

Risk Assessment

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Issue: 1



Whalley Bell Ringers
Church of St. Mary & All Saints
Church Lane
Whalley. BB7 9SY

Visiting and Accessing the Ringing Room

This risk assessment will apply to all visitors who wish to access the ringing room within the bell tower at St Mary's Church, Whalley. The risk assessment is particularly aimed at members of the public who are not bellringers and therefore not familiar with safety hazards while accessing bell towers.

Access to the ringing room is from the ground floor level through a low height door and onwards up the spiral staircase with approximately 30 steps to the ringing room level. An additional small number of steps down allow access to the ringing room which from which the church bells can be rung by suitably trained and authorised bell ringers only.

Prior to entering the bell tower, a short introductory talk will take place to point out and provide education about the hazards indicated in this risk assessment. All visitors must be in good health and physically capable of using the spiral staircase before access to the ringing room is allowed.

An HSE approved first aid kit and accident reporting book are located in the ringing room to cover unforeseen situations.

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Remarks and control measures</u>
Lower door threshold	Trip	The door threshold is marked with yellow and black tape and the step hazard will be discussed in the introductory talk.
Entrance door height	Concussion	The tower entrance door requires some stooping down in order to pass through and this hazard will be discussed in the introductory talk.
Spiral staircase	Falls	A rope is provided up the centre post of the spiral staircase and users are encouraged to hold this loosely while using the spiral staircase. Visitors will be encouraged to use the outside of the staircase where the tread width is the widest.
Ringling room steps	Falls	There are a small number of downward steps to access the ringing room at the top of the spiral staircase. One of the steps is quite deep and is a particular hazard. Two handholds are provided on the sides of the door opening to help prevent falls while using the steps.
Moving bell ropes	General injuries	Bell ropes can move at high speed and with considerable force. Warning notices are in place to indicate that the bells may be up and so cause a hazard if the ropes are pulled. No visitor will be allowed in the ringing room without supervision from an experienced bell ringer. An additional talk while in the ringing room will educate visitors about the risk of pulling a bell rope. Visitors will be asked to use the seating in the ringing room and not move around amongst the bell ropes.

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Remarks and control measures</u>
Tower access	Falls	The spiral staircase allows additional access to the bell chamber and tower roof. A door is in place to prevent access above the ringing room level. This door will remain locked at all times while visitors are accessing the ringing room.
Staircase lighting	Falls and Trips	The spiral staircase is illuminated with a number of wall mounted luminaires to provide sufficient lighting to allow safe use. There is minimal daylight illumination via narrow windows on the staircase. All lights will remain switched on at all times while visitors are accessing the ringing room. All staircase luminaires are provided with emergency backup in case of power cuts.
Ringing room lighting	Falls and trips	The ringing room is illuminated with ceiling lights and a large window provides adequate light during daylight hours. The ringing room lighting will remain switched on at all times while visitors are accessing the ringing room. An additional wall mounted emergency back up luminaire is provided in case of power cuts.
Ringing room general	Trips	The ringing room floor will remain free from trip hazards at all times.
Bell rope entanglement	General injuries	Demonstrations of bell ringing may take place while visitors are within the ringing room. All visitors will be asked to be seated with feet placed firmly on the floor to prevent entanglement with moving bell ropes. A maximum of 6 visitors (non-ringers) will be allowed in the ringing room at any one time. Any visitor not complying with these rules while within the ringing room will be asked to leave.
Tower access general	General injuries	The tower entrance door will be kept locked at all times except when experienced bell ringers are present to supervise visitors.