

Minutes from the EACR Training and Recruitment Sub-Committee Meeting

Venue: Kelvedon Church Room
Date: 30th August 2026
Time: 19:30 hours

Present: Carol Adams, Steve Ashley (observer), Sarah Chin-a-Loy, Paul Crick, Sylvia Crick, Nick Holland, Sarah Holland, Beth Johnson, Ian Kerwin, Sandra Murphy (aka Smurf), Cathy Ovenden, Anne Sloan, David Sparling, Julia Taylor, and Nigel Taylor.

Apologies: Anne Bray, Andrew Brewster, Christina Brewster and Ian Culham

Cathy Ovenden, the new Essex Ringing Course Convenor, was welcomed to her first meeting and introductions made.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Smurf and seconded by Sarah Chin-a-Loy.

Matters arising not covered within the agenda:

a) **Encourage the use of simulators or sound control in teaching (fund tech/establish a simulator user group)**

Smurf to liaise with Simon Mann; Sarah Chin-a-Loy to assist.

2. Final Strategy Document for Approval

The final strategy document has been circulated; Paul Crick asked that we take into account that the EACR includes non-Essex towers. Sarah Holland will amend document and Beth proposed that we accept the document.

- a) Future agendas will reflect the strategic objectives of the sub-committee.
- b) Maintaining a ringers' survey, Mark Jones of Layer de-la-Haye has agreed to take this on (next due 2027).
- c) Young ringers' involvement with the sub-committee was discussed: Sarah Robbins is a possible contributor. Youth Coordinator to suggest another young ringer to approach. Discuss how the young ringers might contribute at next meeting.
- d) A central point of contact for recruitment enquiries ('Learner Engagement Officer' or LEO) was agreed and Carol Adams to send a link out to members asking for volunteers. 2-3 enquiries are received monthly and the LEO would obtain feedback re how the Association handled the enquiry, and outcome.
- e) Sessions for teachers to develop their skills were suggested, members to look for a coordinator for these sessions. Ian Kerwin volunteered to assist.
- f) Exit survey for ringers who do not renew their membership. Waiting for Colin Chapman's advice regarding GDPR on following up lapsed members; consider contacting the district secretary and/or a tower captain to establish whether ringing is being given up for health reasons before sending survey. Need for sensitivity.

3. **Recruitment and Retention**

17 towers have registered for the Heritage Open Day Recruitment event in September, for which the deadline has now passed. The Touring Tower, Charmborough Ring and Vestey Ring are booked and will be at four towers over the weekend.

Marketing material has been developed by a working group and examples, including a 'pop up' banner, were available at the meeting. Seven banners have been bought by towers involved in the event and after the weekend we can offer banners for purchase again. There will be six EACR-owned banners available, so one can be provided to each district. The heritage open days logo is not included on the banners enabling repurposing.

Feedback information from participating towers will help determine whether the event should be repeated regularly.

4. **Around the Districts**

North Western

A calling course is available ranging in ability from beginners up. Practices available include 8, 10 and 12-bell. There are also advanced 6 bell practices as well as surprise minor.

Northern

One day courses are being provided for hunting, listening and advanced ringing on 8 bells; yet to establish whether these will be viable long term. District practices are being held and there is a plan to hold a monthly practice at Coggeshall for plain hunt onwards. A range of theory sessions are being run, e.g. call changes. Day activities are being arranged including 'Teaching the Teachers'.

North Eastern

Continuing with usual scheduled practices additionally running Beyond Bob Minor that includes Kent, Double Oxford, Cambridge, Steadman and Ipswich; these practices occur monthly/bi-monthly.

A plain bob doubles day organised split 15 students into 3 groups and there were 23 helpers. Students were targeted who did not achieve a place on the Essex Ringing Course. Cluster practices take place every week either on a Tuesday or Wednesday, organised through a Facebook page.

On Sunday evenings there is a practice at the only 10 in the district, Ardleigh; ringing ranges from rounds to Cambridge Royal. The focus is on striking, not complexity of ringing with constructive criticism.

Southern

As well as the usual practices held, a new concept of a simulator 'General' practice started in April at Basildon. Further simulator practices at Basildon are scheduled for October. A district practice is scheduled at Prittlewell in October to give members the opportunity to ring on higher numbers following cessation of the 'higher number' practices this year.

South Eastern

Usual practices continue to run. Support for plain bob doubles is an issue especially getting enough helpers. It was suggested that cross-district support could be asked for via Membermojo.

South Western

A training morning was organised that received insufficient interest. After many years interlude, a district outing is being organised to central London on 26 September. Development of a band at Chigwell Row is progressing extremely well with Margaret French driving the project; the Vicar is also learning to ring. Paul Crick attends practices at Chigwell Row 2-3 weekly.

There was a discussion about the viability of electing members in September when a full year's membership fees are paid. It was agreed that a proportional fee would be more realistic – bring this proposal to the Management Committee following adoption of the revised rules.

5. Budgets and Grant Applications

a) **Ingatestone**

Grant application for re-working of existing rope guides. Proposal for a grant of £1,150.00 including VAT was proposed by Beth Johnson and seconded by David Sparling; the application was approved by a majority of 12 sub-committee members. Beth to escalate to the AMC in October.

b) **Great Bardfield**

Grant application for installation of rope guides. The reason for the whole amount of the project being requested is that Great Bardfield is an important long-term venue for the Essex Ringing Course and significant funding has already been raised for bell related projects by this Church and tower.

Proposal for the full grant of £6,794.40 was made by Beth Johnson and seconded by Sandra Murphy; the application was approved by a majority of 11 sub-committee members (Sarah and Nick Holland having absented themselves from the vote). Beth to escalate to the AMC in October, recognising that this would be an ideal candidate for Bequest funding.

c) **White Roding**

Members are delighted to hear of the successful National Lottery Heritage Fund bid. A band needs building and a request is made for £300.00 grant funding for a 'Touring Tower' visit to help generate public interest. David Sparling proposed funding of £250, Beth Johnson seconded and the request was approved by a majority of 12 members with the proviso that paperwork is submitted within the next seven days.

d) **Upminster**

Tony Bloomfield reports: I have quotes from 2 firms and await a third. I think you know the structural survey was positive. PCC remain supportive. The faculty for the kitchen and toilet facilities has gone in and I hope to get a faculty for the bells submitted by the end of the year.

In return - I think it would be good for the R&T committee to start thinking how we would use such a facility for the wider Association and how we can engage with local schools and the community given our prime location.

e) **Ropes**

The group discussed whether the Association should agree to fund ropes in the future considering churches income has declined and the Association has funds available. Previously ropes were exempt from grant applications unless they were part of a larger scheme, a refurbishment or augmentation for example. It was agreed for the sub-committee to put forward a proposal during 2027.

6. Training Courses

a) **M1 and M2 Courses**

An M1 course will be run on 17th October at Ardleigh which has 7 students currently registered and an M2 course on 12th December at Felsted which has 8 students registered so far.

b) **Outline for November Training Day**

Tutors are being contacted to run approximately six courses (including foundation skills, Introduction to Hunting, Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles and Raising and Lowering in Peal); there will also be Steeple keeping run by Steve Ashley and Calling for Women run by Lesley Boyle on the 14th November.

c) Essex Ringing Course 2027

Cathy told the group that preparation is in the early stages with a view to stability, with no significant changes being made for the 2027 course while Cathy gets to grips with the organisation. It was noted that the Hereford course is run at the same time, which David Sparling advised historically this was deliberate to provide training at two different locations in the country. Cathy is considering putting out a survey asking 'if you could choose', to obtain ideas about what to offer.

Cathy would appreciate ideas for the course social event and it was suggested that the social be marketed well and in good time.

A discussion was held about whether participants should be signed off by tower captains as being on the 'right' course but with no resolution.

Look at giving prospective new tutors the opportunity to shadow another tutor during the Training Day or the Course to continue to build the bank of tutors going forward.

Caroline Watts has volunteered to co-ordinate course helpers.

7. Essex Young Ringers

Christina had provided an email update which had been received by all members prior to the meeting. Practices continue through the autumn.

8. First Pealers Club

Carys Hayward has become a 'First Pealer' and Paul Crick received her certificate and badge to pass on. There have been fewer first pealers recently and members are asked to encourage prospective candidates.

9. Any Other Business

- a) A review of ticketing sites has been undertaken by Trevor Church and although Eventbrite is more expensive it is the only site that provides the payment options the EACR needs. Beth to report to AMC.
- b) The CCCBR is undertaking a census and needs volunteers to become collectors for a small number of towers in an area. It was agreed to share the link in the WhatsApp group.
- c) Smurf reported that a training hub at Sandon is not viable whilst there is no rector.

Future meetings agreed for 11th October, 6th December (in person) and 31st January.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

EACR Recruitment and Training Sub-Committee Action List

No.	Meeting Date	Event/ Subject	Item	Responsible	Target Date
1	26/04/26	First Pealers Club	Re-advertise and promote club	BJ and IC	End 2026
2	26/04/26	Simulators	Chase Simon about content for the Simulator user group website.	Smurf	End Oct
3	07/06/26	Training Calendar	Look at advertising the training calendar more widely	BJ	End Oct
4	26/04/26	Promotion of training hubs	Develop a check list for what hubs should offer.	SH/BJ	11/10/26
5	07/06/26	Installation of Simulators	Identify towers to approach. For completion 2027.	AB/BJ	11/10/26
6	07/06/26	Teach the teachers	Plan sessions for trainee teachers and find individual to manage this programme.	BJ	ASAP
7	07/06/26	Exit Questionnaire	Report back on enquiry to Colin Chapman	BJ	11/10/26
8	07/06/26	Essex International Jamboree 2028	Beth to take proposal to support to next AMC	BJ	03/10/26
9	30/08/26	Young Ringers Website	Sarah Chin-a-Loy to liaise with the Youth Co-ordinator and delegated young ringers (as per CB's email) about updates to website.	SCaL	11/10/26
10	30/08/26	Young Ringers Sub-Committee contribution	Recruit 2 young ringers to contribute to sub-committee.	BJ/CB	11/10/26
11	30/08/26	New Members	Explore discount for new members joining after January. Delay until rules revision exercise complete.	TBA	TBA
12	30/08/26	Funding of Ropes	Generate a proposal for the Management Committee to consider funding of ropes; proposal to next meeting.	BJ	11/10/26