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## Newsletter No. 123

**November 2021**

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## **Future Events (DEPENDING ON RESTRICTIONS)**

### **2022**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> March                     | <b>Annual Representatives' Meeting, Oak Farm, Cannock</b><br><br><i>Thanks to Peter Copley (Stafford) for organising. They may be able to support online streaming for those unable to attend as well.</i> |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> April                     | <b>Joint Morris Organisation National Day of Dance - Liverpool 2022</b><br><br><i>They say 3<sup>rd</sup> time's a charm! More details to follow</i>   |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> July                     | <b>Letchworth Centenary Ring Meeting - FULLY BOOKED</b>  |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> August | <b>Saddleworth Rushcart</b>  |

## **Constitutional Changes – Membership Consultation**

Dear All

At the direction of the Squire, please find in this newsletter a packet of documents to review. These are proposed to be submitted for approval by the membership at the ARM on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2022. The Squire's Commission, set up after the 2021 ARM, has steadily worked through the various documents that currently outline the Ring's policies and procedures. From these, they have worked to produce a set of documents which can help the officers to run the Morris Ring by retaining those parts which we know work (such as the voting procedures at meetings), while also rewriting those parts which were deemed to be over-complicated or unnecessarily detailed for our operations (e.g. the safeguarding policy). The overall result is best described as a constitution which is largely similar to what was already in place, but with some of the finer details moved into supporting policy documents to reduce the need to modify the constitution should circumstances change in the world around us.

As has been stated elsewhere, no-one operates in a vacuum and to this end, the commission would now like feedback from member sides as to whether the documents below have a) addressed the essential parts of our operations and b) are fit and appropriate for the future. We recognise that there is a wide body of knowledge and experience within our membership, so we would like to hear comments or answer any questions now, so we have sufficient time to understand if any changes are necessary before submitting the proposals for the ARM.

A consultation period will therefore run from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November and will close on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November. Comments and questions should be submitted by email directly to me using the [bagman@themorrisring.org](mailto:bagman@themorrisring.org) email address, from which I will endeavour to answer as soon as possible pending other commitments. I will also create a discussion thread within the Morris Ring Google Group which can be used as an open forum if people wish in a manner similar to that used to discuss the constitutional changes in 2018. If you wish to join this discussion but have not yet joined the Google Group, full details can be found on the website <https://themorrisring.org/sides/morris-ring-google-group>

Pending any changes, it is anticipated that a further newsletter will be sent out around Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December which contain all the documents in their final draft form plus any other ARM paperwork (including nominations for the next Squire).

Until then, happy reading!

Cheesy

## **A letter from the Squire**

Dear Members

Thank you for taking the time to review the proposed constitution and supporting policy documents for the Morris Ring, which will be voted upon at the next ARM on 5th March 2022. This is the end result of 6 months of work by the Squire's commission, hopefully making these documents and processes ready for the years to come and helping the various officers of the Morris Ring to discharge their duties more effectively. Please take the time to read each document, digest, and either provide feedback or raise questions as required. We do want to make sure we have delivered a set of documents which are foundation blocks upon which the Ring can continue to promote morris dancing and provide a fellowship for morris dancing clubs across the UK and beyond.

The following documents are being proposed for approval for the next ARM

1. Constitution
2. Meetings and Advisory Council guidance (inc. Area Representative constituencies)
3. Equality and Diversity statement
4. Complaints procedure
5. Safeguarding commitment (for website)
6. Safeguarding policy

Some key changes to note include;

- It is proposed that Squire Elect is added as a position on the advisory council, and it is further proposed that they will not assume office until the following ARM (12 months after election) so that there is a full year to hand over between outgoing and incoming squire, providing a smoother transition between the two
- The Safeguarding policy has been revised to better reflect the Morris Ring's operations
- Given the large number of similarities between the 2 levels of membership, it is proposed that Joint membership is merged with associate membership, which in turn will be redefined into 2 sub-groups as 'associate members with insurance' (currently Associate) and 'associate members without insurance' (currently Joint) respectively. The membership fees charges for both categories will be determined annually by the Treasurer of the Morris Ring. Full membership will remain unchanged

It is worth noting that some policies/information documents have not been reviewed yet as they are either more open to personal interpretation (such as advice for running Ring meetings or dancing jigs) or have been published more recently so will be reviewed separately when required (e.g Data Protection policy).

Please send any questions or feedback to our Bagman using the email [bagman@themorrisring.com](mailto:bagman@themorrisring.com) and we will endeavour to provide an answer as quickly as possible.

Thanks and all the best

Simon Newman, Squire - Morris Ring

Morris Ring Newsletter No 123

November 2021

### **A note on the Constitution**

In re-drafting the Constitution, I tried to avoid as many Pooh-traps-for-heffalumps as I could discern, in order to make the tasks of the current and future officers less onerous, and leave the more volatile (in every sense) issues to policies which would be subject to a simple majority at an ARM (or EGM) rather than the super majority required for Constitutional change.

I tried to follow the principles on drafting (and redrafting) acquired in my previous profession - where possible, keep it simple, if it isn't broken, don't fix it, and above all, don't define that which doesn't need definition.

I have kept it to two A4 sides, just ...

I may have succeeded (or not) but that is for others to judge.

John Burke

## **1. OBJECTS AND DEFINITIONS**

- 1.1 The Morris Ring is an association of clubs and other organisations practising and performing morris, sword, mumming and related activities; any established club meeting regularly for these purposes and endeavouring to uphold the standards and dignity of the morris, will be eligible for membership of the Morris Ring.
- 1.2 The Morris Ring will encourage the performance of the morris, maintain its traditions, encourage research into all aspects of the morris, conserve its history as it is able, and bring into contact all morris clubs.
- 1.3 Member clubs, in all respects, retain their independence. The Morris Ring does not replace or supersede member clubs, but will seek to assist, and where appropriate, represent them.
- 1.4 The Morris Ring will treat all individuals with dignity and respect, regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability and/or age.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE MORRIS RING**

- 2.1 At the discretion of the elected officers, a club or organisation may become an associate member of the Morris Ring; if appropriate, such a club or organisation is expected to seek admission to full membership.
- 2.2 Admission of a club into full membership of the Morris Ring is subject to a majority of votes cast at a meeting of club representatives, following any advice from the elected officers.
- 2.3 Each member club or associate will pay an annual subscription, the amount to be determined by the annual representatives meeting, following a recommendation by the Treasurer.
- 2.4 The Morris Ring will maintain appropriate public liability insurance cover for all member clubs and associates in the United Kingdom, applicable to all clubs on receipt of their annual subscription. Optional additional insurance cover may be offered, where appropriate.
- 2.5 Clubs whose standards or conduct fall below those generally accepted by the member clubs, or that conflict with any applicable Morris Ring policy, code of practice or guidance may:
  - exceptionally, following the advice of the Advisory Council, be suspended from membership by the Squire, or
  - be suspended or removed from membership of the Morris Ring if at least two thirds of the votes cast at a meeting of club representatives are in favour of such action.

## **3. REPRESENTATIVES' MEETINGS**

- 3.1 Representatives of member clubs will meet annually.
- 3.2 Other representatives' meetings may be called:
  - at the Squire's discretion
  - following a written request to the Bagman by at least one third of member clubs subject to the published policies of the Morris Ring
- 3.3 Save for:
  - the election of officers, where there are more than two candidates
  - suspension or removal of a club from membership
  - amendments to this constitutionany matters requiring formal determination at a representatives' meeting will be determined by a simple majority vote of the member clubs represented; each club will have one vote on any such matter.
- 3.4 Voting may be by written, electronic or such other reasonable means as the elected officers will agree in advance, appropriate to the circumstances.

## **4. OFFICERS**

- 4.1 The Morris Ring will have three elected officers:

- the Squire, who leads the Morris Ring
- the Bagman, who is responsible for administration
- the Treasurer, who is responsible for financial matters.

4.2 The Squire, Bagman and Treasurer will be elected biennially at the annual representatives' meeting. Elections for Squire and Treasurer will alternate with those for the Bagman, with the Squire taking office at the annual representative's meeting next following their election. The Bagman and Treasurer take office on election.

4.3 The Squire may not, but the Bagman and Treasurer may be re-elected. The officers are elected by an absolute majority of the votes cast unless there are more than two candidates, when the alternative vote system will be used.

4.4 In consultation with the Advisory Council, the Squire may appoint a deputy for any other officer and, may appoint such other officers as they think fit to carry out other functions.

4.5 If a vacancy occurs in the office of Squire, the Advisory Council will take such action as it thinks fit, pending an election to that office.

## **5. AREA REPRESENTATIVES**

5.1 Area Representatives will be elected at an annual representatives' meeting for a three-year term and will be eligible for re-election.

5.2 For the sole purpose of choosing Area Representatives, each member club will be allocated to one of the geographical areas within the United Kingdom and may only vote in that area.

5.3 Candidates for Area Representatives must be a member of one of the area's clubs, be nominated by at least one of those clubs and be elected by a simple majority of votes of the clubs in that area. Clubs outside the UK will be represented by the elected officers. A temporary replacement area representative may be appointed by the Squire, where necessary.

## **6. ADVISORY COUNCIL**

6.1 The Advisory Council consists of the Squire, Bagman and Treasurer, any officers elect, and all past elected officers of the Morris Ring whose term of office has concluded within the past six years, together with the elected area representatives. The Advisory Council will elect a chair, who may not be a currently elected officer but may be the last past Squire.

6.2 The Advisory Council will meet at least once a year, and will have a quorum of five members, including at least one elected officer and two area representatives.

6.3 The purposes of the Advisory Council include:

- advising and assisting the officers to further the objects of the Morris Ring
- taking action in an emergency
- dealing with any other appropriate matters in accordance with the policies of the Morris Ring.

## **7. GENERAL**

7.1 Any amendment of this constitution will require at least two thirds of the votes cast at the annual representatives' meeting to be in favour of the amendment.

7.2 Appropriate policies, guidance and codes of practice may from time to time be adopted by the Morris Ring at a meeting of club representatives by simple majority vote.

7.3 All funds or assets of the Morris Ring will be used only for the furtherance of its objectives and no such funds or assets may be transferred to the officers or member clubs of the Morris Ring for their personal use.

7.4 On the dissolution of the Morris Ring none of its funds or assets may be transferred to its officers or member clubs for their personal use and may only be transferred to charitable or not-for-profit organisations having the same or similar objectives as the Morris Ring and an equivalent prohibition on personal use of funds or assets once transferred.

# Meetings and Advisory Council Policy

## 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Meetings may be conducted by personal or remote attendance of the participants or by a mixture of methods, as appropriate to the circumstances, at the discretion of the Squire, or, in the case of Advisory Council meetings, the chair of the Advisory Council.

## 2. ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVES' MEETINGS

- 2.1 Member clubs will be given at least three months' notice of the date and location of the annual representatives' meeting by the Bagman.
- 2.2 Any of the following must be received by the Bagman no later than two months before the meeting:
- Nominations for elected officers
  - Nominations for Area Representatives
  - proposed alterations to the constitution
  - formal resolutions for discussion
- 2.3 In the case of nominations for elected officers and Area Representatives, each nomination will be accompanied by short biographical details of the candidate, their photograph and the nominating club's supporting statement, no more than 250 words in length.
- 2.4 The Treasurer will recommend to the ARM the level of annual subscription for full member clubs, including public liability insurance, and for associate members, including public liability insurance where equivalent cover is not held elsewhere.
- 2.5 The Bagman will circulate details of the matters set out above to member clubs no later than one month before the meeting.
- 2.6 In the case of elections of officers, member clubs wishing to send their vote to the Bagman in advance, should do so in writing (including by electronic means), to arrive at least seven days before the meeting. Voting in advance will normally only be available for officer elections.

## 3. OTHER REPRESENTATIVES' MEETINGS

- 3.1 When a representatives' meeting (other than the ARM) has been called, it will normally be held within four weeks and the Bagman will give notice of the meeting at least two weeks beforehand, together with any necessary information.

## 4. VOTING PROCEDURE - GENERAL

- 4.1 Voting for all matters is normally on the basis of a simple majority of votes cast, except for constitutional amendments and suspension or removal of clubs from membership, where a two-thirds majority of member clubs voting is required; however, if there are more than two candidates for the posts of Squire, Bagman or Treasurer, the alternative vote system<sup>1</sup> is used.
- 4.2 Each full member club is entitled to one vote in each election or other matter to be determined. Associate clubs may attend a representatives' meeting, but may not vote.

## 5. VOTING PROCEDURE - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 5.1 The Bagman will send one ballot paper to each member club with the formal notice of the meeting for use either as a postal vote, if the club is not sending a delegate to the ARM, or as a ballot paper at the ARM. In accordance with procedures at Local and Parliamentary Elections, these will be uniquely marked to allow checking and/or reissue as/if required.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Electoral Reform Society's explanation of the alternative vote system at: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/voting-systems/types-of-voting-system/alternative-vote/>



## Meetings and Advisory Council Policy

- 5.2 Reasonable time will be allowed at the meeting for open discussion about the candidates. By convention, the candidates do not speak on their own behalf and are not present during the discussion, of which no minutes are taken.
- 5.3 With the consent of the meeting, the Squire will appoint a Returning Officer and a deputy to conduct the ballot and count and may appoint at least two independent scrutineers. None of these shall be current officers of the Morris Ring or candidates.
- 5.4 The name of each club submitting a ballot paper will be marked on a voting register. The ballot papers should not indicate the name of the club voting.
- 5.5 Postal votes should be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the name of the member club on whose behalf the vote is submitted or, if submitted by electronic means, printed and placed in suitably marked envelopes by the Bagman before the meeting.
- The Returning Officer will check to ensure the submitting club has voting rights.
  - The club's name will be marked on the register of clubs as having voted.
  - The ballot paper will be added to those ready for sorting/counting and the envelope discarded.
  - Postal votes submitted in a form other than described above will be treated as spoilt.
- 5.6 If there are more than two candidates, the alternative vote system is used:
- Member clubs rank candidates in order of preference by marking 1, 2, 3 etc. Member clubs may rank as many or as few candidates as they wish or vote for one candidate.
  - First preference votes are counted first. If a candidate receives more than 50% of the first preference votes, then they are elected.
  - If no candidate reaches 50%, the candidate with the fewest first preference votes is eliminated. Their second preference votes are reallocated to the remaining candidates. If one candidate has more votes than the other remaining candidates put together, that candidate is elected.
  - If not, the process is repeated until one candidate has more votes than the other remaining candidates put together. This candidate wins the election.
- 5.7 In the event of equality of votes or, at the discretion of the Returning Officer, a near equality of votes, the result should first be verified by a recount, to eliminate any doubts or concerns.
- 5.8 In later rounds, in case of equality of votes, a higher number of votes in the earliest round gives precedence. In the case of continued equality, the following process<sup>2</sup> will be adopted:
- The Returning Officer marks a blank ballot paper for each of the two tied candidates, folds them, places them in a suitable receptacle and then draws one ballot "blind". The candidate for whom it is marked is awarded one more vote [in that round only].
- 5.9 Announcement of results by the Returning Officer:
- The results of the ballot will be announced to the meeting at a convenient point as soon as the result is known.
  - In keeping with the principle of open democracy, the number of votes for each candidate will be given.
  - The number of spoilt papers and a summary of the reasons for their exclusion will also be given.

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from relevant instructions for Returning Officers in Local and Parliamentary Elections

# Meetings and Advisory Council Policy

## 6. MEETING PROCEDURES

- 6.1 So that representatives' meetings may be conducted efficiently and equitably, the following procedures will normally be adopted:
- 6.2 Motions will be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the meeting decides otherwise.
- 6.3 Motions and amendments will be proposed and seconded.
- 6.4 Motions may be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- 6.5 An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion, not to negate the motion.
- 6.6 If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendments may be moved.
- 6.7 A representative may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting and any seconder.
- 6.8 If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments will be moved and debated in the order directed by the chair.
- 6.9 One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair considers it expedient but each amendment will be voted upon separately.
- 6.10 A representative may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- 6.11 The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- 6.12 Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion will have a right of reply either at the end of debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 6.13 Unless permitted by the chair, a representative may speak only once in the debate on a motion except:
  - to speak on an amendment moved by another representative;
  - to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
  - to make a point of order; or
  - in exercise of a right of reply.
- 6.14 A point of order will be decided by the chair and their decision will be final.
- 6.15 When a motion is under debate, no other motion will be moved except:
  - to amend the motion;
  - to put the motion to a vote;
  - to refer a motion to the Advisory Committee for consideration;
  - to proceed to the next business;
  - to ask that a person to be no longer heard or that they leave the meeting;
  - to adjourn the debate; or
  - to adjourn the meeting.
- 6.16 Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair will be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.

## Meetings and Advisory Council Policy

6.17 Excluding motions moved under 6.15 above, the contributions by a representative will relate only to the motion under discussion.

### 7. THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

7.1 The Advisory Council consists the three elected officers, officers elect and all past officers of the Morris Ring, for a maximum of six years following the conclusion of their term of office, together with elected representatives for geographical areas. The purpose of the Council is to advise and assist the Squire and the other elected officers to further the objects of the Morris Ring, to take action in an emergency and any other appropriate matters.

7.2 It elects its own Chair, who may not be a currently elected officer.

7.3 The Squire or the Advisory Council may invite others to assist it, as necessary. Those individuals will not have voting rights in the Advisory Council's deliberations.

7.4 Area Representatives are elected on a three-year cycle as members of the Advisory Council. They represent member and associate clubs based in the following general geographical areas (shown in the map below), subject to the agreement of individual clubs:

- Eastern
  - Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Greater London (part), Hertfordshire (part), Lincolnshire (part), Norfolk, Rutland, Suffolk
- North
  - East Riding of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire (part). North Yorkshire (part), South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire
- North West
  - Cheshire, Derbyshire (part), Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside
- South West & Wales
  - Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire (part), Somerset, Wales, Wiltshire, Channel Islands
- West Midlands
  - Gloucestershire (part), Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire (part), Warwickshire (part), West Midlands, Worcestershire
- North East
  - Cumbria, Durham, North Yorkshire (part), Northumberland, Scotland, Tyne and Wear
- East Midlands
  - Derbyshire (part), Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire (part), Warwickshire (part)
- South Midlands
  - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Greater London (part), Hampshire (part), Hertfordshire (part), Oxfordshire, Surrey (part)
- South East
  - East Sussex, Greater London (part), Hampshire (part), Isle of Wight, Kent, Surrey (part), West Sussex

7.5 The Overseas Bagman will represent non-UK member clubs on behalf of the elected officers, as necessary.

## The Morris Ring

Regional Areas



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# **RING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY PROPOSAL**

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE**

1. The Morris Ring is committed to ensure that everyone we have dealings with is treated fairly, without bias or discrimination. This means that we will do our best to:
  - Treat people with respect
  - Avoid behaviour which is discriminatory or which treats a person less favourably than others
  - Avoid behaviour which amounts to harassment, bullying or victimisation
2. The Morris Ring is committed to ensuring that morris dancing is made as accessible to as many and as wide a range of people as possible.

## **HOW WE WILL MEET THIS COMMITMENT**

1. By ensuring that Ring officers, member clubs and those who represent the Ring are aware of what constitutes unfair treatment, as defined in legislation, and are committed to avoiding unfair treatment of those they deal with
2. By ensuring that Ring activities are assessed by those organising them to ensure that they avoid unfairness and are aimed at as wide a range of participants as possible
3. By keeping this policy under review
4. By ensuring that member clubs are aware of the importance of fair and indiscriminatory treatment, of the legal requirements of relevant legislation such as the Equality Act, and by encouraging them to devise appropriate policies for their own activities
5. To challenge discrimination, harassment and other unfair behaviour when we encounter it, where necessary implementing policies for members such as that relating to face make-up adopted in 2021;

‘Member sides should not use any solid full-face coloured makeup or disguise which could be taken by a reasonable observer to imitate or parody a skin colour different from their own.’

6. To investigate any complaints we receive promptly, and fairly, and to take appropriate action to resolve the matter, including disciplinary actions as necessary
7. In promoting the morris to place emphasis on reaching as wide a range of people as we can
8. To identify barriers to participation in morris and to remove those barriers where we can.

# MORRIS RING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## CONTEXT NOTES

There are numerous situations where a complaint may be made to the Morris Ring.

In all cases the same procedure will be followed.

### 1. SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS

- 1.1. Member clubs of the Ring.
- 1.2. Officers or Area Representatives.
- 1.3. Members of the public or press.
- 1.4. Other organisations, which interact with the Ring or its members, such as: the JMO, local authorities, groups who have commissioned Morris performances.

*If individuals have a complaint about their own club, it should be resolved locally.*

*Only in the event of total failure of that process, would the Ring endeavour to resolve the matter.*

### 2. TYPES OF COMPLAINT

2.1. **Non-compliance** with any codes of practice published by the Ring, which may include:

- 2.1.1. Safeguarding.
- 2.1.2. Discrimination.
- 2.1.3. Health and Safety.
- 2.1.4. Insurance conditions.

2.2. **Maladministration.**

- 2.2.1. This may include such things as obstruction, incompetence, dereliction of duty, financial impropriety or abusive behaviour.

2.3. **Disputes between Member Teams or other Morris Teams.**

2.4. **Illegal activities.**

- 2.4.1. These may include such things as: theft, drug use or sales, misuse of property or equipment, smuggling, etc.
- 2.4.2. Serious breaches of safeguarding or discrimination laws.

Items in Section 2.4 would normally be referred directly to the police.

However, the Ring would need to be aware of anything that may impact on its reputation.

### 3. PERSONS OR BODIES COMPLAINED AGAINST

These may include:

- 3.1. Officers of the Morris Ring
- 3.2. Area representatives.
- 3.3. Persons or groups with Morris Ring related responsibilities, such as: Overseas Bagman, Archive Group members, shop administrator, appointed instructor, webmaster.
- 3.4. Member Teams.
- 3.5. Members of the Advisory Council.
- 3.6. Should the complaint relate to all three elected Ring Officers, the matter would be referred to the Chair of the Advisory Council. After a decision by the Advisory Council, actions as in section 7.4 below would be implemented.

*Complaints about individual members of Ring Teams must be dealt with locally.*

*The Ring would only be involved in exceptional circumstances.*

### 4. AUTHORITY

- 4.1. The Squire of the Morris Ring has the authority to effect any of the outcomes defined below, either immediately, or in a specified time.
- 4.2. In the case of suspension or exclusion, the decision must be done in consultation with the Morris Ring Advisory Council and ratified at an ARM, or a special meeting called for the purpose.

### 5. SUMMARY

- 5.1. It is hoped that few situations arise that lead to such formal complaints. However, should they occur, the Morris Ring will endeavour to resolve them amicably in as short a time as possible.
- 5.2. It should be remembered that this is a voluntary organisation, not structured for litigation.

- 5.3. The purpose of these procedures is to ensure correct handling and transparency in the event of significant problems occurring.

## **PROCEDURES**

These procedures relate only to the Morris Ring and its own activities, not to member teams.

Matters relating only to member teams must be processed locally.

### **6. METHOD OF DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS TO THE MORRIS RING**

- 6.1. An elected officer of the Morris Ring is informed of the complaint.
- 6.1.1. Methods appropriate to the complainant may be used, but must be recorded, and followed up in writing, giving the basic details of the case.
- 6.2. The officer acknowledges the complaint.
- 6.3. The same officer informs the other elected officers and any other parties that may be affected, such as insurance providers, or other Morris organisations.
- 6.4. The officers investigate, review the case and agree the appropriate outcome.
- 6.5. The complainant is informed of the outcome.

### **7. Possible Outcomes of the Review.**

- 7.1. No action to be taken. (The reason for this may need to be explained.)
- 7.2. Report to appropriate bodies such as the JMO, police, social services or health care for further action.
- 7.3. Sanctions against teams, which could include:
- 7.3.1. A warning
- 7.3.2. Temporary suspension until the problem is rectified
- 7.3.2.1. *In the event of a Temporary Suspension, arrangements would be made to maintain the member's insurance cover until its expiry date.*
- 7.3.3. Exclusion
- 7.3.3.1. *In the event of exclusion, the team would be informed that insurance cover would not be renewed by the Morris Ring.*
- 7.3.4. Appointment of someone to monitor the team (preferably their Area Representative)
- 7.4. Sanctions against individuals, which could include:
- 7.4.1. A warning.
- 7.4.2. Instruction to rectify a situation.
- 7.4.3. Removal from office.

### **8. Appeals**

- 8.1. A complainant, who is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, has the right to request a review by the Advisory Council.
- 8.2. The Chair of the Advisory Council will inform the appellant of the decision.
- 8.2.1. Any decision overturning that of the elected officers requires a two thirds majority of the full Advisory Council.
- 8.3. No further appeals will be entertained.

### **9. Confidentiality**

- 9.1. Unless a criminal offence is alleged or suspected, which has to be divulged to police or other authorities, details of complaints will be restricted to those directly involved.
- 9.2. No press statements or other media responses will be made, other than to say that the matter is being dealt with by the Morris Ring in line with its Complaints Procedure.
- 9.3. No personal information about individuals or groups involved will be divulged to external bodies, unless legally required.
- 9.4. Complaint Information held electronically by the Ring will only be retained in line with current legislation.

# **Morris Ring Safeguarding Commitment**

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING**

Everyone who participates in morris dancing is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. This applies to everybody, but particularly to those legally classed as children or as vulnerable adults (hereafter collectively referred to as vulnerable people).

In its own activities the Morris Ring is committed to ensuring that, when given responsibility for vulnerable people, it provides them with the highest possible standard of care as detailed in the full safeguarding policy.

While acknowledging that its member clubs are diverse, and many do not include vulnerable people amongst their members, the Morris Ring is committed to encouraging all its member clubs to devise and implement safeguarding policies appropriate to their membership and activities.

## **HOW WE WILL MEET THIS COMMITMENT**

1. By ensuring that Ring officers, member clubs and those who represent the Ring are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, as defined in legislation, and are committed to promoting the well-being of those they deal with.
2. By ensuring that Ring activities are assessed by those organising them to ensure that potential safeguarding issues are identified and suitable steps put in place to deal with them, working in partnership with clubs, vulnerable people and their parents / carers.
3. In relation to its member clubs, the Morris Ring will:
4. ensure that they are aware of the importance of safeguarding, of the legal requirements of relevant legislation
5. encourage them to devise appropriate policies for their own activities;
6. provide information on devising an appropriate safeguarding policy for the club;
7. provide specific safeguarding information to clubs when requested
8. By challenging unsafe behaviour when we encounter it.
9. By investigating any safeguarding concerns we receive promptly, and fairly, taking appropriate action to resolve the matter
10. The Executive Officers of the Morris Ring have responsibility for implementing the Safeguarding policy and will keep it under regular review.

For more details please see the full policy document ([link to doc](#))



# **MORRIS RING SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing vulnerable people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Morris Ring.

The Morris Ring, within its activities, will ensure that vulnerable people are kept safe.

The Morris Ring is committed to promoting policies so that everyone involved in morris dancing is aware of their responsibilities to safeguard vulnerable people from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect vulnerable people and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

For the purpose of this document a “vulnerable person” includes any child, young person and any individual who is considered to be vulnerable, whatever their age.

A child or young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (section 105(1), Children Act 1989). The terms “child” and “young person” are used interchangeably in this document.

For vulnerable adults, the terms “adult at risk” or “adult at risk of harm” are also used and can be described as “an adult who requires assistance in the conduct of their own affairs”.

References to “elected officers” are to the officers of the Morris Ring.

## **1.2 POLICY STATEMENT**

The Morris Ring is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the vulnerable person is paramount
- all people, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender (notwithstanding constitutional restrictions), language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in morris dancing in an enjoyable and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect vulnerable people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- working in partnership with parents, guardians, carers and vulnerable people is essential for the protection of vulnerable people.

## **1.3 MONITOR AND REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Bagman of the Morris Ring should regularly report to the Squire and other officers about progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required.

The policy should be reviewed every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

# **2. PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE**

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

To provide vulnerable people with the best possible experience and opportunities in morris dancing everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of participants in morris dancing to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. However, it is their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse, and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the vulnerable person as explained in section 4.

This section will assist in identifying what is meant by good practice.

## **2.2 GOOD PRACTICE**

The Morris Ring should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Ensure member clubs are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding their members attending events
- work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encouraging open communication with no secrets
- make the experience of morris dancing enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all vulnerable people with respect and dignity
- be mindful of the welfare needs of vulnerable people present
- avoid unnecessary physical contact. Where any form of manual or physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with consent.
- aim to give positive, constructive feedback
- keep a written record of any incident or injury that occurs, along with details of any outcomes

Involvement of parents/carers

- Involve parents or carers wherever possible, so that they know where the person in their care is, who they are with and what they are doing.
- secure parental or carers' consent for the club to act *in loco parentis*, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if required

## **3. DEFINING ABUSE**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional, financial or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to physical or psychological injury or harm. Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

### **3.2 INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place.

Indications that someone is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- an injury on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the vulnerable person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- someone expresses concern about the welfare of a third party
- unexplained changes in behaviour including but not limited to: becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn, displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness in minors
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults by children, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected

The above list is not exhaustive; the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place.

It is **NOT** the responsibility of the Morris Ring to decide that abuse is occurring. It **IS** everybody's responsibility to act on any concerns.

### **3.3 Use of Photography or Filming Equipment at Events**

Performances and events may be used as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of vulnerable people. Any concerns should be reported to an Elected Officer.

## 4. RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a responsibility to act on any concerns raised through contact with the appropriate authorities. This applies to allegations or suspicions of abuse occurring within the Morris Ring, and to allegations or suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations or suspicions.

### 4.2 RECEIVING EVIDENCE OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

Awareness of possible abuse may arise in various ways. It may be reported to the Morris Ring by someone else or directly by the vulnerable person affected.

If a vulnerable person says or indicates that they are being abused, the individual should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the vulnerable person
- **reassure** the vulnerable person that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the vulnerable person, showing that they are being taken seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and vulnerable person abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the vulnerable person has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the vulnerable person that other people must be informed about what they have said. Tell the vulnerable person this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the vulnerable person is paramount.** If the vulnerable person needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a vulnerable person protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to an elected officer immediately

### 4.3 RECORDING INFORMATION

A detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or concern. The individual recording the incident should confine themselves to the facts and distinguish between personal knowledge and other sources. The individual should not include their own opinions.

Information should include the following where possible:

- the vulnerable person's name, age, date of birth and contact details
- the details of the allegation or disclosure, including dates, times and any other relevant information (including details of any witnesses)
- the date and time the incident was disclosed

### 4.4 REPORTING THE CONCERN

The elected officers of the Morris Ring will take responsibility for Safeguarding as part of their role. If they are not available, the individual concerned should take responsibility and seek appropriate advice.

In the event of an incident being reported, the elected officers will:

- refer the matter to the appropriate authorities
- decide who will deal with any media enquiries
- take any other appropriate action

In the event of an elected officer being the subject of a disclosure or allegation, a report must be made to the Chairman of the Morris Ring Advisory Council, who will follow the above steps

## **4.5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every effort should be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained without compromising the safety of those concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

All information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

## **5. DECLARATION**

On behalf of **the Morris Ring**, we will oversee the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to. This safeguarding policy supersedes all previous versions.

**Signed on behalf of the officers of the Morris Ring:**

**Name**

**Date**

## **Morris Ring Publications**

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## **On-line Links:**



The main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR:

<https://www.themorrisring.org/>

The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Private Forum for debate or announcements.  
<https://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring>

*Contact the Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.*

Morris Ring Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMorrisRing>

Morris Ring Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheMorrisRing>

## Call for Contributions

Any items of urgent Morris-related news, please send to me at [bagman@themorrisring.org](mailto:bagman@themorrisring.org) for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Less time-dependent updates and longer pieces to Tony Foard, please, for the Circular.

If you have any photographs, you can send them to Duncan Broomhead, the Morris Ring Photo Archivist ([duncan.broomhead@btinternet.com](mailto:duncan.broomhead@btinternet.com)) and any articles, ideally accompanied with photographs, can be submitted to Tony Foard, the Editor of the Morris Ring Circular, details above.

Charlie Corcoran, the Keeper of the Morris Ring Log Book, is keen to receive stories about Ring events, both the formal and the quirky ([Charliecorcoran7@ntlworld.com](mailto:Charliecorcoran7@ntlworld.com)).

