

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 Tuesday 17th June, 2014.

Present:

David Knight (<i>Chair</i>)	Church Buildings Council
Nick Chapple	English Heritage
Chris Mew	CCCBR President
Christopher O'Mahony	CCCBR Vice President
Mary Bone	CCCBR Secretary
Bob Cooles	CCCBR Redundant Bells
Tim Collins	CCCBR Towers & Belfries
Bernard Stone	CCCBR Towers & Belfries

1. Introductions

Diana Evans had tendered her apologies. Chris Mew had taken over as President of CCCBR from Kate Flavell and Christopher O'Mahony was the new Vice President. The new chairman of the Towers & Belfries Committee was Tim Collins, accompanied on this occasion by secretary Bernard Stone.

2. Matters arising from previous meeting notes

(a) Metal Thefts

It was advised that opportunistic crime against churches had been reduced; EIG had received fewer theft claims over last two years. There was, however, more organised crime affecting mainly infrastructure such as railways. Surveillance measures played some part and the value of ringers as "out of hours" eyes was stressed.

(b) Bell Frame Recording Guidance and training

There was nothing further to report regarding training. Douglas Kent, SPAB, had indicated that a potential training project was more likely to be funded by the HLF on a regional basis. The possibility of training forming part of a Church Heritage Records Project was mooted. It was suggested that the needs for various levels of training and by whom they should be delivered needed to be discussed under a separate meeting with SPAB. The CCCBR would consider the matter at their July Towers & Belfries meeting.

(c) ARCH

Mark Harrison from English Heritage was due to give a presentation on ARCH at this year's DAC conference. Suggested presence at the Ringing Roadshow in September had not been confirmed and Chris Mew would follow this up.

(d) World War I commemorations

These were largely being treated as local events according to circumstance with key national dates being 4th August 2014 and 11th November 2018. The bellringers' Rolls of Honour, currently housed at St Paul's Cathedral, were being digitised to make information accessible. There had also been information gathered on bells installed as commemorative memorials to the fallen and information would be passed to David Knight. It was suggested that ringers' activities and events during the coming years could be added to the WWI website (www.1914.org)

3. DAC Bell Advisers Conference

The 2014 Conference was being held in St Albans and details were available on the web site. Principal speakers were Bob Cooles on closure of churches, Alan Frost on bell maintenance,

Mark Harrison on ARCH, Chris Mew on restoration resources, David Knight on work of CBC and Alan Hughes on debate of retaining canons on bells.

The 2015 Conference may be held in the Portsmouth diocese and items for discussion would be welcome. One suggestion was a talk on the issues associated with the installation of mobile phone masts in towers.

4. Bells in closed or closing churches

Bob Cooles reported that whilst there had been much agreement at the Church House Forum last year, there had been little progress in formal terms. It was hoped that progress could be made in discussion with the Statutory Advisory Committee.

5. Cases of Difficulty

There had been no significant cases since the last meeting and no potential problems identified. This seemed to be evidence of sensible compromises being reached with regard to bell work and faculties.

6. Updates

CCCBR reported that Life Membership had been conferred on Alan Frost for his work with towers and belfries and on David Kelly for his work with the Keltok Trust. The Council had created a new post of Public Relations Officer, primarily concerned with media and contacts external to the ringing fraternity.

The Ringing Roadshow would be held at Newbury on 6th September and invitations to attend were offered to EH and CBC. The Bell Restoration Committee had contacted churches with unringable bells within a 75 mile radius of the Roadshow to encourage them to attend and discuss opportunities for restoration work and funding.

EH reported that, with effect from 1 April 2015, their planning, heritage protection, archive and conservation work will be under the name "Historic England"; properties will continue to be managed by English Heritage. There was currently a review of planning guidance although changes were likely to be minor in nature.

CBC reported on three initiatives:

1. "Always Welcome" a scheme to encourage the opening of churches during the week and provide suitable local material for visitors.
2. "100 Treasures", identifying the best artwork in the medium of painting, glass and stone.
3. Faculty simplification – an interactive online form was being devised to make applications simpler and to include a "statement of significance" guide. It was also intended that there would be a definitive list of "De minimis" items not requiring faculty which, once agreed, would be a requirement for English dioceses.
4. When the next CBC Bells Committee is formed in 2016 it is intended to consult the CCCBR for suggestions for members, as was done at the start of the present quinquennium.

7. AOB

Celebrations for the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta were in hand as was marking the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

8. Date and Place of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 16th June 2015 in Church House, commencing at 2.00pm.

CBC were thanked for making the arrangements and for their hospitality.

CFM, MB 21.10.2014