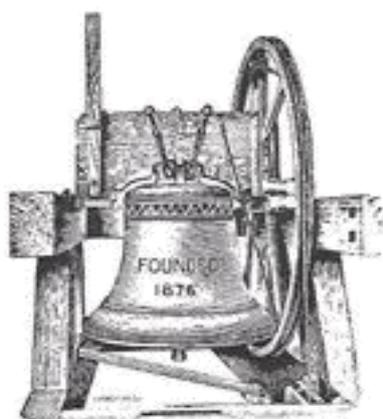


THE LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION OF
CHANGE RINGERS

SPRING 2020
REPORT

FROM THE REVIEW GROUP



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INTRODUCTION

This third report supersedes the previous two reports. It results from continued deliberation, ending in consultation with association members on 22 February, 2020.

Our Remit was the following:

The scope of the review shall include but not be limited to, the Association's

- Objectives
- Management structure
- The structure and operation of the Branches
- The interaction between the association, its branches and its membership

To keep our report brief and avoid repeating passages from the previous reports, we will not detail the rationale for our conclusions here but will simply present a brief digest of our findings and then state certain recommendations; first in summary, then in detail.

BRIEF DIGEST OF FINDINGS

OBJECTIVES

- The purpose and value of LACR membership were insufficiently understood and appreciated; some members of the association felt alienated.
- The Objects of the association were not focused

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- The current management structure was unwieldy and less effective than it could be
- Key association posts were becoming difficult to fill.
- Various aspects of the association's administration were proving difficult, exposing some members to embarrassment, resentment and rancour.
- The association's ability to respond quickly to new requirements is restricted by the rigidity of the rules and the calendar of meetings.

STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF BRANCHES

The LACR Rule 13 (a) , (copied below for ease of reference) explains that the Association shall be divided into convenient branches, there are 12 in total. The branches, in the main, are structured in accordance with the rule. There is some cooperation between branches, i.e. joint meetings, outings, training and quarter peals. The structure allows branches to call for assistance from the LACR for help and advice i.e. basic and advanced training, bell installation inspections, safeguarding, PR and GDPR etc.

The 'ringing communities' operating within the area of the Association, are mainly the branches but they also include various self-constituted groups (e.g. mid-week, cathedral and university societies) who share members with LACR. Some branch members have reported difficulty in communicating with association officers from whom they wish to obtain assistance.

Rule 13. (a) *The Association shall be divided into convenient branches, the management of which shall be conducted as hereinafter provided. (b) No tower shall be transferred from one branch to another without the written*

consent of a majority of the ringers at the tower concerned and after discussion by the Central Committee and with the approval of the Annual General Meeting of the Association. (c) The branch affairs shall be managed by a Chairman and/or Ringing Master, Secretary and Committee, the constitution of the Committee being decided by the Branch. Two of the Branch Committee shall represent the Branch on the Association Committee, it being advisable that one should be the Branch Secretary. The Branch Secretary shall be responsible for collecting subscriptions from: (i) All newly elected members (ii) All unattached Members of the Branch and forwarding these subscriptions to the Gen Secretary.

INTERACTION BETWEEN ASSOCIATION, BRANCHES AND MEMBERSHIP

- Pooling resources as an association enables us to achieve collectively, what cannot be achieved alone by smaller groups or by individuals. As well as money, 'resources' include time, knowledge, skills and expertise, equipment and facilities, information and enthusiasm.
- The benefits of association are not spread uniformly between and within branches.
- Members need to be kept more closely in touch with events, to know what has been happening, what is going to happen next and, if something important did not happen, the reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN SUMMARY

LACR needs to develop the following as soon as can be accomplished:

1. A CLEARER, MORE APPEALING PURPOSE
2. A CLEARER PROGRAMME focused on productive outcomes in relation to fewer, better-defined centres of attention; namely, RINGERS, RINGING AND RINGING FACILITIES.
3. A CLEAR STRATEGY, involving branches more closely in planning
4. EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

The main thrust of our recommendations is to reorganise the association through 'Operating Groups'. These are discussed in detail on pages 8-9.

For consistency, the recommendations will be presented in the order indicated above.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN DETAIL

1. A CLEARER, MORE APPEALING PURPOSE

We need to answer the key question, “WHAT IS THE LACR FOR?”, more succinctly and appealingly than is expressed by the OBJECTS published in the annual report.

We recommend:

THE LACR EXISTS TO FOSTER AND COORDINATE

A THRIVING COMMUNITY OF CHANGE RINGERS IN LANCASHIRE

To bind members into tighter affiliation and provide a tangible and immediate token of reward for the first year’s subscription, it is proposed to issue to each new member a welcome pack whose principal component will be a letter, signed by the LACR president.

The letter conveys what is meant by ‘a thriving community of change ringers’, and outlines the ethos to sustain a ringing environment in which new and developing ringers can flourish.

The letter is reproduced in the *appendix*. Existing members are requested to promote its contents.

2. A CLEAR PROGRAMME

To have a continuing tangible value and maintain effectiveness in its purpose, the association needs to pursue

A CLEAR PROGRAMME OF CHANGE, DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO

- **RINGERS,**
- **RINGING AND**
- **RINGING FACILITIES.**

THE ASSOCIATION MUST ALIGN ALL BUSINESS TO ACCOMPLISH THE PROGRAMME

To define and implement its programme effectively, it will be necessary to give greater influence and responsibility to individuals and their parent branches or local communities of ringers. In the next section, we introduce the concept of 'operating groups' to accomplish this.

THE ASSOCIATION ALSO NEEDS TO DEAL WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

'Dealing with the outside world' means having a programme of 'governance' : that is to say, taking all reasonable steps to comply with important expectations imposed by powerful regulatory and legislative agencies, and to keeping channels of communication with those agencies, open.

Examples of authorities in 'the outside world' are churches and diocesan authorities, environmental health (noise abatement) officers, safeguarding officers, the Health & Safety Executive and Data Protection Registrar who upholds the General Data Protection Regulation.

3. A CLEAR STRATEGY

‘Having a clear strategy’ is organising and distributing the association’s people and resources towards specific accomplishments in the realms of Ringers, Ringing and Ringing Facilities.

By having such a strategy, LACR will be better equipped to

- **define programmes of activity,**
- **give them leadership, coordination and direction,**
- **and follow them through to completion.**

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY

Our proposals hinge around functional co-operatives or ‘**Operating Groups**’ with strong local representation. Two categories of operating group (strategic, administrative) will be described. The leaders of operating groups will constitute an **Operating Officers’ Group**. The Operating Officers’ Group. will be overseen by a **Governance and Oversight Group**.

Strong local perspectives will influence the plan of change and put the ordinary membership at the centre of things.

Instead of working sedately to a prescribed calendar of six-monthly meetings, the members of these various groups will meet as often and intensively as their current project demands, They will lay heavy emphasis upon purposeful, productive activities, pursued with the necessary urgency and pace.

OPERATING GROUPS

‘Operating groups’ are cooperatives constituted from members who take responsibility for similar aspects of business within their parent ringing communities (eg branch secretary, treasurer, ringing master, bell maintenance officer, training officer).

Participants will encourage mutual aid and greater sharing of knowledge and skills at various scales : between nearby towers, between localities within a branch, between neighbouring branches or across the association as a whole.

To begin with, Operating Groups will be led by the relevant association officers. As arrangements bed in, the groups will elect their own leaders. This will allow members of any group to ‘grow’ into the leadership role and this implicit form of succession planning will ease difficulties, previously encountered, in filling key association roles.

STRATEGIC OPERATING GROUPS

Three groups will collaborate to give purpose and meaning to the LACR by taking responsibility for projects to develop continuously the association’s capacity for activities and achievements in relation to Ringers, Ringing and Ringing Facilities.

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATING GROUPS

The secretariat, the financial section and the support section will conduct the streams of activity most important to ensure that the administration of LACR runs smoothly and efficiently. More detail is presented in section 4 (page 11).

THE EXECUTIVE AND OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE

The lead members of each of the operating groups will together form the executive. The executive will co-ordinate the activities of the various operating groups and develop the association’s policy and direction.

The executive will be overseen on behalf of the association by the president, the vice-president and three “ordinary” members, elected by the annual membership meeting. These members will uphold the best interests of the membership and ensure correct management

THE BELL RESTORATION FUND

We have received advice from several sources suggesting that the governance of the LACR Bell Restoration Fund as a charity, in light of current requirements of the UK and Isle of Man charity regulators, should be reviewed urgently.

Therefore we recommend that a review group be set up, with the membership having the appropriate experience in charity matters, to consider setting up the BRF as a separate charity associated with the LACR.

The remit of this review groups will cover the following:

- The aims of the charity
- The governance of the charity
- The membership of the charity

The BRF will be governed and administered separately from the remainder of the association, as far as legislation will allow. This will allow decision making in other aspects of the association's running to be free from the specific constraints imposed upon a charity.

4. EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

The administrative operating groups described in the previous section will conduct the streams of activity most important to keeping the LACR functioning administratively.

Preliminary suggestions follow, to detail the division of labour between the three administrative operating groups.

SECRETARIAT

- Agendas, minutes, support for meetings, administration of elections (when elections are necessary).
- Registration of members, communication with branch secretaries and other members
- General administration of communications between the LACR and external bodies e.g dioceses or the Central Council.
- General administration of standard communications within the LACR.

FINANCIAL GROUP

- Preparation of budgets
- Preparation of accounts
- External audit
- Interface with banks
- Recovery of revenues: subscriptions, fees, donations.
- Routine disbursements

SUPPORT SECTION

- Website and ICT infrastructure
- Preparation of annual report
- Design and support for efficient administrative procedures & processes

5. HOW EVERYTHING HANGS TOGETHER

We propose the following arrangement.

The Bell Restoration Fund is difficult to separate from the LACR but we suggest it should be constituted and administered as a separate entity.

Our proposals construct the association from the bottom up, beginning with members who restrict their ringing to a given tower or those who want to participate in a wider community, based on a branch or locality, a particular ringing facility or a shared set of competences and ringing interests.

Lancashire's ringing communities contribute members to each of the various operating groups, so that each group can be effective in every locality. This will enable the initiative of ordinary members to be amplified through an effective and responsive structure.

Training and education are developed in the 'Ringers' strategic operating group.

Ringing activities, special commemorative ringing events and striking competitions are developed in the 'Ringing' strategic operating group.

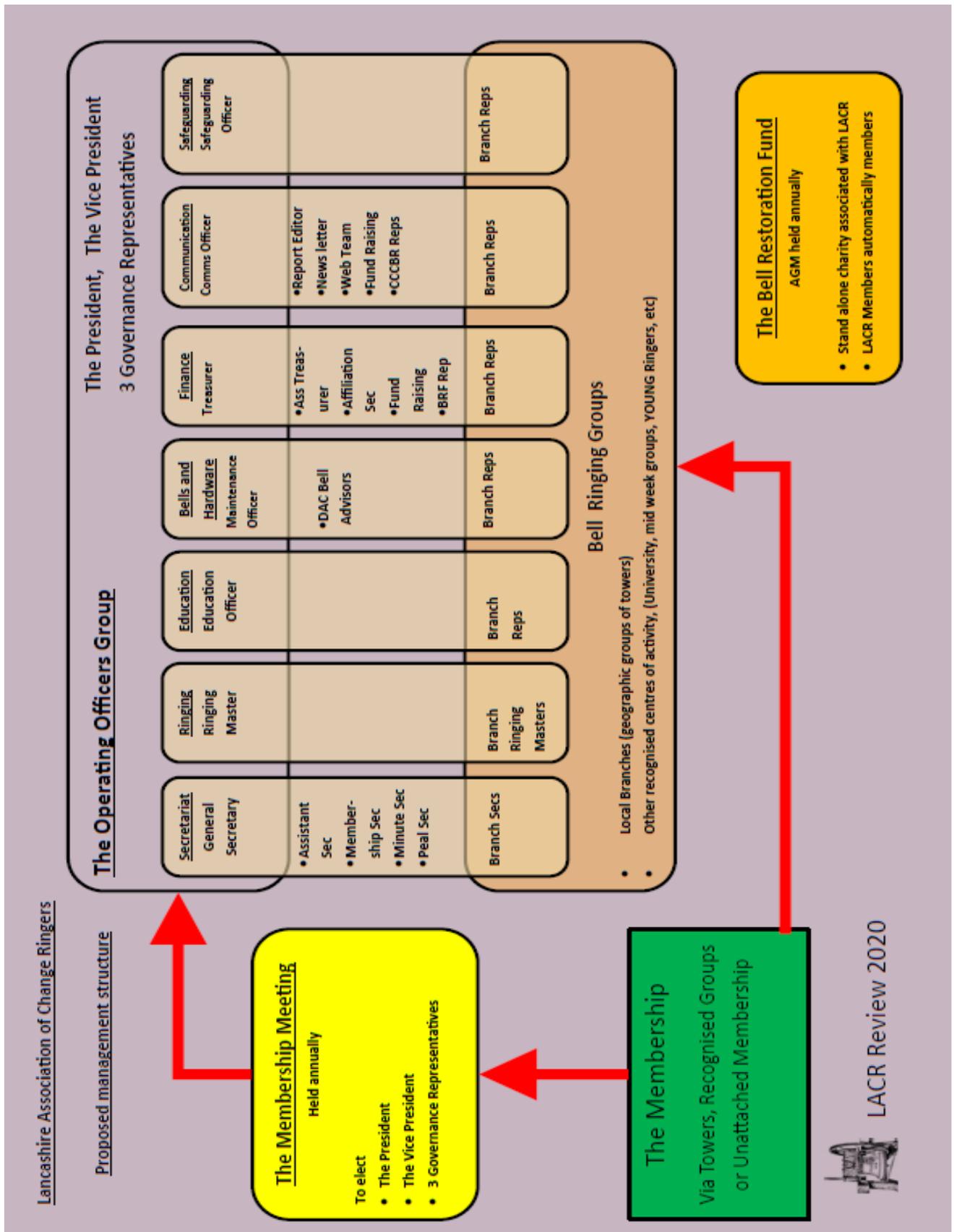
Capacity for practical bell maintenance tasks is built within the 'Ringing Facilities' strategic operating group.

Administrative operating groups will ensure the association runs smoothly.

The lead members of the various operating groups will constitute the association executive. The executive will be overseen by the president, the vice president and three members elected by the annual membership meeting.

Other membership meetings can be convened when required.

Graphic : LACR Proposed Management Structure



6. IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER WORK NEEDED

To progress the review and bring this stage of our consultation to its end, we will have to take the procedural steps set out in the schedule below. In the meantime, work needs to commence on two important projects.

1. Complying with GDPR requirements for Membership records and communications

Like any membership based organisation, The LACR is required to comply with the appropriate requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations, specifically with regard to its membership records and how this information is used. The LACR needs to understand how to comply with these requirements, and how to use the data for effective communications.

A task group should be set up to undertake this work.

2. Resolving uncertainty over certain legal aspects of the BRF.

UK charities have an obligation to comply with the legal requirements of the UK Charity Commission. The LACR's Bell Restoration Fund is a UK registered Charity. It has been recommended by several sources, that the LACR should examine the governance of its BRF charity, for compliance with the appropriate laws and regulations. The basis for this recommendation needs to be clarified and any necessary work undertaken.

A task group should be set up to undertake this work.

The procedural steps to be taken to conclude the consultation are shown in the **schedule** which follows.

Schedule: Procedural steps to conclude the review consultation

Date	Event
2020 AGM	Presentation of report and proposals to the LACR Annual General Meeting
Summer / Autumn, 2020	Presentation of report to individual branches
WINTER 2020/2021	Review groups for rule changes and BRF revisions
April 2021 AGM	Rule change proposals to AGM
2021 Onwards	Implementation

***Appendix* :WELCOME TO THE LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS**

A letter from the President

Dear ,

I am writing to welcome you warmly to the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers.

I would like to tell you what the association is for and why it is worthwhile to be a member.

The LACR sustains and coordinates a thriving community of change ringers in Lancashire. Meeting socially and ringing with encouraging colleagues will help you to become a confident, versatile change ringer. Looking regularly at the LACR website will help you keep abreast of our activities.

Membership will help you to link in to the wider world of ringers and ringing. The tradition of ringing involves learning, possessing and then handing on from one generation of ringers to the next, the knowledge, skills and expertise we enjoy together. Participation in association activities with encouraging and helpful colleagues will present you with enjoyable challenges and opportunities to widen your ringing horizons in ways your local tower may be unable to provide from its own, limited resources.

As you gain confidence and proficiency, the contribution you can make to your local ringing team will expand and fellow ringers will enjoy having you in the team. Obviously, it is in all our interest to support and help you during your development as a change ringer.

I hope you will enjoy developing as a member of our association and joining in fully and enthusiastically with the monthly meetings of your branch and the various association training days which take place during the year.

With best wishes for happy and fulfilling ringing in the future,

Fr. MARTIN DANIELS.
PRESIDENT, LACR.