



Dorset County Association of Church Bell Ringers

Web Site: <http://dcacbr.org.uk/>

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

COMPLAINTS POLICY (Version 1.0 - 23rd November 2025)

Principles

The Dorset County Association of Church Bell Ringers (DCA) is a friendly, 'open to all' bell ringing society. As such, we expect that all members shall make every effort to be inclusive, follow the [Central Council Code of Practice](#) and to encourage other ringers of all abilities. In line with this friendly ethos, the DCA wishes to run its disciplinary procedure on an informal basis for the most part, but accepts that from time to time a formal complaint may be necessary.

Only DCA members can make a formal complaint.

This policy only covers internal DCA matters. Other matters may include:

- A safeguarding issue which should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer and /or Church of England Safeguarding Team (see the Safeguarding Policy).
- Matters of a criminal nature MUST be reported to the Chairman, or in his/her absence, the vice-Chairman who will normally need to forward it to the Police for investigation.
- Matters of possible breaches of UK Regulations (i.e. Charity rules) should also be reported to appropriate DCA Officer(s) for forwarding to the appropriate external organisation.

Informal Process

The majority of complaints can be handled informally. It is most often the case that the person who has caused offence has no idea that their actions or words have caused harm in any way. Therefore, the first port of call for any complaint is for the aggrieved party to speak informally to the person who has caused offence in order to make them aware of the situation. In the majority of cases, the offending party will be apologetic and not have realised that their actions were harmful in any way.

There should be no further action here.

Formal Process

1. If a DCA member wishes to make a formal complaint, this MUST be submitted in writing by email to dcacbr@gmail.com within 28 days of the offence. The DCA secretary shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 days.
2. The Secretary shall make the whole committee aware. The Chairman, or in his/her absence the vice-Chairman shall appoint 2 members of the committee to investigate the complaint. (Normally these 2 members would be the Chair and Secretary but neither of these 2 committee members shall be the subject of the complaint unless the complaint is against the whole committee).
3. The investigation may include face to face interviews or written submission from a number of parties. Any person interviewed shall have the right to have another member present with them at the time of interview. The complaint shall be decided on balance of probability and evidence.

4. The investigating officers shall present a brief summary of the case and their recommendations to the Committee who shall have the final say on any action recommended. This shall then be conveyed to all parties at the earliest opportunity. These actions will be based upon one of the following three scenarios:
 - a. Uphold the complaint: In this case, the Committee shall decide that the complaint is upheld. A written apology shall be made on behalf of the DCA. One or more of the following actions will be taken:
 - i. The member who has caused offence shall receive a verbal warning as to their behaviour.
 - ii. Any changes to DCA rules or Standing Orders that may arise from an investigation will be passed through the normal change processes.
 - iii. A formal recommendation will be passed to a General Meeting of the Association. (Note that the recommendation to remove membership from someone can only be after a criminal conviction has occurred).
 - b. Reject the complaint: In some cases, the complainant will have been wrong or the complaint unsubstantiated. In these cases, the Association shall write to the person with their findings. No further action shall be required.
 - c. Partially uphold the complaint: It may be that the complaint is based on several premises / assumptions and that one or more of these are likely to have happened but some did not or it was unclear what occurred (e.g. one person's word against another). In these cases, the actions in a & b above will be followed for their respective components of the complaint.