

# Minutes from the EACR Training and Recruitment Sub-Committee Meeting

**Venue:** Via Zoom  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026  
**Time:** 20:00 hours

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**Present:** Carol Adams, Anne Bray, Christina Brewster, Paul Crick, Sylvia Crick, Ian Culham, Sarah Holland, Nick Holland, Beth Johnson, Sandra Murphy (aka Smurf) and Mike Worboys

**Apologies:** Andrew Brewster, Vicki Chapman, Sarah Chin-a-Loy, Anne Sloan and David Sparling

**Copied to:** Steve Ashley, Andrew Beech and Nigel Taylor

## 1. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting. Most actions from the minutes have been completed. Items reported on were:

- a) Sarah Chin-a-Loy designed the Semkin Scholarship Book Token
- b) Smurf confirmed progress on the Simulator Workshop user group initiatives with Simon who has agreed to put something onto the website.
- c) Beth has advertised the ART course this year and once 6 candidates have come forward a course can be organised.
- d) The installation at Great Bentley is awaiting a faculty application by the vicar. A Heritage Lottery Fund grant is expected of £68,000.00 plus £10,000.00 from the BRF. A request for this Committee to provide £1,437.00 for a simulator has been made; once the work has progressed Roger Carey-Smith will let the committee know what the outstanding cost will be for the training elements of the work.
- e) Christina reported on a successful Young Ringers session with 17 participants at their most recent monthly practice.
- f) First Pealers Club  
Ian and Beth will put out an appeal for new 'pealers'. Ian promoted the club during the Ringing Course. Members were encouraged to engage with any potential new peal ringers. A batch of badges have been purchased and are available for when needed.

## 2. Strategic Discussion

Members discussed the 'Strategic Objectives for the Recruitment and Training Sub-Committee' document produced by Sarah Holland. The document has three overarching objectives:

- a) Increase the people who actively take part in bell ringing in Essex.
- b) Increase the number of centres of excellence for teaching bell ringing in Essex.
- c) Have a breadth of ringing in Essex which enables every level of ringer to maintain and improve their skills.

Discussions surrounding the Key objectives are below:

## **Key Objectives:**

### **Sub-Committee Workstreams**

#### **Increase the people to have heard about ringing or had a go at ringing**

Willingale and Ardleigh are existing designated ART teaching hubs in Essex. A different approach is provided at the Prittlewell Ringing School. It was agreed to develop criteria for evaluating teaching quality across towers with a checklist to assess and recognise towers that meet standards, whilst recognising others that may struggle with progression to more advanced skills.

The terminology "Centres of Excellence" to be changed to avoid preconceptions. The group debated specific targets versus year-over-year improvement. The group concluded by exploring the first key objective: 'establishing a public ringing visitor centre to promote bell ringing and serve as a training centre for Essex ringers', such as St Clement's and Mancroft.

#### **County Ringers Training Project Proposal**

The group discussed a county-wide training project similar to the successful initiative at Ipswich costing c.£30,000. Ipswich provides practices and bookable training sessions using weighted dumbbells in pairs, operates with a £1 drop-in fee and £10 per hour for booked sessions; producing new ringers and generating income. The group agreed this project should proceed, potentially with a separate sub-committee to manage the project.

Objectives for increasing public awareness and recruiting new ringers were discussed. Concern was expressed about hiring paid staff and opening during the day, noting that many towers don't have sufficient foot traffic to make this feasible. The group agreed to pursue an Essex mobile ring for recruitment and training purposes, however, it was noted that there had previously been resistance from the management committee. An annual cross-county event to promote awareness and recruit new ringers was discussed (see Recruitment and Retention below).

#### **Recruit new ringers (with a focus on under 30 years)**

The group reviewed recruitment and training strategies, focusing on engaging younger ringers and improving practices across different levels. They agreed to keep existing work streams including supporting grant applications, providing recruitment inquiries contact, and promoting Essex Young Ringers Group. Beth said she is discussing potential collaboration with uniformed organizations like Brownies through Gemma Crouchman. The group also discussed promoting professional ringing environments and practices, creating a community of tower captains and improving facilities to make ringing more appealing, particularly for younger participants.

The group emphasised the importance of teaching young and older learners rather than specifically targeting under-30s specifically to give bands stability.

#### **Promote professional bell ringing environments and practices**

The group discussed providing bell maintenance advice and grants and Beth expressed surprise at the lack of heating system grant applications. Challenges and benefits of simulators were explored and Smurf highlighted the importance of dedicated champions to manage the technology. Strategies for supporting bellringing tutors, including maintaining a list of qualified teachers, subsidizing training courses for young ringers, and creating mentorship programs to develop future leaders and teachers in the ringing community were discussed.

### Provide inspirational bell ringing tutors to meet the training need at each level

Ways to support tutors and ringers in developing their skills were discussed. Maintaining and adding to our central resources and methods repository is helpful to tutors. Many resources are already available on the ART and CCCBR websites.

It is important to support ringers who have completed ART M1 and M2 courses by providing practice opportunities and encouraging feedback. The discussion then moved to creating progression pathways for all ringers, including targeted practices for specific skills such as handling and plain hunting. It was proposed to increase the number of specialized practices across Essex to help ringers develop their skills and provide clear progression paths. The group also touched on existing grant opportunities for courses and discussed ways to promote them to those who might need financial assistance.

### Provide progression pathways for all ringers

The group discussed young ringers joining organisations such as the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths and the Ancient Society of College Youths; membership is by invitation based on demonstrated potential rather than applications.

### Increase retention of ringers

Work streams relating to understanding why people pause or stop ringing, including plans for an exit survey to identify common reasons, such as injuries or tower issues, and a ringing health survey were discussed. Concerns were voiced about the challenges of conducting effective surveys without proper expertise and resources. The discussion concluded with a proposal that the group should collaborate effectively across district boundaries to address member engagement and retention challenges.

It was concluded that the breadth of work required to achieve all elements contained within the document would not be achievable in the short term. The group agreed that they needed to prioritize which initiatives needed focus, asking what would be the most impactful and cost-effective activities to pursue in their strategy over the next five years.

Members agreed that each would forward to Beth and Sarah their top ten points from the list.

Paul Crick led thanks to Sarah Holland for her hard work developing the comprehensive strategy document.

### 3. Recruitment and Retention

Beth reported that interest has been shown by 15 towers and three clusters for the Recruitment event proposed to take place as part of the National Heritage Open Days this year over the weekend of 19th-20th September 2026.

The group decided to proceed with the event: individual towers should own and manage their own events with support for PR, promotional materials and follow-up methods. The committee also discussed logistics including mobile belfries, safeguarding considerations, and the need for someone experienced in PR to lead marketing efforts.

Beth shared images of a poster drafted for the event. Members discussed and agreed the poster needed to be more inclusive. There was no consensus about whether to use the EACR or CCCBR logo on the poster and or for the whole event.

**4. Any Other Business**

There were no items under any other business.

**5. Next Meeting**

Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at 8:00p.m. via Zoom.

Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> July in person. Beth welcomed suggestions for a venue north of Chelmsford.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9:50p.m.

## EACR Recruitment and Training Sub-Committee Action List

Meeting Date	Event/ Subject	Item	Responsible	Target Date	Completion
26/04/26	First Pealers Club	Re-advertise and promote club	Beth and Ian C	15/05/26	
26/04/26	Simulators	Chase Simon about content for the Simulator user group website.	Smurf	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Contact all participating towers week commencing 26 April 2026 to request they develop detailed plans for the event. Approach towers about using the Mobile belfry and identify people who can tow it.	Beth	02/05/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Participating towers to provide feedback regarding their plans	Towers	16/05/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Circulate the event plan to the group for review and feedback, particularly seeking input from Mike regarding the experience at Maldon.	Beth	02/05/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Find a volunteer to lead the event PR campaign.	All	ASAP	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Share the AI generated poster files with interested members.	Beth	02/05/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Decide whether to use CCCBR or EACR branding for recruitment material.	All	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Present detailed recruitment plans and budget for approval.	Beth	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Provide customisable promotional materials (leaflets/banners) to participating towers.	Beth	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Provide guidance to towers about how to list their events on the Heritage week website.	Beth	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Remind towers about safeguarding requirements and PCC approval for events.	Beth	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Grand Recruitment event	Arrange for delivery of promotional materials to towers.	Beth	15/09/26	
26/04/26	Strategic objectives	Submit top 10 priority work streams/objectives from the strategy document, along with suggestions for combining items or identifying non-priority items.	Group	07/06/26	
26/04/26	Meeting	Identify location for 19 July meeting (north of Chelmsford preferred).	Group	07/06/26	