

Minutes from EACR Training and Recruitment Sub-Committee Meeting

Venue: Springfield Church Hall
Date: 5th December 2024
Time: 19.30 hours

Apologies: Anne Bray, Christina Brewster, Andrew Brewster, Helen Bridgman, Sarah Knights, Zoë Purdie-Wood, Sarah Scannell, David Sparling, Yvonne Towler

Attendees: Beth Johnson, Sarah Chin-A-Loy, Ian Kerwin, Vicky Richards, Adam Sloman, Roy Threadgold, Richard Wilson

CC Andrew Kelso (EACR Master), Andrew and Clare Beech, EACR Secretary

Topic	Content	Action who	Action by when
1. Apologies, minutes and matters arising	<p>Minutes from October’s meeting were reviewed and confirmed as accurate and accepted unanimously.</p> <p>Matters arising: No response from Jason Hughes re CCCBR Schools Initiative. BJ to provide Jason’s contact details to Ian Kerwin who wishes to follow up in regard to White Roding.</p>	BJ	done
2. Redrafted Terms of Reference	<p>Main discussions revolved around frequency of meetings and voting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Scannell and Andrew Kelso queried if meeting six-weekly was more frequent than necessary. SS suggested quarterly. Sarah C-a-Loy referred the committee to the number of meetings over the last 3 years: 2022 - 6, 2023 -7, 2024 - 8 (including special meeting requested by Essex Course Convenor in February). RW noted each meeting had a full agenda, VK flagged up that people liked to feel their grant applications were heard quickly. Previous meeting schedules appeared to be successful. Propose keeping schedule as approximately six-weekly. • Discussion regarding voting centred on a) are the sub-committee members all elected/appointed b) whether the members of the committee represent solely Essex members (eg Anne Bray in relation to Universities would be representing individuals who are not members). BJ felt if people were asked to attend the sub-committee because of their expertise or knowledge and gave up their time to do so then they should be entitled to vote. The sub-committee requested further clarity on this query from the Master. Note: subsequently discussed at the Trustee meeting on 13 Dec; minutes of this meeting should show further discussion/comment. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small amendments were made to the finance paragraph to cover how decisions are made on grant recommendations over £250; these would be approved by the Ass Management meeting. <p>Updated draft TOR to be circulated prior to next meeting.</p>		
3. Training Courses	<p>3.1 See attached for feedback on November Training Day. 60 students attended at 12 locations across the centre of county.</p> <p>3.2 Call for interest for ART courses in 2025 to go out by end of year.</p>	BJ	End 2024
4. Bequest Initiative update	<p>Vicky Richards will prepare and circulate analysis of tower enquiries.</p> <p>Proposal discussed for Training Centre at St Laurence’s, Upminster (attached) submitted by Tony Bloomfield.</p> <p>Comments summarised: Both those who had submitted comments and members at the meeting were cautiously positive about a training centre of the sort described (positive, impactful, state of the art) in Essex. There is some reluctance to install more bells in the county – as evidenced by comments received in the Bequests Survey.</p> <p>The sub-committee felt they needed to see the following before being able to indicate support for the venture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What outreach, engagement and market research has been carried out to clearly understand the need? • As this would be a new ring, a full home band would need to be trained. How realistic is this? • What is the level of enthusiasm about the project from the Incumbent and PCC? A more formal conversation is required. • The structural suitability of the Tower needs to be assessed. • Is there parking? • The location is at one end of the Association so not ideal but does have good transport links. Unless a location was in the centre of the county, any such project will suffer similar challenges. • Firmer current cost estimate is needed (estimate is from 2023). • For a project with such a level of financial commitment, is there long-term support? • Are we going to think about having a dedicated manager (e.g. as at Mancroft and Cambridge) to drive the usage of such a facility? Consider acquiring a job description for the managers of Mancroft and Cambridge and a time-line for those projects. • How much would a ‘rentabell’ be used (i.e. for single practice)? • Can we ensure such a centre has a longer life than the facility at Chigwell which has dropped largely into disuse. <p>Feedback comments to Tony Bloomfield.</p>	VR	End Dec
		BJ	Dec

	<p>would like to ensure this does not detract from the main EYR.</p> <p>If more Districts organize young ringers' groups, consider inter-district competition?</p> <p>Change of personnel: Beth Johnson is not standing again as Education Officer from May 2025 Adam Sloman is not standing again as Youth Coordinator from Jan 2025. *Sarah C-a-L to discuss post with Theo Johnson, BJ to email Richard Dunhill. Any other suggestions? Richard Wilson will not be attending the meetings after January 2025 due to his hand-over period expiring. Roy Threadgold hoping to stand down.</p> <p>Thanks go to retiring members for their input to the work of the sub-committee.</p> <p>Congratulations to Alfie Holland on his first peel (very proud of his blisters).</p>		
<p>Proposed meeting dates for first half of 2025</p>	<p>19th January Sunday 7.30pm Zoom - pre-management meeting</p> <p>27 February Thursday 7.30pm Zoom - Essex course</p> <p>4th May Sunday 7.30pm Zoom - post course</p> <p>12th June Thursday 7.30pm Zoom</p> <p>27th July Sunday 7.30pm In person</p>		
	<p>Meeting closed at 21.50 (including break for seasonal refreshments!)</p>		

Feedback on EACR Training Day November 23rd 2024

60 students attended 9 courses across 12 towers (elementary raising and lowering was run at 3 locations)

35 responses have been received, 74% from students and 26% from helpers

Feedback was evenly spread across the courses with some extra responses from Raising and Lowering in Peal.

All respondents had been contacted in good time and apart from some problems with the simulator at Writtle, towers were convenient and good for their course although several were reported as cold (but it was November).

The chosen course was the right level for all respondents.

94% of Tutors managed the course 'Really well' (highest praise).

Theory provided was 'excellent', 'very good', 'very helpful'.

Was the course the right length? 91.4% said yes, 1 said too short and 2 said too long.

What would you like to do a course on next?

- Ring up and down in peal
- Another bob doubles course
- PBD on inside bell
- Same course again
- Surprise minor/major
- Beginner change ringing
- Grandsire touches or Bob Triples
- Plain hunt to get striking right
- Back to basics and work on my style and striking
- Leading up and down in peal
- Improving ropesight
- Trebling to methods
- Stedman Triples
- Spliced methods

Comments will be fed back to tutors.

One respondent who was dissatisfied with the day will be followed up in person.

ST LAURENCE UPMINSTER RINGING TRAINING CENTRE – from Tony Bloomfield



Premise:

A new set of bells (light eight) in the Parish Church of St Laurence Upminster, along with simulator and other facilities to support education - to be both a local tower but also a training centre open for use for Essex members and beyond.

The premise for a training centre is an ideal light and easy going set of bells that can be used for easy training - if anyone has visited the bells in Vernet, Ypres, Garlickhythe, Isles of Scilly, Worcester St Martin - we just do not have one of these examples in Essex. With facilities such as the ability to simulate sound somewhere that can be open as an ideal training venue open to all in Essex and around.

Why here?

- Very well located 3 minutes walk from Upminster Station, C2C, Underground and Liberty Line trains to Southend, Central London and Romford with connections to Elizabeth Line, Stratford, Harlow, Stortford, Chelmsford and Colchester. 10 minutes from J29 of the M25 and 5 mins from A127.
- Town Centre location so shops/cafes/facilities to hand.
- Church has 4 halls, kitchen and toilets with likely further development. Many groups using the halls so lots of education and different groups going on.
- Connections with local schools (esp Coopers) and uniformed groups.
- Significant centre of population with many ringers nearby - likely to be sustainable (eg band at Hornchurch (1 mile away) the biggest by number in EACR).
- High church culture and clergy likely to be supportive based on a conversation I had with the Rector last year.

- Church has third highest quota in the deanery - very unlikely to be impacted by an future parish rationalisation.
- Church tower not too close to residences.
- Donald Heath territory as in London Borough of Havering.

Challenges

- Need for structural survey on tower to ensure it can bear the loads of full circle ringing
- Heritage - grade 1 listed due to the tower which will need consideration through the usual faculty process.
- Church is focused on building improvements which includes some tower area development - but the two could complement each other - there is a lot of space.
- Some soundproofing may be needed as no history of change ringing.

What could it cost:

- Whites quote (Sep 2023) of a 7cwt 8 using 1973 Whitechapel bell as tenor of £132,401 (ex VAT). Full 8 new bells would be 15k more.
- Rope guides £4,000
- Opportunities for savings re local labour, etc.
- Incidentals such as tower survey etc - £5,000
- Soundproofing for internal/external - say £10,000
- Simulator - £1,200
- Laptop/PC set up - say £2,000
- No need for dumbbells if a simple easy going eight - simulated sound would suffice.
- Possible further developments to really develop the tower for dual use such as a mezzanine floor - TBD

I actually think a really top quality job would be £200k including works in the tower to make the environment ideal.

Source of funds

- Heath/Cobb bequest
- Individual donations to bells could be encouraged from the congregation
- Possible PCC contribution - we are receiving legacies at the moment
- Bodies of interest re Upminster (eg Royal Society given the scientific importance of the tower)

Support for the project

- There has been on/off interest in putting bells in Upminster since the old 2nd of the swing chime was replaced in the 1970s. This was revived when I moved into the Parish and I am now an active part of the church along with my wife, Julie. There are also some other ringers in the congregation who would get involved, including Jonathan Slack (ex-Southwark Cathedral Ringing Master) and his family, and at least 2 other lapsed/part-time ringers. Support can also come from the active bands nearby at Hornchurch and North Ockendon, both having ringers who live in the Parish. The leadership of the SW District have been informed for their support given it has changed since this idea was last mooted. The Education Officer is supportive.

Who am I?

I learned to ring at Dagenham in the mid-1980s and this remained my home tower for many years. I ended up out of ringing for a while whilst raising a young family and working overseas. I now live in Upminster with my fellow-ringer wife, Julie. I am currently a ringing officer of the Ancient Society of College Youths and am due to be so until November 2026, and I am also a supernumerary member of the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers. I still ring locally in Essex, mainly at Hornchurch, and I particularly enjoy ringing with some of our up-and-coming talent and look forward to doing a lot more training once I get to retirement from work!