

## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - REPORT TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **1. PROCEDURE**

Following the Executive Committee's approval in October 2008, the Working Group met on 11 November. The Group members were -

Brian Meads	Master
Vicki Chapman	Secretary
Andrew Brewster	Treasurer
Carol Wilkinson	NW District
Dan Smith	N District - replaced by Alistair Donaldson
Anne Bray	NE District
Sandra Lee	SW District
Hilary Donaghue	S District
Richard Wilson	SE District - elected as Group Convenor

It was decided to survey as many towers as possible, preferably by personal visit. The survey was in two parts - firstly the Central Council Ringing Trends Committee factual survey - and secondly an opinion survey drawn up by the Group. The Group are extremely grateful for the very great willingness shown across the county to participate in this exercise - the response rate was very high at 84%. The Group members would also like to thank everybody for the very warm welcomes they received, and for the willingness to give up valuable practice time to take part. After completing the survey the group have met three times, on 31 May, 27 June and 17 July 2009 to analyse the results, prepare their report, and draw up recommendations.

### **2. RESULTS**

A. Ringing Trends Survey. The results of our Essex survey are consistent with the national survey of the Ringing Trends Committee. Some significant results are shown in the attached addendum. We believe the following should be noted.

- a. The average age of ringers is much higher than that of the population as a whole, and many people now do not now learn to ring until they are over 40.
- b. A high proportion of ringers have been ringing less than 5 years, giving concern about the general ability to pass on accumulated expertise.
- c. Overall there is a marked difficulty in getting and keeping young people interested in ringing.

B. Opinion Survey. Very many wide and varied views were expressed about the state of ringing and what could be done to improve it, both in individual towers, and in general. Analysis of opinion as to where the Association might provide extra assistance, could almost all be placed in the categories of help with recruitment of new ringers, and training of such recruits once obtained. All of the raw data collected is being archived on CR-ROM, and will be available for inspection.

### **3. RECOMENDATIONS**

A. If the Association wishes to provide more help with recruitment and training, this would best be done by expanding its existing Public Relations and Education functions.

B. The main emphasis of Public Relations should be changed to providing a service to help with recruitment of new and lapsed ringers. Press liaison and being a contact for public enquiries, whilst still being included, would not be uppermost in the role. A suggested modified job description is appended for the Association PRO, however the intention is not to load all extra responsibility upon one person, but to widen the function within the Association as a whole.

C. The main emphasis of Education should be changed to catering for training needs at the most local (district or tower level) possible. Some suggestions for implementation of this are appended. Once again the intention is not to load all extra responsibility upon one person, but to seek ways of widening the reach of this function within the whole Association.

D. The expanded Public Relations and Education functions will need to have a close contact and working relationship within our districts. The designation and active maintenance of district contacts for both functions will be key to making any significant advance.