Ringing 2030 Business Plan

Overview

Ringing 2030 is a major strategy, initiated by the Central Council of Church Bellringers to create a sustainable future for change ringing:

We want to work in collaboration with ringing organisations to put in place a growth pipeline, creating a steady and sustainable recruitment stream:

- 10000 more active ringers by 2030 (new or returned)
- Half of them under the age of 30
- 30000 people under the age of 20 have heard about or had a go a bellringing.
- A retention rate of 50% of new recruits
- Double the number of teachers and trainers of ringing.

Previous recruitment campaign shows can recruit large numbers of ringers – Ringing Remembers brought over 5k new enquiries, resulting in 3332 ringers on the day. There were 3k enquiries for Ring for the King, and around 50% of those are still ringing.

These ''big bang'' campaigns tied to a specific event also raise awareness of bellringing, and we have anecdotal evidence that people continue to express interest in learning to ring because of these campaigns.

We also have evidence that taking a mini-ring to a public event, such as a festival or scouting event can give up to 1200 people a chance to try and learn about bellringing, laying the ground for future recruitment and public understanding of what we do.

With this evidence and with all ringers working together, we know we can achieve these goals. More importantly, this work will lay the foundation for how we continue to recruit people into ringing far beyond 2030.

The challenges we face

Bellringing is a remarkable activity with many areas of growth. Until the pandemic lockdowns in 2020-2022, the number of peals rung each continued to increase. The complexity of methods, ground-breaking compositions and other theoretical and musical innovations continue. The number of bands able to put a team into national competitions, and the explosion in the number of youth bands in the RW National Youth Competition – all these point to a thriving art.

Our key challenge is demographic. In the ringing survey of 1988, the number of ringers was estimated at 41000 ringers. We now think that there are 25% fewer ringers and the biggest loss is in the recruitment of younger ringers.

Age	Percentage in 1988	Est percentage now	Est numbers now	Numbers in 25 years
Under 40	49%	15%	4500	4500*
40-60	38%	25%	7500	4500
Over 60	13%	60%	18000	7500

*Assumes same rate of recruitment

** The under-40s turn into the 40-60 in 25 years' time

*** the over 60s are the 40-60 of 25 years ago

There are other challenges:

Church Buildings: The financial pressure of maintaining church buildings and falling congregations pose a threat to the easy access ringers are accustomed to having.

Funding Issues: Large amounts of money are locked in Bell Restoration Funds while other aspects of ringing operate on minimal budgets.

Skill Shortages: To be able to teach all the ringers we need, we need about 10 times more teachers than we have.

Recruitment Challenges: Traditional recruitment via church congregations and choirs is no longer viable as the only route. We need to explore new ways to promote bellringing.

Resource challenge: We have always relied on volunteers, but ringing is struggling to find volunteers for key posts, much less the additional effort to support national initiatives, and to do them at pace.

Objectives

This section outlines the specific objectives identified as deliverable by the Central Council, divided into three pillars:

Pillar 1: Publicity and Marketing: Raise awareness of bellringing and promote it as a social and voluntary activity through targeted marketing initiatives.

Pillar 2: Recruitment and Development: Develop local and regional structures to recruit new ringers and attract lapsed ringers,

Pillar 3: Quality Environment: Create a quality environment with effective teaching, leadership, and well-maintained ringing facilities to make bellringing enjoyable and sustainable.

Initiatives

This section details key high-level initiatives under each pillar:

Pillar One: Marketing

Support for Campaigns: Provide support for national and local campaigns and events, including social media campaigns, and work with scouting and guiding groups.

Brand Development: Develop a brand identity and associated assets for bellringing that are available for use by all bellringers. Creation of branding portals to make using assets easy and accessible. Association website templates.

School Outreach: Use mobile belfries and specially developed enrichment curriculum to create awareness of bellringing in young people.

Pillar Two: Recruitment and Development

Recruitment Network: Establish an international recruitment network and a universal marketing and recruitment portal, so that potential new ringers can reach the person who might teach them quickly, and so that we can track the progress of new ringers. Surveys and other tools to understand gaps and how to address them.

Regional Courses: Develop regional ringing courses to train new ringers and advance progress for existing ringers.

Young Ringers Networks and support: Create and support regional, national, and international networks specifically for young ringers , including supporting the Young Change Ringers Association, and networking support to university and early career young people.

Pillar Three: Environments

Support for Associations: Take the lead in research, guidance and outreach for associations dealing with changes of use in churches with bells, advice and guidance, coordination with other ringing organisations for a shared ringing portal.

Professional engagement and training: Expand knowledge in engineering and basic bell maintenance to increase the number of steeplekeepers and advisors in this specialist area, collaborations with field experts for knowledge capture and research.

Leadership and Diversity Training: Bitesize training and awareness to ensure that bellringing is welcoming to everyone.

Business Model

The success of Ringing 2030 can only be achieved through collaboration and cooperation between all ringing organisations. The key to our business model is to develop projects and structures that can be sustained well past 2030.

Collaboration: Collaborate with ringing organizations and stakeholders. Affiliated ringing associations are a key partner, as well as the Association of Ringing Teachers, the Ringing World, the Mobile Belfry Trust, and regional teaching hubs. In addition, we need to reinforce and expand collaboration with external governing bodies, schools, universities and scouting and guiding associations.

Enablement: Much of the work identified by the Central Council has a focus on enabling ringers to become ambassadors, teachers, and leaders.

Project Teams: The Council's projects will be organised through specific project teams within Workgroups that are primarily focussed on Ringing 2030. In addition to Workgroups that support each pillar, there are two additional Workgroups for Young People and for Technology support.

Volunteer Model: As with most ringing projects, most planning and delivery work needs to be done through volunteers.

Contracted out projects: To improve pace of delivery and to leverage skillsets we don't have; certain projects have been outsourced to professional agencies. These are agreed on a per project basis and the results shared with all bellringers.

Paid support roles: To improve sustainability and continuity of critical projects and to achieve the service levels expected by many ringers, some long- and short-term fee-based work is planned. Key areas are in recruitment support, youth development, and marketing support.

Finances

This section outlines the forecast and proposed expenditure by the Central Council relating to Ringing 2030. It does not include projects or spending initiated by partner organisations, or localised projects and spending by ringing associations.

This is not a budget; however, this forecast will inform the specific budget for each year, and the forecast will be reviewed and adjusted in light of current budget and actual spending.

Income Assumptions

Since 2023, affiliation fees have been tied to the declared membership of affiliated societies, replacing a flat fee structure based on approximated size of the affiliated society. This is currently .40p per member of an affiliated society.

Other income sources are interest rates (decreasing as cash reserves are spent), grants and bequests, transfers from sales of publications, and repayments of previous loans or lines of credit.

- An increase to £1 per member of an affiliated society has been assumed for 2026.
- The model assumes a constant rate of members and does not incorporate increases due to recruitment or decreases due to retirement.
- A modest amount of grant income has been assumed from 2027 onwards.

The Council has a reserves policy of 75k to allow for an ordered closure, cash holdings in excess of this amount should be used for promoting the charitable objectives of the Central Council.

Expenditure Assumptions

Ringing 2030 projects which have costs are detailed to the extent that they are known and are based on roadmaps and project plans produced by WorkGroup leads and the Executive. This is not a complete list of projects, but the items that have a known or predicted cost attached to them.

These costs are set within the context of the overall spending commitment and income expectations of the Central Council.

- Statutory obligations are the spending required by the Council to minimally function, including the cost of the Annual Meeting, software licenses and hosting costs of our digital estate, insurance, bank charges and other expenses related to 'keeping the lights on'.
- Workgroup expenditure not related to Ringing 2030 includes project work committed or required for preserving and improving on existing Council physical assets, such as the Rolls of Honour.
- No assumptions for inflation have been made.
- No assumptions have been made for cost reduction due to competitive tendering.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Income	**21,558**	**20,150**	**11,900**	**52,705**	**55,730**	**80,230**	**59,230**	**58,230**	**33,230**
Expenditure									
Statutory Obligations	**25,822**	**13,332**	**12,530**	**13,940**	**14,485**	**18,135**	**16,300**	**19,800**	**17,580**
Workgroup Expenditure not Ringing 2030	**411**	**688**	**6,500**	**500**	**2,500**	**2,500**	**500**	**500**	**500**
Ringing 2030									
Pillar One - Marketing - unallocated			*5,740*		*750*	*750*	*750*	*750*	*750*
Branded marketing assets	4,200	16,613	4,260	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1000
Banners & Flags - Bobcat			1,478						
Blue Pine Films - Discover Bellringing		4,370							
Unified Marketing & Recruitment Platform				4,000	2,000				
School lesson plans					250	250	250	250	250
Banners and other pub materials for different groups				3,000					
Event support				6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6000

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
Branding for Touring Tower				1,200					
Virtual Tower Tour				2,000	2,000	2,000			
Youth group badge sponsorship				1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Advertisements & social media				1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1000
MBT Trust Grant				5,000					
MBT Loan				3,000	2,000	2,000			
Pillar Two - Recruitment - unallocated			*1,500*		*4,500*	*1,500*	*1,500*	*1,500*	*1,500*
NW Course	2,500								
Ring for the King - ART support		900							
SW Course -Starter Grant			5,000						
SW Course - Line of credit				19,500	19,500	19,500			
New ringing course - Starter Grant							5,000		
New ringing course - line of credit							19,500	19,500	19,500
Ringing Survey			1,000						
Unified Ringing Platform					2,000	2,000	2,000		
Facilitation of YCRA Events					500	500	500	500	500
Recruitment admin contract fee				5,000	11,650	12,500	13,325	14,150	15,000
Pillar Three - Environment - Unallocated			*1,000*						
Leadership Course					1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1000
Face to face meetings				2,000					
New Banner				200					
Association website template					300	300	300	300	300
Student ringing support				2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2000
Total Ringing 2030 Expenditure	4,200	20,983	11,478	57,900	55,450	53,300	55,125	50,950	49,800
Total Expenditure	30,433	35,003	30,508	72,340	72,435	73,935	71,925	71,250	67,880
Surplus/(Loss) Income over Expenditure	(8,875)	(14,853)	(18,608)	(19,635)	(16,705)	6,295	(12,695)	(13,020)	(34,650)
General Fund B/Fwd 1 January			160,440	144,327	132,192	115,487	121,782	109,087	96,067
Transfer from Publications	10,000			7,500	3,000			3,000	
General Fund C/Fwd 31 December		160,440	144,327	132,192	115,487	121,782	109,087	96,067	61,417
Less Reserves Policy (to close Charity)		75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Available Reserves		85,440	69,327	57,192	40,487	46,782	34,087	21,067	(13,583)

Metrics

The Central Council has limited metrics available to count ringers and their progress, and none of them are perfect. Projects like the recruitment portal will help to improve this, as reporting is built into the design. However, we would also rely on reporting from affiliated ringing organisations to help create a picture of progress.

- Association Membership Numbers: Track association membership numbers as an indirect way of monitoring new ringers.
- Teaching Course Completions: Work with ART to track the number of ringers completing ART's M1 course or Learn to Ring levels.
- Recruitment Portal: Tracking queries, where they go and how they are followed up.
- Self-reporting by ringing organisations
- Demand for ringing courses
- Positive News Stories: Highlight positive news stories about bellringing.