



Strategic Priorities 2020 and beyond **updated September 2021**

1. Find alternative long term sources of recruits who have the potential to be good ringers

We can no longer rely on the church to supply us with recruits, particularly youngsters, and we have to work harder to attract and retain them.

2. That no ringer should hit a barrier to their own progression

If a ringer wants to progress, they should always be able to find a pathway that helps them, although it will probably not just be at their own tower.

3. The pursuit of excellence in everything we do

The pursuit of high quality performances is something that binds together all the different strata and styles of ringing. To achieve this we need the best possible ringing environments, organisation and leadership.

4. The sound of church bells remains part of our cultural soundscape and is appreciated and understood

The sound of church bells is quintessentially British, although it exists more widely. When people hear bells it should not only remind them of the presence of the church, but they should recognise and appreciate the skills involved.

5. The pursuit of method ringing is not the only measure of success for a ringer

No one should feel a failure if they do not do method ringing. All ringers are valued.

6. The Church continues to value our contribution

We must retain the Church's goodwill in order to continue to have access to their bells.

This is a working document which has been produced by the Central Council Executive to develop and deliver a strategy for supporting and promoting ringers and ringing on behalf of the associations it represents.

Strategic Priority 1

Find alternative long-term sources of recruits who have the potential to be good ringers

Synopsis

Ringling no longer gets potential recruits handed to us on a plate – decline in church congregations and particularly young members of church congregations has put a stop to it.

Catching the attention of young recruits is particularly difficult when other activities and interests compete for their attention.

The task of ringer recruitment and teaching is much harder than it used to be. Territorial associations didn't have to do recruitment and few were or are set up to do so – recruits came to us (from the church).

Recruitment and training is much harder than it was and the Central Council needs to help, even though this will be new to the Council as well!

Ringling is still seen as predominantly white, able bodied (and male in some places!) – diversity and improved community engagement and benefit is critical, especially for connectivity with the church and grant awarding bodies. Diversity also opens up a bigger pool.

Solutions and Strategies

We need to inject more young ringers into the system and stop them giving up.

Strategies are needed for each of the following:

Schools and Youth Groups

New Schools Workgroup to be established comprising people actively involved in schools, and those currently running youth groups.

- How do we get ringing into the curriculum?
- Handbell ringing (tunes and changes) as an easier way of establishing after school clubs?
- Learn from successful school initiatives
- How do we get ringing more firmly bedded as a DofE activity?

Scouts / Guides

Boys / Girls Brigade

I have not defined a 'good ringer', as that depends on circumstances and what a local band needs from that ringer. A ringer who is 'good' in a tower struggling for ringers is different to a ringer who is 'good' in a healthier band. Competent would be better than nothing in many towers.

Universities

University Workgroup to look at strategies for preventing loss of ringers at the point of going to University or leaving university. Also help with the relationships with Students Unions for funding – ringing societies often don't meet membership thresholds at single institutions but might across a local group of institutions.

University Workgroup to establish links with universities at current undergraduate level, and with broader groupings such as the NUA and SUA. Must comprise members currently active in universities.

Young teachers

ART to deliver M1 and M2 courses to young teachers

Pilot a summer school that has Year 12 ringers learning to teach in the first week and then younger learners to be taught by them in the second week. This is aimed at getting more ringers going to university with the ability and confidence to teach those recruited at Freshers Fayres. The YCRA might help with this.

Note that we have not set as a Strategic Priority turning ringing into a mass participation activity. It is a more controlled expansion focusing on priorities and keeping quality.

Just because we don't turn away any keen learners doesn't mean we shouldn't target our recruitment in the first place to give us more chance of attracting those who will be good at it.

Mobile Belfry

Investigate a truly mobile belfry that can be taken round schools, music festivals, etc. and set up quickly. Needs to be proper bells so it is a realistic experience. Maybe on the back of a truck, or towed.

Additionally commission a standard permanent mini-ring design that could be rolled out to multiple secular venues after first being built at the NaRC.

This is a possible target for large scale funding.

Demographic Profiling

We also need to continue with recruitment of older ringers who form the mainstay of many bands. The group that is missing in so many areas is the 25-50 age group, and activation of lapsed ringers could help plug that gap. Most of our current marketing is indiscriminate. We may be more effective if we target our marketing better.

There are probably complementary hobbies which could identify potential recruits with the right profile. This might be different in different types of community – city vs rural town vs village. Crossword puzzlers, train spotters, musicians and choir members, young farmers, engineers, scientists, mathematicians (started to show dominance in Trends survey) etc. Social media marketing could be very targeted if we understood where people with the sorts of traits that make good bellringers are also active.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF RECRUITS

	Area	Details	Resources	Progress
1.1	Schools and Youth Groups	Establish Schools Workgroup / Taskforce to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we get ringing into the curriculum - Handbell ringing as an easier way of establishing after school clubs? - Learn from successful school initiatives - Scouts, guides, DofE 	Jason Hughes Colin Newman Duncan Loweth Mark Place/Jon Hetherington Boys Brigade – Jack Hanlon Dof E – Roger Booth	Group established with Colin Newman as leader Progress being made with all initiatives - see Workgroup report from 2021 meeting.
1.2	Funding Bids	Submit a funding bid to NHLF for to support taking bells into schools Uses new Mobile Belfry, existing mobile belfries and mini rings	Working with HRGB and ART and with support from the Churches Conservation Trust Bid document being written by Roger Booth supported by SL	Due for submission November
1.3	Universities	Establish Universities Workgroup / Taskforce to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategies for preventing loss of ringers at the point of going to Uni - Relationships with Stu Unions for funding, etc - links with universities at current undergraduate level NUA / SUA 	Members currently active in universities Emily Hall Simon Percy Ewan Hull Claire Pearson Jacqui Brown Imogen Brooke	Group established with Ian Roulstone as leader Work being done on Students Unions YCRA launch is aimed at preventing loss at the school/uni border
1.4	Young teachers	M1 and M2 courses tailored to and promoted to young ringer groups	ART – David Smith	3 have been run to date. M2F run by CUG and plan to repeat in Oxford and Bristol.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF RECRUITS

1.5	Summer School	Summer school that has Year 12 ringers learning to teach in the first week and then younger learners to be taught by them in the second week. This is aimed at getting more ringers going to university with the ability and confidence to teach those recruited at Freshers Fayres.	ART RWNYC Maybe the YCRA	Plans were in hand for a summer school in 2021. Possible link with CCT or NaRC Emily Ashton researching value of similar activities Can this be revitalised for 2022?
1.6	Mobile belfry	Truly mobile belfry that can be taken round schools, music festivals, etc. and set up quickly. Standard permanent mini ring design	Taylor's Phil Gay, Roger Booth	Well advanced. Design agreed, bells cast and test rung, business plan development, website close to launch to support funding.
1.7	Social media	To understand how to communicate with young ringers we need to understand how to best use Instagram	PR Workgroup	No real progress to date
1.8	Demographic profiling	Possibly commission some demographic profiling to identify all age recruitment areas that we might not have thought of "if you like this, you may like this". This has potential for being a university research project.	Build on previous surveys and "Trends"	No real progress to date
1.9	Marketing campaigns	Support a national recruitment campaign post Covid Target spring 2022 Encourage Churches Conservation Trust to launch the campaign they had planned for 2020 Produce short new PR/marketing video General awareness improvement	PR Workgroup and others SL / CCT / ART George Perrin?	Added to the PR Workgroup Action Log for suggestions on how to move these forward. Next meeting 5 th October 2021.

Strategic Priority 2

That no ringer should hit a barrier to their own progression

Synopsis

Towers and even territorial associations are struggling to fulfil the aspirations of all ringers.

There are now too few local bands that are strong enough to develop ringers beyond rounds and call changes, and there are lots of places where a Surprise practice is a rarity. Some ringers travel many miles to advance their ringing.

This situation is prevalent at most points on the learning curve, but it is particularly true at the point of getting ringers past basic methods such as Grandsire and Plain Bob – the limit of the majority of local bands. Many associations are addressing more basic training needs than they have in the past.

There is a huge amount of unfulfilled ringing potential, ringers who desperately want to improve or extend their horizons but lack the opportunity and/or guidance to do so.

Sometimes towers try to “keep” the few ringers they have, rather than recognising that this may in fact lose them indirectly if they don’t encourage them to find opportunities to progress.

The borders of territorial associations, and even the borders between branches or districts within associations, are often poorly served as they seem to form a barrier to cooperation, although there are definitely exceptions.

(“My four closest towers are all in different associations so we cannot co-operate” – actual comment on Facebook)

In many places, groups of towers form themselves into ‘clusters’ - a unit smaller than a branch or district, and not necessarily towers affiliated to the same society. This is usually just to have enough ringers for the basics, rather than a critical mass for more advanced ringing. There are also examples of where ringers themselves form themselves into new groups specifically to practice more advanced ringing.

We are not managing to energise enough ringers to help other ringers, although we should be mindful that not everyone actually wants to be helped.

There are too few teachers, especially good ones

There are too few good leaders, and leaders are so important in inspiring and encouraging others.

The creation of a Direct Membership Organisation (with regional branches) was consulted in towards the end of 2020 and early 2021. No workable proposal could be found.

Ringing organisation will therefore need to continue with the current territorial association structures unless something emerges organically.

Solutions and Strategies

(In addition to what branches, districts and associations already do)

More places could be encouraged or given the tools to establish ringing 'schools' that provide regular (weekly if possible) training and longer courses, particularly targeted at the 'Twilight Zone' (see diagram on following page). There are a number of models that are starting to work. A Workgroup could focus the expertise of those who have made it work and then help establish other groups.

Organise more Bradfield/Hereford-type courses. Ringers will pay for training. There is probably enough demand for an intensive residential training course once a month if they were spread around the country! This would need a team to organise them, working with local ringers, and energising helpers. Let's start small and build on the success of existing courses.

Investigate running residential courses at Churches Conservation Trust churches where they run 'Champing'.

ART Hubs and other Ringing Centres to be encouraged to run regular courses that ringers can sign up to. These could be publicised more widely. Weekly focus is ideal if possible.

All this needs to leverage more people willing to help. We could target untapped potential to help with training. Specifically how about finding 1000 ringers who would be prepared to do two hours on a Saturday morning once a month to help with training? Set up a structure that will organise them and ask them, and then maybe reward and recognise them appropriately (not necessarily financially).

- Lapsed ringers
- Retired peal ringers
- Active ringers outside territorial associations

The College Youths and Cumberland Youths could be specifically invited to help with development of ringing for the untapped potential of young ringers who have outgrown local opportunity (Stephanie Warboys' "Talent Bank"). They have both agreed to support the 'Cast of 1000'. This could be like the LtR Masterclass but at a higher level. (Not implying their members don't, but they have the organisational capacity to make a difference).

With potentially less peal ringing going on post-pandemic, there ought to be more available helper resource – swap one peal a week for helping at a practice. It will only work if those attending practices to learn are motivated to learn.

There should be much more focus on quarter peal and peal ringing as a mechanism for providing opportunities to up and coming ringers not only to cement method knowledge but to attain prolonged exposure to better striking with competent bands. Quarter peals for evensong used to be a way that lots of bands provided extended practice for learners. Somehow we need to get the giving of opportunities to others ranking at least as highly as pursuit of personal goals and numbers.

Leadership Academy

A Leadership Academy needs to have broad support. A set of recognised leadership principles could be established under which different organisations (Guilds, Associations, Ringing Centre, ART) can deliver courses / material.

ART is already developing a leadership course in recognition of this need

We are good at recognising ringers who have been in charge for a long time. We should however also celebrate new leaders, and those who create other leaders.

Good leadership is not a subject restricted to leadership of ringing. Nor is progress in ringing limited to increasing knowledge and skills in method ringing. Leadership of tower and bell maintenance is also important, as is more understanding of engineering, bell history, and social history associated with ringing. All this will help with retention of ringers, but keeping those with different skills interested and valued. This will require more proactive creation and organisation of courses targeted at these areas.

This all needs to be supported by comms and marketing that enables those ringers looking to progress their ringing to find the sources of help. And even before that, some ringers will not even realise that progression is possible or that there is life outside their own tower's bubble. The breadth of ringing activity should be easily discoverable.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 ACTIONS

REMOVING BARRIERS TO PROGRESS

	Area	Details	Possible resources	Progress
2.1	Schools and regular training sources	Establish what is current being done and what is working Not just bell handling and change ringing techniques, but bell maintenance and all the broader aspects of ringing	Clyde Whittaker to undertake the research SMWG + ? Taylors museum, CC Library etc	Nich Wilson has taken on the Ringing Centre brief and is looking at how this works alongside ART Hubs
2.2	More residential 'Bradfield' courses	Feasibility of central organisation of more of them 15.2 – decided we will try and organise 2 new residential courses in 2021 in areas currently underserved by exiting courses. CC led, with local support. Likely to both be in the North of England Possibility of courses at CCT Champing towers	Organisers of Bradfield, Essex, Hereford, etc V&L Participants in current courses	First course planned in Lancashire in 2021. Options for adding in 2023 and 2023 being considered including Yorkshire and Exeter/North Somerset
2.3	More day courses focusing on Red Zone development	Unlocking CYs and SRCY Unlock lapsed ringers	Simon / Phil Those Societies' Reps Associations	Support obtained from ASCY and SRCY for the Cast of 1000
2.4	Leadership Academy	Develop a set of agreed Leadership Principles so different groups can organise leadership courses and material under a common strategy Leadership course or leadership strategy Ways to celebrate new leaders and old leaders replacing themselves	ART is working on a leadership course. V&L in support Ringing World	
2.5	Improve diversity	Project to identify barriers to progress of women ringers then provide support and opportunity Progress to monitored by peals and quarters analysis team and reported on quarterly	Julia Cater and team Performance analysis group	Women in Ringing project was done. Needs high profile commitment. Progress made on QP analysis and investigation into gender tracking

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 ACTIONS

REMOVING BARRIERS TO PROGRESS

2.5	New publications focused on early stages of change ringing	Book series like Ladybird books being considered Single topic, low cost "How do I?"	Publications	Needs writers and topic list

Strategic Priority 3

Pursuit of excellence in everything we do

Synopsis

There are now two quite distinct bodies of ringers and we need to recognise this because it might guide our recruitment and retention strategies. This may have been even more accentuated by the pandemic as some ringers have reassessed their aspirations, and some bands have got weaker.

Group 1 or 'Service Group'

Primary motive is to provide a service to the church locally, and to have a sociable activity.

Characteristics of ringers and ringing in the service group are as follows:

- Operate predominantly in Green/Blue Zones (up to Bob Minor but stopping short of Cambridge Minor)
- Sociability driver
- Service ethos
- Unpressured ringing environment
- More mature learners
- Much heavier teacher requirement
- Recruitment through church or as lifelong hobby
- Not really that interested in the wider world

This probably represents 70-80% of ringers.

Group 2 – pursuit of progress

This group may have much the same motives as Group 1 in terms of the importance of providing a service to the church and wanting a sociable activity, but in addition sees ringing for the challenge of making progress. Ringers in this group are going to further the 'Art and Science' of change ringing.

Characteristics of ringers in this group are:

- More likely to be recruited as teenagers
- Will learn rapidly when still young and will retain the ability and desire to learn
- See ringing as a 'secular sport' but with the service obligation
- Support through transition to University
- May have variable commitment
- Predominantly (but not exclusively) urban
- Practising on handbells as well as tower bells
- Doesn't actually need the church organisation, and the church is possibly a hindrance (as in, if all rings of bells were not in churches, many of this group would still ring, and might ring even more)

In most of the ringing community 'progress' is measured in terms of method ringing, with call changes being an intermediate step, however in parts of the south west of England the group also exists but develops its skill in call change ringing.

One thing that can link these two groups other than the physical act of ringing is the pursuit of quality performance.

Unlike in the South West's call change regions, where the pursuit of good striking is the sole focus, in the rest of the country, eagerness to progress in method ringing is often done at good striking's expense.

Many factors contribute to lack of focus on the quality of the performance. Struggling bands often recruit older learners, who in turn take longer to learn, who may well be encouraged to ring more difficult things before they are ready. Able learners migrate elsewhere, leading to a downward spiral. More experienced ringers don't tend to support towers where standards are low, leading to a further downward spiral.

There is a culture of it being acceptable to correct another ringer's method ringing, but not their striking. Correcting striking is also more difficult both for the corrector and the corrected.

The ringing we do should be of the highest quality in terms of performance – it is better to have one tower ringing well than two towers ringing badly. Possibly not everyone thinks this is true and it depends on whether the public can tell good ringing from bad, and whether a vicar would prefer to have his bells rung poorly rather than not at all.

Whatever the level of ringing, ringers must feel welcome and encouraged in any tower where they ring or visit. We cannot enforce that, but we can suggest good practices and publicise good examples.

Whichever group, excellence is also required in tower operations and tower infrastructure – many potential ringers are lost and many ringing performances seriously sub-standard because of the poor conditions and environments in towers. Once again, we cannot enforce that, but we can suggest good practices and publicise good examples.

Solutions and Strategies

Increase the importance of Excellence in the Council's vision/mission.

Can we encourage more striking competitions, maybe of a different style that all ringers would actually enjoy? Regional six bell striking competitions maybe between clusters of towers to be encouraged although that is effectively what branches and districts already do. Practicing for competitions gives very good focus. It is a failing of the current way in which striking competitions are organised that they put off just those bands that would benefit most from participating. Probably incorporated into some other social event. Increase the awareness of and use high-quality Call Change ringing as an end in itself in the rest of the country, as a distinct skill and part of ringing.

There needs to be clarity in what EXCELLENCE is, at all ringing levels, in all teaching, and in the condition of the bells and the state of towers.

Suggest good practices and publicise good examples of how ringers should be made welcome in towers. Encourage the view that ringing can be fun. We can be very bad at inclusivity, always just staying with our own circle of friends.

Provide advice and publicise good examples of how to improve and maintain the "go" of the bells, and good environmental conditions in towers. Emphasis that this is not a chore, but a real transferrable skill. Welcome those who are not ringers to help and advise – they may become ringers!

Excellence in teaching – we need to get away from people being taught badly. Being taught by good teachers at a limited number of towers is ideal. The thing to crack is a tower that has a new recruit not feeling they have to teach that learner themselves. Increasing the number of teachers known to be good would underpin the importance of quality teaching.

Also need training in how to run practices – with a focus for those attending on methods, striking etc. Not just practices on the end of ropes but theory sessions and home work.

There must be better commitment by participants on attending and participating – in most group pursuits it is expected that you will attend the weekly or monthly session, contribute, learn / prepare at home etc. In ringing we rarely know who will or will not turn up. You may prepare to ring Cambridge Major then find that only 5 people arrive!

A recruitment-oriented website could then give location-based recommendation of where to learn to ring.

Then we need to make sure that the importance of striking becomes a focus at the foundation level. Listening exercise should go hand in hand with the other aspects of learning to ring. Reduce emphasis on pushing on to ring more methods when they don't have the basics.

ART is already working on increasing the prominence of striking and the testing of striking in the early stages of Learning the Ropes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 ACTIONS

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING WE DO

	Area	Details	Possible resources	Progress
3.1	Vision and Mission	Review and ensure it is in line with this Strategy	Exec - done	
3.2	Learning the Ropes – striking	Increased focus on striking in Learning the Ropes programme	David Smith ART	6.3: In progress with ART Web based version of striking app from 3.6 to be incorporated.
3.3	Devon Call Changes	Revise Judging Striking Competitions book ART to develop revised course material for Devon Review positioning and description of Devon Call Change ringing across all Council's activities and publications	SL after visit to Devon ART after SL's visit to Devon Devon Association	SL visit to Devon now planned for Spring 2022
3.4	Website	Improvement of location-based ringing recruitment website "find nearest teacher" functionality		This will come from Nich Wilson's work
3.5	Teacher accreditation	ART to explore a way of widening pool of accredited teachers based on something other than attending M1	ART	Desirability agreed Under discussion and ideas being floated Very difficult area (and it is up to ART)
3.6	Striking app	Development of a mobile app that can develop and test listening skills	ART Graham John + team <u>In progress</u>	App specified. GACJ on the case. Contacted the developer of the tadhill website who is keen to help.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 ACTIONS

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING WE DO

3.7	Welcome attitude	<p>Suggest good practices and publicise good examples of how ringers should be made welcome in towers. Encourage the view that ringing can be fun.</p> <p>Establish “networks” for people involved in positions of responsibility</p>	<p>Let's Ring!</p> <p>The Accidental Ringer blog</p> <p>Seminars, events, workshops, videos, etc.</p> <p>SMWG articles in RW in "When did you last do it?" series</p> <p>“Trip Adviser” extension to Dove?</p>	<p>Stalled really during ringing restrictions</p> <p>Discussed at ART Conference – why not?</p>
3.8	Tower environment and condition of bells	<p>Provide advice and publicise good examples of how to improve and maintain bells in good condition, and provide good environmental conditions in towers.</p> <p>Training more trainers to provide good (inter)-national coverage</p> <p>Establish “networks” for people involved in positions of responsibility e.g. tower operation / maintenance etc</p>	<p>SMWG articles on improving tower environment in RW in "When did you last do it?" series</p> <p>Seminars, events, workshops, videos, case studies, etc.</p> <p>Westley Award, further awards (certification?)</p>	<p>First draft of tower environment best practice drafted</p> <p>Called Forums – launched Sep 21. WGLeads to get special interest groups established</p>

Strategic Priority 4

The sound of church bells remains part of our cultural soundscape and is appreciated and understood

Synopsis

The role of bells in actually calling people to worship is not particularly strong. Some evangelical churches actively discourage it! The sound of bells is however associated with churches and with 'Britishness'.

When people hear ringing they should appreciate the skill involved – too many members of the general public think the bells they hear are being rung by a machine!

Broadening the understanding of what we do will make ringing more respected and potential recruits keener to learn. It may also let recruits know what is involved, igniting their curiosity, and managing their expectations.

Solutions and Strategies

We need to consider how people would find out about bells and bell ringing and then make sure they are properly informed when they do, as well as proactively raising awareness.

YouTube is the 'go to' place for videos of anything people might be interested in. Although there is now a lot of ringing on YouTube, the likelihood of a member of the general public finding something on YouTube that really explains or demonstrates what we do is slim. There are at least two things we could do:

- There needs to be a curated collection of historic videos of ringing so potential and new learners can get interested in ringing and its history
- There needs to be much more good change ringing on YouTube. At the moment there is hardly any because the best change ringing, or at least the best method ringing, is rarely filmed, and if it is, it doesn't necessarily make it to YouTube.
- We could create and distribute more content that explains the art and science behind change ringing which would get a different audience interested

A 'National Ringing Centre' could act as a focal point, providing a place where school trips, club outings, or other interested people can go and learn about bell ringing.

"Friends of the Bells" – this concept would be something to encourage people who are not going to become bellringers to be supportive and value their bell ringers and the sound of the bells. It could encourage legacy giving.

"Band of the Year" – similar to the previous point, we could run an annual competition for non ringers to nominate a local band who makes the most difference to the local community?

Both those two ideas, which are about raising awareness of the general public without overtly trying to recruit them, could be done in association with the church.

We could try and promote ringing by linking it with BBC Music Day, perhaps with a National Quarter Peal week.

More people nominated and successful in high level national awards such as MBEs – there are very few in ringing, Alan Regin, Harry Windsor, others? Is this comparable to other activities? Probably not. Would it be possible for there to be a national/international ringing awards process or are the ART Awards filling a decent part of that gap?

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 ACTIONS

SOUND OF CHURCH BELLS IS APPRECIATED AND UNDERSTOOD

	Area	Details	Possible resources	Progress
4.1	YouTube - historical	Collection of all historic videos	H&A Workgroup	
4.2	YouTube – current	Good ringing on YouTube. Creation of new material, Channel to feature the best current clips. Needs to be somewhere people find it	C&M	Completed with the YouTube competition
4.3	National Ringing Centre	Creation of NaRC as a focal point	SL, CW working with PDG team	MOU with CCT, PDG closely involved – target early 2023
4.4	Engagement of non ringers	Explore possibility of a “Friends of the Bells” concept “Band of the Year” annual competition to be voted on by non ringers	PR Clerical Guild (to explore whether this is something that could be led from church congregations)	Clerical Guild looking at establishing “Bell Sunday”
4.5	BBC Music Day	Link in somehow, e.g. a National Quarter Peal week	Clyde?	
4.6	Promotional video	For social media distribution There isn't actually a succinct and very good explanation of what we do	See 1.9 above	

4.1 and 4.2 aren't necessarily in this section

Strategic Priority 5

The pursuit of method ringing is not the only measure of success for a ringer

Synopsis

The 'Service Group' referred to earlier (ringers whose primary motivation is service to the church at a local level) does not need method ringing in order to fulfil its objectives. Competence and loyalty are key attributes for ringers in this group. However much of what we currently do implies that someone who does not progress into method ringing is a second class citizen.

For those not cut out for method ringing, its pursuit will just make their ringing worse, which in turn will lead to dissatisfaction and undermine their overall contribution to ringing. Those who do not wish to pursue method ringing will often just end up in the 'learners' touch' and not experience the joy of good ringing.

We also need ringers whose special aptitude is for things other than ringing, e.g. bell maintenance so it would not want to lose such a person.

A focus on excellence in call changes is more likely to meet the needs of the Service Group. Parts of the West Country successfully have the pursuit of excellence instead of the pursuit of complexity, and it is the sole focus of the Devon Association.

Solutions and Strategies

Call change competitions need greater exposure – perhaps have more associations challenging some of the bands from the West Country. Striking competitions in method ringing areas tend to discourage the more experienced bands from ringing call changes.

Could ART Hubs or Ringing Centres have mini call change challenges between them? Geographical challenges to overcome but more will form.

ART could consider amending the Learning the Ropes programme so that the achievement of call changes is an end in itself rather than being part way towards something 'greater'.

The CC website to be much clearer on the distinction between different styles of ringing.

Review of recruitment and training material to see whether it would be desirable or indeed beneficial to separate ringing up to call changes from method ringing.

We should do more to recognise achievement in aspects of the wider ringing environment, which the Westley Awards has started to do for instance.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 ACTIONS**METHOD RINGING IS NOT THE ONLY MEASURE OF SUCCESS**

	Area	Details	Possible resources	Progress
5.1	Learning the Ropes	ART to consider whether LtR changes so that call changes is the end of a 'Foundation' block, prior to specialisation	ART Clare McArdle	Principle is supported by ART and is being actively considered
5.2	Devon Call Changes	Increase exposure outside Devon. Needs a cross-border task force to explore possibilities Review how CC website deals with different styles of ringing Review other recruitment and training material	Cross border task force	No progress except talking about it Not done Not done
5.3	Competitions	Expand call change competitions outside Devon Call change comps between ART Hubs and Ringing Centres	ART Kent keen for a challenge	SL to discuss in Devon Planned for this year
5.4				
5.5				

Strategic Priority 6

The Church continues to value our contribution

Synopsis

The vast majority of bells are in churches and we need to maintain the goodwill of the Church to give us continued access. We are fortunate that the Church recognises that ringing other than for service still advertises the presence of the church and its place in the community.

Ringers' contribution to church life often extends beyond the belfry. Ringers often multi-task in churches, singing in the choir, acting as churchwardens, taking the service or just being part of the congregation.

Church organisation is decentralised. Dioceses act independently. Other bodies are also important to us – the Church Buildings Council advises churches and dioceses on care, conservation and development of church buildings. Dioceses have their own Advisory Committees which make decisions on bell-related matters. Cathedrals tend to talk to each other as a network. Heritage bodies such as Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland and Cadw have an interest in bells and frames which may conflict with our own. And ultimately an individual Vicar or Rector has jurisdiction over their own church.

Safeguarding needs to continue to be taken very seriously. Issues at major cathedrals have highlighted that ringers could be seen as disproportionately troublesome for the value they add. Ringing is the icing on the cake for these institutions – not an essential.

An increasing number of churches, particularly in city centres, are going to be taken over by the evangelical wing of the Church. Evangelical churches tend not to see bells as part of their worship and may actively discourage it, converting ringing chambers into office space or actively preventing ringing. Given how this is the form of worship that is most attractive to young people, it is important to align ringing with the evangelical church in different ways.

The decline in the number of active churches is not ringing's biggest problem although it is a cause of much concern. It's not as though we have too many ringers and too few bells! Concentration of ringing resources on fewer towers is actually of benefit to us, and one might be able to subsidise the other.

Solutions and Strategies

The Central Council must maintain and develop its high level relationship with all relevant church and advisory bodies, as well as other stakeholders.

Somehow this needs to filter down to Diocesan level and individual churches so the importance of bells and bell ringing is appreciated by all clergy. Bells are the church's most powerful external voice and something that cements the church's position in the community.

If there is a service, we should try and have bells rung, provided the incumbent actually wants them (not all churches with bells want them rung for services).

Safeguarding needs to remain a number one priority. One major safeguarding issue could make recruitment of youngsters impossible.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6 ACTIONS

CHURCH CONTINUES TO VALUE OUR CONTRIBUTION

	Area	Details	Possible resources	Progress
6.1	Engagement with church and heritage bodies	Ongoing – particular focus on Church Buildings Council, Historic England, National Heritage Lottery Fund, Dioceses	Simon Linford, Mark Regan as SSL Workgroup lead,	Senior Stakeholder Workgroup making good progress. Profile increased with Church Buildings Council, Historic England.
6.2	Theological College module	Aborted following discussion with David Grimwood		
6.3	DACs	Improved focus on bells and ringing at DAC level		SL and MR speaking at DAC conference
6.4	Improve understanding of bells and bell ringing with the clergy and with evangelical churches	Clerical Guild to develop “The Theology of Ringing” Information sharing on successful evangelical towers Recruitment campaign for young people at evangelica churches?	Clerical Guild	
6.5	Bell Sunday	One Sunday a year to be designated ‘Bell Sunday’ on an international basis. Can for the basis of recruitment but generally raise awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ringers all go to church - Ringers do the coffee - Bells on Sunday broadcast later than 6am! - etc 	PR Workgroup Clerical Guild	

Wasted assets

There are lots of 'wasted assets' which we could unlock and help meet some of our strategic priorities:

Ringers who have given up	Persuade them to sign up to help with training on 'no obligation' basis
Peal ringers who don't currently help anyone else	Ditto Or get them to subscribe to the Ringing Impact Bond
Practices that lack critical mass	Encourage clusters, i.e. groups of towers working together and sharing resources and commitments. There are lots of good examples of this already so it may just be a question of making effective models better known.
Redundant bells, especially rings of 3 and 4	Move them to establish rings of bells in schools or youth centres? Highly controversial!!
Ringers who are not encouraged to ring better	Not a lot can be done directly – this comes from leadership and organisation structure
Sending the elevator back down too far	The point here is that training is most efficient if ringers help the levels not too far below them. Black zone helps Red Zone, Red Zone helps Blue Zone, etc Leaders probably need to go down two levels.
Money locked up in Bell Restoration Funds	This was highlighted to associations in February 2021. There is £4.5m in BRFs, representing 10 years expenditure. No sign of any action taken as a result of that although it raised awareness and some BRFs working hard.
Money locked up in branch/district and association General Funds	Start by identifying how big an asset this is. Is there anything to be gained from looking at this collectively?

Strategic Possibilities

Money no object

Move redundant bells into schools or places where ringing training, particularly of young people, can be encouraged. There is a pending trial project that will do just this. Conservation Trust is also interested in improving those rings which have potential to be ringing centres by repurposing non-significant rings of 1-4

Build secular ringing centres (Birmingham is already designing one with the hope that it will be built in a public park)

Have a fully staffed ringing development office – could be at the NaRC

Pay good teachers to run more courses

Action

Set up a small group to investigate how we might change the whole basis of the funding of ringing.

What could we do if we had income of £500,000 a year?

How could we persuade ringers to pay a meaningful annual subscription that would put ringing on a level playing field with other skills and activities?

What could we do that might persuade a seven-figure philanthropic donation which might cover major capital infrastructure projects such as new training centres? Money is easy to find but the purpose of it needs to be clear. It cannot just pay people – donor like to pay for infrastructure.

Reconsider the 'Ringing Impact Bond' idea for payment by results for ringing training.

Technology Improvements

Online Dove – we could provide more and better ways for ringers to find ringing opportunities, location based, app driven, expandable in due course to include information about practices. This can build on the power of the Dove database.

Bellboard – great resource but could do with a mobile app

Strava-style app so you can follow people rather than search all of Bellboard (Colin Parker's idea presented at ART Conference a couple of years ago)

Apps generally – ringing is probably not as good via handheld devices as other activities.

None of this particularly ties into the Strategic Objectives other than that they help meet the needs of ringers, which in turn makes ringing more fulfilling and helps stop people giving up.

Could there ultimately be a single platform that supported towers, ringers and performances, enabling ringers to make connections between all three? Other platforms develop when existing services are inadequate, which has led to a fragmentation of information.