

This is Guild Bulletin No. 23 dated 9 December 2020.

Latest Central Council Advice: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – CCCBR Covid Winter Plan – updated guidance for England Wales and Scotland – CCCBR Christmas ringing – England – CCCBR](#)
[Guidance for the Christmas period - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The latest guidance below is for the period 23-27 December ONLY – before that we remain in Tier II regulations and after that return to Tier II (as previously set out in my last bulletin) (subject to the 16 December review keeping Dorset and Wiltshire in that Tier!!!)

From Simon Linford – Central Council President:

We have agreed with the House of Bishops Covid recovery team that an exception should be made to the current ringing guidance across all Tiers in England for those bands that wish to ring for services over Christmas, in the period where the household restrictions are also being lifted. **This will allow bells to be rung for key services including those on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and also for the 6pm Christmas Eve ringing which has been widely suggested.**

This is on the assumption that the announcement on 16th December does not introduce some catastrophic restriction on the opening of churches (which seems unlikely). We are still consulting on whether this can be adopted in other countries in the British Isles which may be subject to other restrictions.

The current guidance for ringing in Tier 1 will be adopted for towers in all three Tiers just for Christmas, that being to ring up to six bells, with 1m+ separation and using facemasks. The recommendation is to ring for 15 minutes but to assess your tower's characteristics. Ventilation is key to reducing the risk of aerosol transmission.

There is guidance [here](#) for you to assess the risk of your own ringing chamber and for members of your band to assess their own personal risk (see towards the bottom of the page for Guidance Notes). No doubt many ringers (especially those at special risk personally or in their family) will decide not to ring, just as many towers will lack sufficient ventilation to sufficiently mitigate risk even for this one-off occasion.

You may ask why it is suddenly 'safe' to ring at Christmas when it wasn't before and it won't be again afterwards. Risk of transmission is closely correlated with the amount of contact with others. With ringing having been restricted for so long, this limited ringing on one or two occasions at one of the most important times of the year for the Church does not represent a major absolute risk, particularly as some ringers will be in church anyway. It is also pragmatic given some ringers will want to ring anyway and will be under pressure from their incumbents. However, repeated ringing

would increase the risk substantially, and we are not suggesting that this should now restart.

We may not be far away from ringing being less restricted. As one member of the Covid recovery team said “with the light at the end of the tunnel let’s not fall down a sink hole”.

Simon Linford
President CCCBR