing in towers.

Andrew Evans suggested that people independent of the Association should be involved with making the decision on suspension. James Mort said that he will address this in the Appeals section.

Section v. Termination

Section v. d. Leonie Woodward suggested that other diocese should be informed of decisions made in Worcester. Di Awkati explained that Diocesan safeguarding teams do share information with other Diocese where necessary so any sharing would be by them.

Section v. f. Leonie Woodward noted that a custodial sentence was mentioned so enquired what would occur if someone held a suspended sentence. It was explained that all cases would be considered individually.

Section v. d. Andy Gray noted that a decision made by the Association may differ from that made by the Diocese. James Mort explained that safeguarding decisions are led by the Diocese with the Association taking advice from them. If decisions differed, then the person concerned could appeal.

Section vii. Appeals

Leonie Woodward asked whether appeals should be made on paper or verbally. It was noted that written cases would be expected, and that appeals will probably face to face. The proposed Rule is not explicit so leaves flexibility to fit the circumstances.

Section vii. b. Leonie Woodward also proposed that 3 people should decide on the outcome of an appeal so that there would be any vote would not be tied. This was seconded by Helen Normington, and carried by the meeting.

David Hildred commented that needing 3 people could be excessive for the senior clergy mentioned. It was confirmed that other suitable independent people could also be involved.

Leonie Woodward asked that an appellant should be given reasons in writing for the outcome of the decision. It was confirmed that this would be the case.

General matters

Andrew Evans said that a decision to terminate someone's membership would be very significant for that individual. If he were ever to be in such a position, he would seek legal. He therefore asked whether the proposed Rule changes had been reviewed by a solicitor and if not, he recommended doing so.

Merlyn Wilcox said that this should be costed before being agreed.

Leonie Woodward noted that a court would only consider whether procedures had been followed, rather than make a separate decision.

David Jones seconded the proposal that the Rule changes should be reviewed by a solicitor.

Martyn Hills noted that while some people may simply accept decisions taken on their membership, he recalled that there had been occasions in the past when people had challenged other Association decisions with legal support.

Alison Hodge noted that any such review would have to be of all the Association Rules and Policies, not just one or two sections.

Paul Smith commented that a legal review would be difficult and unnecessary.

Paul Mills asked whether the Association's insurer would offer legal advice.

The Chairman asked the meeting to vote on whether the Rule changes should be reviewed by a solicitor. 7 voted for but 15 against. Legal advice will therefore not be obtained.

Stuart Piper identified one grammatical error – in section v, f. 'remove' should be amended to 'has removed'. This was agreed by the meeting.

The Chairman then put the proposed changes to Rules 7 and 8 Rule to a vote – the proposed Rule changes (with the amendments agreed above) were supported by a significant majority of those present with none voting against.

4. Any other relevant business with the consent of the Chairman

Paul Smith thanked James Mort for the work that he had done in preparing the Rule changes.

Alison Hodge stated that the Minutes of the 2025 AGM will be checked for accuracy and matters arising at the 2026 AGM.

The meeting closed at 5.25pm

Prof Alison Hodge
WDCRA General Secretary
19th October 2025