Rules for the 2027 Contest

1. Objective

The objective of the National Twelve Bell Striking Contest is to promote excellent ringing on twelve bells. The contest shall be held annually and the winning band awarded the Taylor Trophy.

2. Contest Dates

Qualifiers shall be held on the 4th Saturday in March and the final on the 4th Saturday in June. Variations (e.g. for Petertide or local circumstances) shall be notified via the Ringing World and contest website at the earliest opportunity.

3. Venue Selection

A weight grouping of bells (The Weight Band List) will be consulted when selecting venues for the final, such that bells of a variety of weights are selected over a period of consecutive years. Qualifier towers should be of roughly the same weight as each other and that of the bells for the final. There should be geographical clustering of qualifier towers when possible.

4. Entry Qualifications

4.1 Applications shall be invited from centres at which twelve bell ringing is organised and practised. No centre may enter more than one team.

4.2 The closing date for entries to the contest shall be the Friday, 9 days before the December committee meeting.

4.3 A list of potential participants shall be submitted to the committee by the advertised deadline. Each team member must have current and regular association with the centre they represent. No ringer may represent more than one band in any year's contest. The committee may accept or reject entries. Subsequent changes must be submitted to the secretary not less than two weeks before a qualifier or final.

4.4 A confirmed band list must be provided to the Secretary a fortnight before the contest. Teams may substitute ringers in the fortnight before the contest; a new band list must be provided to the committee representative on the day of the contest. Any band which includes names not previously approved by the committee will be disqualified.

5. Allocation of Teams

5.1 If an entry is received from the team hosting the final, that team, provided it has also entered the previous three contests, will be granted a bye into the final.

5.2 The committee shall allocate teams to qualifiers at its December meeting by drawing lots, seeking to include an equal number of teams (not exceeding nine) in each qualifier. Teams will be seeded based on previous contest performances. An equal number of teams from each qualifier shall qualify for the final. The number of teams in the final shall not exceed ten.

5.3 Teams will be drawn into pots (A, B, C and D) representing qualifiers but with no venue being assigned. (If the qualifier venues are not geographically clustered, the committee will then attempt to assign venues to each set of teams in order to minimise travel distances.) Teams representing host towers will be assigned to the qualifier at their home tower.

5.4 Teams will be seeded by taking the average placing of bands from the previous 3 years' contests.

5.4.1 The same number of teams will be seeded at each qualifier. The committee will decide at each year's September meeting how many teams will be seeded. Eight teams will be seeded for the 2027 contest.

5.4.2 Seeds will be divided into groups of two. For the 2027 contest, the seeds will be paired thus: 1&8, 2&7, 3&6, 4&5. If two teams have the same seeding score, the result from the most recent contest will prevail.

5.4.3 One pair of seeds will be drawn at each qualifier.

5.5 Following the draw of the seeded teams, the remaining teams will be drawn and assigned to qualifiers in strict rotation.

5.6 Team withdrawal from qualifiers will not normally trigger a re-allocation unless the distribution of teams is significantly unbalanced, in which case the committee may seek to negotiate a re-allocation taking into account timing and seeding. Team withdrawal from a final will result in its place being left vacant.

6. Practices at Contest Venues

6.1 Subject to appropriate practice arrangements at each qualifier venue, competing teams may be allocated one practice slot in advance of the qualifiers. Whether practice arrangements are appropriate shall be decided by the committee following the contest draw; if appropriate arrangements are not available at a host tower, no practices at that tower shall be permitted. Teams competing in the final may be allocated one practice slot each.

6.2 Practices shall not be allowed closer than the Sunday 13 days before the contest (though they can be on that Sunday).

6.3 During the period from the draw to the Contest, non-host teams and individual team members shall limit the amount of additional ringing they do at the qualifier venue at which they are drawn and the final venue, over and above their usual contribution, to the formal practice period agreed for that venue and allocated by the Contest Committee. The Committee shall take a view as to whether or not a proposed or actual performance outside

the Contest itself is in the ‘spirit of the rules’ and may impose a sanction on a team or team member, should that be considered appropriate.

7. Judges

7.1 The committee shall appoint the chief judge for each contest at its September meeting.

7.2 The chief judge, in consultation with the chair, shall be responsible for selecting judging panels for the qualifiers and the final. Judging panels shall be considered for ratification by the committee at its December meeting.

7.3 A person may not normally be appointed chief judge for either the final or a qualifier unless they have previously been a contest judge. The judging panel for a contest final shall normally consist of those who have previously judged at a qualifier.

7.4 The committee shall provide written guidance to judges. (‘Judges’ Notes.’)

7.5 The chief judge may recruit assistant(s) to undertake administrative tasks at the contest.

7.6 Judges’ decisions at any stage of the contest are final.

8. Draw at Contest Venues

8.1 The draw shall take place at the time advertised in the Ringing World. All teams will be entered into the draw whether or not they are complete. Each team will be allocated a timeslot in which to complete their practice and test piece.

8.2 If a band is not complete when it is time for their team to start their test piece it will be disqualified. If a band is complete in time to ring the test piece and is prepared to forfeit their practice and rope adjustment time they will be allowed to do so.

9. Interruption of a Contest

9.1 If a clapper falls out or a rope breaks the fault will be repaired, if possible, and the competing team will be allowed to start their competition slot again from the beginning. No change will be made to the running order and the starting times for the following teams will be adjusted accordingly.

9.2 In extreme other circumstances, if a team is interrupted, their band representative should talk to the committee representative in charge of the contest who will make a reasonable decision. In the event of an irreparable mechanical failure or permission being withdrawn every effort will be made to re-arrange the contest through consultation with the committee and teams. Any team unable to be present on the new date will have their entry fee refunded.

10. Instructions for Conductors and Stewards

10.1 The conductors will be briefed after the draw to ensure they understand the below procedure.

10.2 The time from entry to the ringing room to starting the test piece may be used by the bands to practise as they wish. Practising must not start before the allocated timeslot.

10.3 Rounds are not judged. It is the conductor's responsibility to ensure that the touch is in changes by the correct time and bands will drop a place if they do not comply. Teams are asked to minimise the rounds at the end of the test piece and to leave the ringing room promptly.

10.4 Qualifiers

10.4.1 Each band will have up to 40 minutes in the ringing room.

10.4.2 Bands are asked to assemble at the entrance to the tower stairs 15 minutes before their timeslot commences.

10.4.3 The steward will escort the band up the stairs so that they may enter the ringing room as soon as the previous band has set the bells and take the previous band downstairs.

10.4.4 Each band must be in the changes of the test piece 15 minutes before the end of their timeslot. The signal to the judges will be two whole pulls on 1,2 (i.e. 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2) rung any time after 20 minutes of the timeslot have elapsed and immediately before starting the rounds that precede the test piece.

10.5 Final

10.5.1 Each band will have approximately 30 minutes in the ringing room starting on the hour and half-hour.

10.5.2 Bands are asked to assemble at the entrance to the tower stairs at 15 or 45 minutes past the hour as appropriate.

10.5.3 The steward will escort the band up the stairs so that they may enter the ringing room as soon as the previous band has set the bells and take the previous band downstairs.

10.5.4 Each band must be in the changes of the test piece by 15 or 45 minutes past each hour as appropriate. The signal to the judges will be two whole pulls on 1,2 (i.e. 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2) rung any time after 10 or 40 minutes past each hour and immediately before starting the rounds that precede the test piece.

11. Composition of the Committee

11.1 The contest shall be planned and organised by a committee which shall be convened annually immediately following the contest and which shall serve until the conclusion of the subsequent contest. The committee will meet three times a year: immediately following the presentation of the results at the final; on the first Sunday in September; on the first Sunday in December.

11.2 Each of the centres of ringing represented in the final of the contest and the centres holding the highest placed runner-up position in each qualifier contest shall be entitled to appoint one representative to the committee. A centre may change its representative at any time by giving notice in writing to the secretary. Each member of the committee shall have one vote.

11.3 A chair, normally a committee member, shall be elected annually at the committee meeting following the contest and shall be eligible for re-election. When a committee vote is tied, the chair shall have the casting vote.

11.4 The committee shall appoint a secretary who shall not be a committee member and who shall not be entitled to vote at committee meetings.

11.5 The committee shall appoint an archivist who, if not a committee member, shall not be entitled to vote at committee meetings.

11.6 The committee may appoint a Strikeometer coordinator who, if not a committee member, shall not be entitled to vote at committee meetings.

12. Role and duties of the committee

12.1 Committee members should be prepared to attend three committee meetings each year; carry out additional tasks as agreed at committee meetings in support of the work of the committee; accept joint responsibility with the other committee members for ensuring a successful contest; accept that committee membership involves a responsibility to the Exercise and for the success of the contest, not just the band that they represent; support and promote the work of the committee in the ringing community.

12.2 The committee shall decide the venues and test pieces for all contests; arrange the dates of each contest in consultation with host towers; maintain a plan of venues for future years; invite entries to the contest from centres of 12 bell ringing; review entries from bands for compliance with contest rules; allocate bands to qualifier contests through the drawing of lots and the use of seeding arrangements; approve the accounts annually and determine the contest entry fee; manage the budget including the cost of engraving and insuring the Taylor Trophy and other necessary administrative expenses; maintain an archive of the contest; publish detailed procedures and guidance on the administration of the contest; develop the contest, to ensure its continued success and quality; carry out surveys of bands and undertake research to ensure effective decision-making; make such decisions that are required to ensure a successful contest.

12.3 The committee shall have the power to vary these rules only by a decision of a majority of those eligible to vote.

13. Copyright

All copyright, and any associated intellectual property rights and moral rights, in any work undertaken or produced by any persons (including but not limited to team members, judges,

committee members, stewards, Strikeometer operators and technicians) as part of the contest will vest in and belong to the committee.