

Notes of a meeting held between English Heritage, the Church Buildings Council and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers at Church House, London , SW1 on Monday 25th June , 2012.

Present:	David Knight (Chair)	Church Buildings Council
	Diana Evans	English Heritage
	Anne McNair	Church Buildings Council
	Kate Flavell	CCCBR President
	Chris Mew	CCCBR Vice President
	Mary Bone	CCCBR Secretary
	Bob Cooles	CCCBR Committee for Redundant Bells
	Alan Frost	CCCBR Towers & Belfries Committee

1. Matters arising from previous meeting notes (RW, 20 Jan 2012, p75):

(a) Metal Thefts

CBC advised that new powers would come into effect in October prohibiting cash sales, giving the police powers of entry to scrap metal yards and increasing fines. British Transport Police were also working with the UK Border Agency to monitor shipment of material out of the country in containers. A Private Member's Bill to provide effective new regulation of the scrap metal industry had been introduced into the Commons and received its second reading on 13 July. Ringers were encouraged to write to their MPs to urge support for this Bill (<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/about-us/campaigns/news-items/new-scrap-metal-bill>). EH published guidance to congregations in September 2011 offering advice on prevention of theft, securing of metal in situ and the situations in which alternative roofing materials might be considered where lead had been stolen; guidance is also available on the ChurchCare website.

(b) Bell Frame Recording Guidance

It was noted that appraisal and recording examples to accompany the guidance had been completed and uploaded (<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/cathedrals/conservation/caring-conservation-of-artworks-and-historic-furnishings-cathedrals/bells-bell-frames/bell-frame-recording>).

(c) Training in bell frame recording

The possibility of holding training sessions was discussed and it was felt that grants for such work might be available. A training day for architectural archaeologists, otherwise unfamiliar with bell installations, might be useful. Further contact will be made with SPAB over this matter.

2. DAC Bell Advisers Conference

The 2012 conference in Worcester had been excellent and a report should appear in *The Ringing World* shortly. The 2013 Conference would take place at Bishopsthorpe (York) on Tuesday 4th June with ringing the previous evening. The agenda would include a presentation from a clockmaker.

3. Bells in closed or closing churches

Robert Cooles spoke to a paper he had prepared setting out some of the problems which were being encountered with bells in redundant buildings. The Church Commissioners were in favour of early agreement on the future use of bells which, subject to support of EH and CBC, would rest upon ultimate local authority view, when the church is closed and outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction. All ringers were asked to notify the Committee for Redundant Bells as soon as possible of any church closure proposals so that consultations and plans for the future use of the bells could take place at an early stage.

Anne McNair spoke on the Statutory Advisory Committee's policy on bells and bell frames, which was currently being updated. Bells were usually regarded as part of the contents of a closing church

and therefore considered moveable; however, local authorities regarded them as part of the fabric and this difference of approach had led to many of the recent difficult cases. The SAC's critical information documents were in the process of being made public and documents from 2008 onwards will be available on the ChurchCare site later in the year. The SAC intended to convene a forum of interested parties, including CCCBR, to aid revision of the policy and then present the draft for comment and further revision. SAC policy applied to all Church of England churches.

Robert Cooles would prepare an article for *The Ringing World* giving advice on redundancy matters. It was noted that there was no planning authority control regarding the contents of unlisted buildings.

4. Membership of the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH)

ARCH is a network founded by English Heritage, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers, with support from local authorities and numerous organisations and individuals. The work being done by the Alliance (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/heritage-crime/arch/>) was explained, the principal benefits being the creation of a network of information sources to prevent and apprehend perpetrators. Both CBC and EIG are members, as well as many dioceses, and it was suggested that the CCCBR might also join and then create local links through affiliated societies.

5. Other business

(a) CBC reminded those present that grants for bell-related work were available.

(b) CCCBR advised the date for the next tower inspection seminar.

(c) Attention was drawn to an article regarding tower tours included in the Coventry diocesan newsletter *Gatekeeper*. The CCCBR had a note on opening towers to the public contained in its public relations advice and further advice was given on the ChurchCare site.

(d) The meeting recorded its best wishes to Graham Pledger on his retirement from EH and thanked him for his contributions to past meetings.

(e) CBC and EH noted the excellent publicity for ringing during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

(f) The position regarding VAT on church work was clarified. Until 1st October there was no change but after that date it was envisaged that 20% VAT would be chargeable. The intention was that a rebate would be made through the LPWGS but this would continue to exclude work on bells, clocks, organs etc. [post meeting note: the details of the revised Scheme have been published on http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/news_stories/9277.aspx]

The next meeting will be held on Monday 17th June, 2013 in Church House, commencing at 2.00pm. A conference call will be held earlier if necessary.

CFM/MB

July 2012