

Planning for a Successful Return to Ringing

Here are some ideas to adapt to suit your local tower or area.

Visit the [Survival and Recovery Toolbox](#) for more information and keep an eye on the most up to date [CCCBR guidance](#).

1. Taking stock

Although there is renewed optimism for our return to ringing, restrictions may well still be with us for some time yet. Every person will have a different attitude to risk and every tower is different.

Ideas	Your plan
Discuss the return with your band	
<p>Find out who's definitely returning, who's definitely not, and who might need some encouragement and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will they be ready to start ringing again? Under what circumstances? • What are their concerns and how can you help them? • What are their views on social distancing and face covering etc.? <p>The dynamics of the conversations and people's choices might depend on whether you to talk to people individually or as a band.</p>	
<u>New people</u>	
<p>Do key roles need to be filled e.g., Tower Captain, Steeple Keeper, Ringing Master or Ringing Teacher? Start looking for replacements and consider training or mentoring opportunities.</p>	
Is your tower suitable?	
<p>Consider the ventilation guidelines. Is your ringing chamber suitable for group ringing? Could you ring at another tower initially?</p>	
<u>Online ringing</u> and <u>handbells</u>	
<p>Continue with online and handbell ringing, particularly if ringing in the tower is limited or some people don't come back immediately.</p> <p>Discuss if and how you want to continue with online and handbell ringing in the future.</p>	

2. Getting ready for ringing

Before you ring for the first time, make sure the physical infrastructure is safe and secure – the birds have been busy. Some ringers might be nervous of ringing again. The church and local community might have got used to (but hopefully missed) the regular sound of the bells being rung.

Ideas	Your plans
Getting the bells and tower fit for ringing	
<p>Complete outstanding paperwork – risk assessments, safeguarding, etc. The Church of England has recently re-confirmed that it expects all Tower Captains and Ringing Masters (those who “shape the culture” of the band) to have done the Leadership Pathway (formerly C2) safeguarding training.</p> <p>Carry out an inspection of the ringing room, clock room, and belfry to check if anything has changed since you last rang.</p> <p>Carry out bell installation checks.</p>	
An agreed return	
<p>Agree as a band when, where and how you want to return to ringing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many bells will you ring? • Have ringers got access to lateral flow tests? • What is your attitude to masks and social distancing? <p>Could any of these issues cause problems within the band? It’s better to discuss differences beforehand and reach a consensus than have to resolve problems in the tower later.</p>	
Getting physically fit for ringing	
<p>Encourage ringers to get fit for ringing using online resources for ideas and motivation.</p>	
Building good relations with your church	
<p>Discuss with the church authorities when bells can be rung – services, national events and practices.</p> <p>Work with the Incumbent and church authorities to agree risk assessments, including an on-going Covid-19 Risk Assessment.</p>	

Building good relations with the local community

Keep in touch with the local community using newsletters, websites and social media.

Let the community know why the bells might sound different (odd combinations) and give advance notice of how and when ringing will commence. An editable flyer is included in the Survival and Recovery Toolbox.

3. Ringing together – a successful return

It's been a long time since many of us have rung a bell. Plan for how you are going to:

- Help ringers regain their confidence to return to tower bell ringing.
- Transfer the new skills and enthusiasm from online ringing into the tower.
- Make the most of opportunities to ring within existing restrictions.

Ideas	Your Plan
Opportunities to practise	
<p>Is everyone just going to turn up to the tower to ring for the first practice or service? Are you going to arrange some special events, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice sessions with the less confident ringers on their own alongside a supportive and experienced teacher. • One-on-one sessions on a nearby simulator prior to the return to group ringing. • A relaxed 'post-hibernation event' for people to ring and socialise in a supportive environment. • Include raising and lower practice. 	
The first few practices	
<p>Plan for the first practices to be a success. People have got out of the routine of ringing and might drift away if unhappy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan the first practices. • Start with simple, well struck ringing. • Make sure everyone rings something just for them. • Mentor the unconfident or nervous – place bands if they don't step forward to ring. • Don't forget the social side – it's what many ringers have missed the most. 	



Ringling for services	
Take every opportunity to ring for services, even if this is just ringing a single bell or a few bells. Set up a rota to give everyone a chance to get time on the end of a rope. The less experienced or nervous might want to chime a bell rather than ring full-circle.	
Lockdown leaners	
Consider those less experienced ringers who have enjoyed and made a lot of progress on online ringing platforms. What can you do to keep those ringers motivated whist their level of bell control and ropesight catches up with their theory? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive bell handling lessons. • Agree goals based on performance quality rather than method ringing. • Coach in small groups. • Continue with online ringing. 	
Working together	
If you don't have enough ringers to form a band, see if you can join up with another tower.	

4. The Recovery – back to some sort of normal

After the band has become comfortable with ringing together again, then it might be time to explore ringing opportunities 'post' restrictions.

Ideas	Your Plan
Focus on retaining your existing ringers	
Discuss band and individual goals for the rest of the year. Ringers' motivations might well have changed. Be sensitive to people's constraints and attitude to risk.	
Recruitment and Retention	
Encourage lapsed ringers back to ringing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach those you know, who've lapsed because of family or work constraints. • Advertise locally for those who might have moved into your area but not taken up ringing when they moved. 	

Teacher refresher workshops

How are you going to refresh your teaching skills? Look out for ART's online and physical refresher workshops.

5. The Recovery – coming back better

Think about what you can do differently to sustain ringing for the future.

Ideas	Your Plan
<u>Recruitment and Retention</u>	
Are you planning to recruit? Have a look at the Recruitment and Retention resources to produce a plan or take part in a recruitment and retention workshop.	
<u>Teaching bell handling</u>	
Do you have enough enthusiastic and skilled teachers in your tower or local area? Can you work with neighbouring towers to teach a group of new recruits together?	
<u>Teaching foundation skills</u>	
What is your plan for improving the teaching and learning of good foundation skills in you tower or area?	
<u>Working together</u>	
Is there enthusiasm to work with local bands to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach new recruits.• Develop opportunities for new ringers, including foundation skills practices.• Form a cluster to share the load and to create new opportunities.• Hold more advanced practices.• Form a youth or school group.	

