Recruitment and Retention Workshop – Presentation Notes

CCCBR Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup (February 2020)

The Central Council Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup has developed a resources pack to allow local associations/branches/clusters of towers to run their own Recruitment and Retention Workshop. This interactive workshop will help ringers come up with a plan for their tower(s), using resources from the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) and from the Central Council. The workshop was trialled in Sussex in early 2020, then run on a larger scale at the V&L day during the 2020 ART Conference.

These Notes may be used by the Workshop Presenter, alongside the slides from the resources pack. The Notes suggest the main points to be made on each slide.

We strongly advise that you do <u>not</u> read off the notes – that makes for a very boring presentation! *Plan what you want to say about each slide and practice your presentation a few times.*

Use the accompanying *Organisers' Guide* and *Facilitators' Guide* to plan how you will run the discussion sessions.

1. Introduction (slides 1-8)

Slide 1 – Title slide

- Welcome everyone
- Introduce yourself and the facilitators

Slide 2 – Acknowledgements

This workshop was first run in Shropshire in 2019 based on the excellent ART Recruitment and Retention Resources.

It has since been refined by the CCCBR Volunteer and Leadership Workgroup and piloted in Sussex and the V&L day of the ART conference in 2020.

Slide 3 – Agenda

This will not be death by PowerPoint.

We've split the workshop into interactive exercises that are designed for you to be able go back to your local area and produce your own plan for recruitment.

Slide 4 – What is the situation like in your tower/area (5 minute ice-breaker)

- What is it like in your local area?
- What's working?
- What's not working?
- Is *recruitment* or *retention* the issue, or is it both?

Slide 5 – Views of recent recruits

- Recent recruits can often be your best resource in recruiting and supporting new ringers
- These quotes from new recruits at Lilleshall, Shropshire
- We all know that Bell Ringing is a fabulous hobby - we need to find a way to pass our enjoyment on to others.

Slide 6 – Recruiting volunteers

- It's not just ringing that has its challenges with R&R
- This cartoon is from The Church Times.
- Similar issue face other church groups and other hobbies (Guides, Scouts etc.)

Slide 7 – What gets people into the tower?

At the 2017 ART Conference a selection of ringing teachers (sample size = 83) who were mainly recruited in the 1960s and 1970s were asked what got them into the tower to learn to ring. An online poll of Learning the Ropes ringers (sample size = 65) who have mainly been recruited during the past five years was asked exactly the same question.

Key Messages:

- Times have changed - the traditional ways of recruiting new ringer may no longer work.
- New recruits won't necessarily come to you.
- You need to be active and go out and get them.
- Success of Ringing Remembers campaign demonstrates what can be done.

More detail:

- Knowing what has worked for others will help you focus your efforts on effective recruitment methods and spend less time on those that don't.
- Traditional routes into ringing such as the Church and family are being replaced by friends and larger scale recruitment drives including tower open days.
- All advice is subject to the usual health warning that every band and community is different, with different links, different needs and different aspirations.
- We are seeing a shift away from recruitment through the Church and family, towards larger-scale recruitment events such as ringing friends and general appeals for new ringers including tower open days.

Slide 8 – Planning: the R&R toolbox

Key Message: planning is essential, you need to work out what you want to achieve and what you are going to do.

- Do have the teaching competence and capacity to cope?
- Important to consider recruitment <u>and</u> retention as a package.
- "planning is everything, the plan is nothing"
- There are no magic answers, what works well for some towers doesn't necessarily work for others. There are plenty of examples out there of what has worked; look to adapt these for your local situation.
- This workshop will take you through ART 10 point plan ("Recruitment Toolbox").
- Further info and case studies are available from ART Recruitment and Retention Resources.

2. Points 1-3 of the 10-Point Plan (slides 9-12)

Slide 9 – Raising awareness

Key Message: events and recruitment drives will have a much greater chance of success if there is a basic awareness of ringing and ringers in the area (in both the community and church) and it is recognised as one of the normal activities in the locality.

- Aim for ringing to be recognised as one of the regular normal activities in the locality.
- Make sure that people see you enjoying your hobby.
- Create a band that supports learning and welcomes those keen to learn a new skill.
- Make yourselves easy to find – ensure contact details and practice times are correct on-line and in print. This includes Branch and Guild publications and Dove. Ring with your bells open so that people know that you're there!

Ensure ringers are known and appreciated in the community

- Take part in local events as a bell ringing group
- Ring for public events and publicise it
- Give a talk to local groups. Follow up with a taster session
- Write general articles for community and Church magazines and newspapers
- Celebrate your successes

Get support of clergy, church wardens and parishioners

- Invite them to social events
- Give them a taster day
- Give them access to publicity materials so they can spread the word

Raise your on-line presence

- Build your own social media presence
- Connect and contribute to social media of others
- Maintain an interesting tower website and link to other websites.
- Add yourself to activity and event based websites (e.g. meetup)

Let people know why you're ringing for special events

- A board outside the tower
- Postcards through the door
- Local media
- Social media

Get the basics right

- Ensure your contact details and ringing times are correct on guild/branch website and the Dove website.

Slide 10 – What do you want to achieve?

Key Message: start by deciding what you want to achieve rather than what you are going to do. Have an honest look at the band's needs and aspirations and what skills and people you have to realise them.

How many new recruits do you want?

- Do you want a low-level steady flow of new recruits or need an injection of new recruits?
- Are you starting a band from scratch?

What are the aspirations and values of you band?

- Are you interested mainly in keeping the bells ringing on a Sunday?
- Are you looking for ringers who can extend your method ringing repertoire?
- Will the band welcome the new ringers or resent the time they take to train up?

Do you have the skills and people to transform new recruits into fully developed ringers?

- Organise some teacher training – e.g. ART course
- Ask for help – from other local towers, or your Association/Guild/Branch

Slide 11 – Who to recruit?

Key Message: Knowing what you want to achieve, think about who you'd like to recruit and how you might appeal to them.

Ask yourself: why would they be interested in learning to ring with your band? What is the best way of contacting your target audience (what kind of media do they engage with)?

Potential recruits

- The local community
- Church groups
- Church congregation
- Families
- School children
- University students
- Retirees
- Established professionals
- Scouts and guides
- Girls and Boys Brigades
- Duke of Edinburgh scheme
- Other local groups

Slide 12 – First Discussion Session

At the end, ask your discussion groups to summarise the key points from their discussions

3. Points 4-6 of the 10-Point Plan (slides 13-17)

Slide 13 – What are you going to do?

Key Message: if you've raised the local profile of ringing in your community, you have a better chance of getting people to come to an event.

What activities can you organise to reaching and convince your target recruits to learn to ring?

- Not just tower open days!
- There are many other ways of engaging with people
- E.g. an Experience Day or gift voucher, for someone to learn to ring - could be given as auction prizes for local fundraisers, or sold as gifts for special occasions or Christmas.
- Or give a talk, as part of a Church Service or to a local interest group - include a specific invitation to come and have a go at the end of the talk (collect names straight away).

For a steady flow of new recruits

- Personal contact
- Posters
- Leaflets
- Social Media
- Website
- On-line hobbies listing
- Magazines
- Church notices / taking part in church services – have a service that focuses on the ringers, or an event after service
- Experience Day or gift voucher

For an injection of new recruits or to build a band from scratch

- Special church service
- Tower open day
- Mini-ring at an event

Slide 14 – Publicity

Key Messages:

- Need to be active – word of mouth works best
- Stress the positives or learning to ring
- Don't be negative – avoid phrases like "recruitment crisis" or "dying art"
- Embrace new technology (or find someone who will)

Things to bear in mind

- There are lots of ideas and some useful "how to" guides out there.
- Be specific in your message – if you are recruiting, mention this.
- Use the right medium – if you're recruiting school children you need to talk to the parents. It is rarely any good approaching the children without their parents. The children are often keen to try anything on offer, but when they ask their parents if they can attend ringing lessons, the parents are suspicious of religion/expense/time commitments and say no.
- Have a clear call to action - Giving a talk to the U3A? At the end of the talk, offer a taster session on a specific date. Give out leaflets and collect contact details of those coming. The invite is what turns interest into action.

Communication channels

- Personal contact / invitation
- Websites
- Social Media
- Press - local newspapers & radio
- Posters
- Leaflets
- Displays
- Talks

Slide 15 – Holding a successful event

Key Message: it's all about PLANNING. Whatever form your event(s) take, check your plans out with a non-ringer and see what they think. Find out what has worked for others; there's no need to reinvent the wheel.

Things to consider in advance

- Ensure you have fulfilled all safeguarding and health & safety requirements.
- Date agreed with Church and any helpers?
- Venue cleaned and welcoming?

What to include in the event

- Display boards and information?
- Leaflets and booklets on bell ringing?
- Refreshments?
- Talks and demonstrations?
- Ringing props – history, ringing hardware (e.g. broken stays), photos?

On the day

- Be professional and be welcoming
- Use people to their best effect – some people will be more suited to meeting the public, some would prefer to stay in the background, making refreshments or demonstrating ringing
- Collect names, emails, Facebook names and phone numbers – delegate this task to someone and make sure you can read their writing!
- Take good quality photos

Afterwards

- Post-event publicity including photos to share on social media and press
- Follow-up with people who left contact details

Slide 16 – The follow-up

Key Message: keep the momentum going; contact anyone interested as soon as you can and arrange something concrete. People will lose interest if you contact them months later or think you're not really interested in them. Be personal, be quick – phone people; don't just rely on email.

Action

- Contact everyone after event
- Arrange a taster session / date for first lesson

Slide 17 – Second Discussion Session

At the end, ask your discussion groups to summarise the key points from their discussions

4. Points 7-10 of the 10-Point Plan (slides 18-20)

Slide 18 – Intensive training

Key Message:

- Research clearly demonstrates that intensive training leads to faster learning.
- More of what has been learned is retained between sessions
- Ringers maintain enthusiasm as they feel they are progressing.
- Intensive training is both frequent and concentrated.

These days new recruits expect 'courses' and a defined, structured way of learning to ring. This is comparable to other hobbies – such as music grades or karate belts. The ART Learning the Ropes scheme provides this structure.

Plan for 10 to 15 hours of one-on-one training.

Action

- Silence bells or use sound control
- Decide whether to charge for training
- Permission to ring forms and safeguarding for minors

- Tour of bells at home tower or alternative
- Decide with new ringer best times for bell handling training
- Get helpers if more than one is being taught
- Set date for first go of ringing rounds with others on open bells – a great motivator

Slide 19 – Keeping your new ringers interested

Key Message: Throughout the phase of learning to handle the bell the ringer receives lots of individual attention. Once the ringer joins the normal weekly practice they will receive considerably less attention. The learning curve will plateau which may lead to a waning in interest and motivation. Think about how you can provide targeted sessions and give your new ringers in as much rope time as possible to keep them progressing.

Action

- Carry on with tied-bell sessions otherwise handling will deteriorate
- Organise a separate early ringers' practice, perhaps joint with other towers
- Individual practice sessions using a simulator
- Organise early ringer's courses over 6 to 8 weeks
- Provide plenty of activities (games, reading, quizzes, mobile phone apps) for your ringers to learn when they aren't ringing at the practice
- Integrate them into the ringing social scene
- Group learning keeps ringers motivated
- The ART Foundation Skills programme is an excellent resource

Slide 20 – Intensive training

Key Message: Need to consider what can you do to keep the whole band happy and make recruitment work for the whole team.

- New ringers can change the dynamic of your band
- Need to consider impact on existing ringers
- How are you going to integrate new ringers into your tower?

Possible issues:

- Practice nights becoming swamped by new ringers (possibly from other towers)
- Experienced members of the band may not get enough advanced practice or enjoyable ringing
- Some people gradually stop coming, or go elsewhere, or their method ringing ability declines
- Teachers and helpers can start to feel burned out

Suggested solutions:

- A monthly advanced practice by invitation only
- Regular quarter peal attempts
- Combine with another tower for special practices on a particular method or aspect of ringing
- Split your practice so that the last half hour is always reserved for more advanced ringing
- Sunday Service ringing by invitation only - giving opportunities to ring longer touches of methods
- Ensure that everyone at the practice gets to ring at least one touch of something they'd like to ring … with a steady band
- Have a ringing friend who you can confide in and help you solve problems
- Teach in groups where the burden is shared
- Collaborate with other towers running combined foundation practices or workshops
- Don't neglect your own ringing … make sure you get the balance right

Slide 21 – Third Discussion Session

At the end, ask your discussion groups to summarise the key points from their discussions

5. Wrap-up: Key Messages

Ask your discussion groups to feed back what they think are the most important outcomes from their discussions