

Health and safety

1. Please do not bring large bags up the tower. This is so that you can have both hands free when ascending / descending the tower steps.
2. Please do not pass others on the stair way.
3. If you are ringing one of the larger bells please take care when climbing onto / stepping off the boxes in front of the 8th – 12th bells.
4. If you feel unwell or require first aid please let the Head of Tower know.

Security

1. Your name will appear on the register /tower list for this ringing session. We will sign you in and out on that list.
2. If there is need to exit the building in an emergency please follow the instructions given by the Head of Tower or Minster staff.
3. Please make sure that you do not leave any bags unattended. Once up the tower there are coat hooks and places around the side of the ringing chamber to leave your belongings whilst you are actually ringing.
4. There is a CCTV camera in the ringing chamber taking images. These images (which are not taken off site and are held by the Minster Police) will not be shared, unless needed for investigation reasons.

Afterwards

1. We will make sure we see you safely out of the building at the end of ringing!
2. Many of our ringers ring at more than one tower in York and if you are visiting York for longer will be very happy to tell you about other towers where you could ring
3. It would be really useful for me if you would take a few minutes at the end of your visit to let me know how the experience has been for you, most particularly if there is anything that we could do to improve things for future visitors. If you would either e mail back the evaluation form (or I can give you a paper copy and a SAE on the day of your visit) that would be really useful for me in my role.

We look forward to meeting you!



VISITING YORK MINSTER TO RING **2020 strategy 'Extending our Reach'**



In the Parish Church where I learnt to ring (as happens in most places) if we had a visitor to ringing practice they were often told, "Oh just find the door at the bottom of the tower and come up." Many of us have been somewhere on holiday, heard bells ringing and just gone up the tower to see if we could join in that ringing. At York Minster we very much want to welcome visitors in that spirit of bellringing camaraderie, but hope you will understand that we can't just say, "We'll leave a door open – just wander in"! Particularly with the current security threat, we have to be very mindful of the security of the cathedral and therefore have to organise visits in advance.

If you want to visit York Minster to ring I will do my best to make sure you can! I am out of the house during weekday working hours, so it is best to communicate with me via e mail (head@yorkminster.org). I hope this leaflet will give you an overview of what to expect when you visit us.

Andy Blacklock (Head of Bell Tower)
head@yorkminster.org

Can anyone come and ring at York Minster?

1. If you have only just started to ring you will need to wait until you can handle a bell very confidently and be able to strike the bell well when ringing with others. At York the bells are the fourth heaviest in the world and we try to ring on all 12 as much as possible. That is not something most people can manage in the early stages of leaning to ring. The best thing would be to ask the person who is teaching you to ring whether they think you would manage to ring on a heavy 12 and listen to their opinion before asking to come and visit.
2. You also need to be capable of climbing 100 steps up to the bell chamber, so that is another consideration for you before asking to come and join us.
3. If you are a competent ringer and want to come and ring with us, please let me know when you are likely to be in York. Our regular practice night is Tuesdays from 1930 – 2100. Sometimes we cannot ring on Tuesdays (for example in December there are quite often Carol services which mean we can't practice that night). Again I will do my best to accommodate your visit
4. Usually we will arrange visitors to come during our Practice Night rather than Sunday service ringing. This is to ensure that we have the highest possible standards of striking on Sunday morning as we call people to worship between 0900 and 0955, ahead of the 10am Sunday Eucharist Service. If you are an experienced ringer at another 12 bell tower and know that you would be able to ring to that standard with us on a Sunday morning, again please do get in touch so we can discuss your coming to ring with us.

Beforehand

1. Please let the Head of Tower know if you have any medical conditions that it would be appropriate for her to know about and who to contact in an emergency (e.g. if you are diabetic or asthmatic it would be useful to know just in case you were unwell when up the tower). The Head of Tower would obviously only use this information as background knowledge and certainly keep that information discretely to herself.
2. The Head of Tower will ask you where you usually ring and what methods you ring, to help her gauge what to ask you to ring at York Minster on your visit.

Safeguarding

1. As part of York Minster's commitment to safeguarding, the Head of Tower will ask every visitor whether there is any 'sexual risk order', 'sexual harm prevention order' or 'volunteer agreement' in place with any parish, tower or diocese with regard to themselves. That is the standard procedure for everyone enquiring about coming to ring at York Minster. This will be done by asking each visiting ringer to sign a volunteer agreement about these criteria.
2. We have some members of our volunteer ringing team who are under 18. They may well be at the ringing session you attend and will be accompanied by their parents. Please do feel free to talk to them (and they may well talk to you) about ringing and matters in general, but please do not divulge or ask them for any personal information. Our guidance would be please be polite and sociable with them but keep all conversation general.
3. We considered asking everyone to put their phones / any electrical device capable of taking photos in a designated store when they went into the tower (as is common practice in schools, security services etc.). However I am conscious that I am not running a School when ringing, so we would expect that ringers would honour the agreement not to take any photos up the tower. Similar with any other electronic device capable of taking photos. We would ask that mobile phones are on silent or switched off during ringing practice please.
4. If visitors want to have a photo, the Head of Tower will ensure only those comfortable with being in such a photograph were in shot (and in the case of any Under 18s or vulnerable adults that their carer's permission was gained in advance)

Toilets

1. There are toilet facilities just as you enter the Minster from the designated entrance for this evening.
2. We recommend using them on your way in, as once you have reached the ringing chamber it is a long way to return down the 100 steps, through the Minster and to make the return journey back to the ringing chamber. We would also have to have a member of the ringing team escort you as visitors to the Minster have to be escorted at all times!

Access to the Minster

- Please meet outside the Police cabin in the Chapter House Yard at the back of Minster (include Map). You will appreciate that we cannot just leave a door open for you to come in by yourself, especially with the current security situation.
- You will be met and signed into the Minster and will be accompanied to and from the ringing chamber by the Head of Bell Tower or other ringers from our volunteer ringing team.

Parking arrangements

- When you come to ring at the Minster hopefully you should be able to park behind the Minster, under the direction of the Minster Police.
- Parking at the Minster is a privilege not a right – but as you will be joining the Bell Ringers on ‘Minster business’ (which is the pre requirement for anyone using the car park) and you should be able to use a parking space as long as there is room (it works on a first come first served basis but seldom causes any problems as the police do stick to the Minster business rule)
- We will need names and registration numbers ahead of your arriving as the Head of Tower will need to give that to the Minster Police beforehand. Please could you give this information to Angela as soon as possible, so that she can get this underway well ahead of our first ringing sessions? We are sure you will understand the security aspects which mean we need to do this.
- I would like to emphasise the very hard job Minster police have to do in managing the security and the safety of the Minster. Dealing concurrently with that, their many other duties and people buzzing the car park button (particularly at the end of a long shift) must be a demanding role.
- Sometimes if you buzz at the gate, the police may be involved in other tasks and cannot immediately answer your call. PLEASE, PLEASE, be polite and understanding at all times and understand there may be times when it isn't possible for us to park behind the Minster.

Photos

- We would ask that visitors do not take any photographs up the tower. This is because we have young people under the age of 18 in our volunteer ringing team; also some ringers who do not wish to be photographed or filmed during ringing.
- If you would like a photo of the ringing chamber or of yourself ringing please ask the Head of Tower who will be happy to arrange for a photo to be taken

Expectations of ringing

1. In an average parish church a touch or set of call changes will normally take about 5 – 10 mins so during an average practice there could be 18 sets of ringing. At York Minster with the weight of the bells, each touch or set of call changes will take 10 – 15 mins, so during a practice of 90 mins, there will be a maximum of 9 sets of ringing.
2. You will appreciate that we have to cater for our own learning band (especially those practising new 12 bell methods), as well as giving opportunity for our better ringers to challenge themselves with advanced methods. That and practising as a team to make our Sunday Service ringing as good as possible will take up the bulk of our practice. We will make sure that you get opportunity to ring in at least two of our pieces of ringing and hope you will understand why there will be periods of time when you are not ringing. Our own ringers are used to sitting for perhaps 20 – 30 minutes between rings, but it can be an unusual experience for people if they are used to ringing at a tower where ringing happens faster!
3. The bells here are heavy around the back end, but the front ones are usually well within the capabilities of experienced ringers. They are weighted as follows: treble to 8th weighing between 8cwt and 17cwt; 9th weighing 23cwt; 10th weighing 30cwt; 11th weighing 40cwt and tenor weighing 59cwt.
4. The main thing that is different here to most towers is that we ring slower due to the weight of the back bells. A good pull at handstroke is key so that the bell will rise at backstroke and visiting / new ringers find they have to hold up the backstrokes more than they are perhaps used to in order to get good clean rounds. Our volunteer ringing team will help you if you are nervous!
5. All our ringers are used to being helped with their striking and so whoever is conducting will ask ringers to hold off / ring slightly closer or whatever is needed to ensure really well-struck ringing is achieved. Please don't be offended if you are asked to adjust your striking – that is just common practice here and it is just as likely to be the Head of Tower being told to leave more space at backstroke as any visitor! We hope you understand that our bells, though magnificent, are loud and widely heard so we need to make sure our ringing is as good as possible for the local residents who have to listen to it!

that only includes yourself or those ringers who are happy to be in such a photo!

MAP of YORK MINSTER PRECINCT.

For visiting ringers you need to aim for number 3 on the map which is the Chapter House Yard. There are railings and gated entrance at that point and an intercom to the Minster Police. Press that on arrival and you will be able to explain who you are and the police should then let you through.

