

SCACR Northern District

Central Council Rep's Report (2022) – Steph Pendlebury

Forward plan and “Ringling 2030”

The Council has launched a [major initiative to plan for the future of ringing](#), setting 2030 as a target for bringing about change needed to make sure ringing grows and thrives in the future. The pandemic exposed the fragility of ringing, the effect of losing critical mass, and how that starts to make people do things differently. While there are pockets of great progress, there are many towers, districts, branches, or even associations struggling with numbers, and not seeing young ringers come through. We need to start thinking about what we want ringing to be like in 2030 and how we get there. A new branding and marketing campaign for bellringing is currently being developed, using a commercial marketing agency. We will also need to train more trainers, as well as recruiting more new ringers.

Bell maintenance

The Stewardship & Management Workgroup launched [Belfry Upkeep](#), an online document aimed at the Steeple Keeper – the person responsible for keeping the bells in order.

- To help you understand the installation in your tower
- To describe the checks you should carry out to identify any problems
- To advise you on the maintenance tasks that you should be able to carry out, possibly with expert advice or assistance
- Most importantly, to help you recognise the tasks that require specialist knowledge from a Bell Hanger or other expert

Residential ringing courses

The new residential [North-West Ringing Course](#) was launched in summer 2022, open to ringers from anywhere in the country. This course is for learners in the middle ground – those who are no longer at the early stages of learning, but are not yet experts. Students should typically be comfortable ringing touches of a few methods, and now want to extend their skills to the next level.

There are plans for another new residential course, this time in the South-West.

Youth ringing

A new [video of a group of Scots and Guides visiting a tower](#) has been produced (featuring Sussex's very own Rachel Mahony), with the aim of attracting younger recruits to ringing.

The Young Ringers workgroup has been engaging with the Scouting and Guiding movements at various levels, to design badge programmes and challenges. The [Bluebells Challenge](#) for Guides (created in 2012) has been refreshed and relaunched. A framework to help manage and measure progress by Duke of Edinburgh candidates has been drawn up. The CC continues to support the [Young Change Ringers Association](#); there are plans to run a summer school for young ringers who aspire to teach.

Publicity and recruitment

The PR workgroup coordinated lots of publicity around QEII Platinum Jubilee and then the death of the Queen and the proclamation of HM King Charles. Ongoing publicity, including a [new website](#), around “Ring for the King”, aiming for new recruits to take up ringing and be involved (even if just e.g. assisted backstrokes in rounds) in ringing for the coronation on 6th May 2023. A library of high-quality [photographs of bells and ringing](#) has been collated, available for free for use in e.g. publicity materials. A new mobile belfry is being built, to help take bellringing out of the tower and into schools and communities. Another workstream has been to develop teaching materials in line with the National Curriculum; two schools have successfully tested lesson plans involving ringing concepts, for Maths, English, Science, History, Geography and Drama. There has also been initial engagement with new specialist A-Level Mathematics Schools.

Dove's Guide database

The Dove database has been expanded to include new types of tower and bell data, including for bells that no longer ring, and additional data on individual bells and frames. The scope of the database has been extended to include all bells in Church of England jurisdiction buildings.

The future of the CC Library

A key challenge is the need to find a new home for the CC Library Collection. Other organisations have been approached, but either they were not interested in housing the collection, or they were only interested in certain parts of it. The Council aims to preserve the collection in its entirety (books, rare printed material, and manuscripts).

Admin

Change to affiliation fee for Associations/Guilds (now directly linked to number of members; 20p per member).

How you can get involved

There is currently a push to encourage lapsed ringers to return to ringing. Do you know anyone who used to ring – perhaps they learned as a teenager, then gave it up when they moved away or went to university? Why not bring them along to the next District event?! Even if they don't want to ring, there's usually plenty of cake to eat and lovely people to talk to...

Finally, if you are interested in contributing to the wider ringing community, there are opportunities for everyone, no matter what your interest or skills, in the CC's Workgroups. All ringers have skills and knowledge (not just about ringing!) that are useful to others. *Any* ringer can volunteer in a Workgroup, and Workgroups cover a range of subjects – from supporting young ringers and university ringing, to caring for churches and bells. More information on the "situations vacant" page on the CC website (cccbr.org.uk/about/volunteering-with-the-council/). My experience of being on a Workgroup has been one of fun, friendship and fulfilment – I definitely recommend it.