

Method Statement for information of persons needing to access the bell chamber and making adjustments to the time or chiming.

Method Statement reviewed by PCC 21 May 2025

This Method Statement is to be read in conjunction with the **Church Clock Risk Assessment** in which the main hazards associated with accessing the bell chamber are summarised.

Before starting to access the bell chamber, ensure that:

1. You are authorised by the Church wardens and have had the necessary training, have no health issues that might make you unsafe and have suitable footwear to get up and down the ladder safely.
2. Another competent person is aware that you are about to enter the bell chamber.
3. You have a mobile phone, a face mask and a head torch with you.
4. You have hooked off the bell using the pull-off wires.
5. You have placed the sign in a prominent place to alert others to your presence in the bell chamber.

When getting onto the window sill and ascending the ladder

1. Place the steps provided so that you are able to reach the sill safely (steps required rather than relying on use of a chair or simply pulling on the ladder to reach the sill).
2. Wear your hard hat and head torch (switched on) and ensure your phone is safely stowed in a pocket so that you have both hands free.
3. Take care to avoid the electric lead to the bird scarer.
4. Check that the auto-winder weights are in their normal place which is well clear of the ladder and that there are no other obstructions below the trap door.
5. Be aware that the trap door is heavy and open it fully.
6. Be aware of objects in the bell chamber as you enter that may be low enough for you to hit your head.

Once inside the bell chamber:

1. Close the trap door carefully.
2. Put on your face mask.
3. Check the environment to make sure that there are no obvious hazards beyond those noted in the risk assessment.

If needing to access the clock mechanism:

1. If needing to access the clock mechanism, unlock the outer leaf door (right hand side) then unbolt the inner leaf and carefully take it out of the frame and lay it on the bulk-head to the left.
2. To arrest the pendulum, open the hatch below the doors and reach through to bring the pendulum to a gentle stop without knocking it out of its usual course.
3. If altering the time, only wind the clock forwards. To set the clock an hour back, leave the pendulum stopped and return to restart the clock soon after an hour has elapsed. To set the clock an hour forward, gently turn the brass ring at the front of the case which is engraved with the hours. Be aware that the striking mechanism will engage as you pass the hour.

4. To restart the clock, move the pendulum gently and only a little to one side and release, checking that it resumes its normal swing. Replace the hatch cover. Replace the doors to the front of the clock case, ensuring that they are properly secured.

When exiting the bell chamber:

1. Raise the trap door to open it fully.
2. Turn to face into the ladder and descend until you are below the opening but still able to take hold of the handle on the underside of the trap door. Pull the trap door towards you, descending the ladder further and closing the door gently.
3. Descend the ladder and from the sill carefully.
4. Remove the sign from the base of the ladder and stow in its usual place.
5. Inform your contact that you have exited the bell chamber safely.

Personal Protective Equipment

1. Hard hat, face masks, ear protection, head torch and additional PPE if deemed necessary for the task to be carried out.

Training and Permits

1. The Church wardens are responsible for authorising persons to access the bell chamber. Unauthorised persons must not do so.
2. The Church wardens or another nominated by the CW will ensure that all those authorised have received training in what is within the local clock-keepers' scope and what must be left for maintenance contractors.
3. The Church wardens or another nominated by the CW is responsible for arranging liaison with the Church's normal clock maintenance contractor, including reporting on defects and receiving reports from the contractor following routine maintenance visits.

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