Top Ten Topics for a bell project

– there is no "right" way but a few reminders may help

1 – Scoping the project

Initial assessment – use knowledgeable volunteers, bell hangers, consider whole tower and installation.

Set out a) what is essential (fix safety issues etc), b) minimum to restore / install a working ring, c) a good solution, what options / compromises could be made?

How many bells, why? Is augmentation really needed? Play devils advocate!

Clock hammers, Ellacombe – what is to stay, what can go, what could be added

Make records, with photos etc, condition, good points, serious issues - STOP if it is not safe!

Do research – historical items, think about content needed "*Statement of Significance*", "*Statement of Need*"

Define and redefine overall goals, bells plus what else? Eg meeting rooms, toilets, kitchens, offices…..; a larger project may be more attractive for the community than just bells

Meet topical interests – equality and diversity, green agenda, sustainability, youth, elderly, disabled, …

Check what may be permitted with / without a faculty

Go round the loop several times - ask, responses, revisions – it won't be done in one iteration!

Get all the facts and accurately

Relatively minor points can cause heated debate eg colour of sallies!

Impact on other users / facilities during and after project eg organ, vestry, flower arrangers etc

Make it fun! What impact for the next century? With what overall outcomes and consequences for stakeholders? Not a vanity project for one or a few people with vested or personal interests!

> *TOP TIP 1 - Explain the benefits for each stakeholder? Why do it? Analyse carefully and have responses for "naysayers"*

2 – Getting specialist advice

Contact ringing Guilds and Associations, CCCBR, county archives, diocesan records, local history groups, Church Care, Heritage England, Church Buildings Council (was Council for the Care of churches), Heritage England (was English Heritage), George Dawson's National Bell Register, SPAB and Chris Pickford Historic Bell Frames (or Welsh, Scottish, Irish and overseas equivalents)

Some stakeholders may have to give approval as well as advise, so check for conflicts of interest

3 – Project management

One person to lead with a deputy / supporter is almost essential, plus a wider Team (please, not a Committee!). Project Manager does not need to be "the best ringer" or tower captain or Steeple Keeper.

Clear defined delegation to PM from incumbent and PCC, should have overall "control", have time available

Set clear responsibilities for others, have the ability to divert people to other tasks and get others on board

Sets timescales with contingencies, monitor progress, chase actions, share with all involved openly

Arrange meetings / consultation / communication with stakeholders, contractors, suppliers

Agree milestones eg dates of major events, keep everyone up to date

Always expect delays!

Make sure responsibility stays with those responsible

Get equivalent estimates and quotes so they can be compared readily, **NB** most grant awarding bodies require more than one equivalent quote

Ensure requirements / reports etc are delivered on time

Track risks, consider contingencies, things will go adrift!

4 – Project team and their skills / attributes

Need not all be ringers, some but not all from PCC. Don't force activities on those who are unwilling or unable.

- <u>Visionary</u> - charismatic champion for the project, key influencer, well connected, spokesman
- <u>Overall project manager</u> – completer finisher, records, planner, team worker
- <u>Fund raiser / bid writer</u> – excellent writing / language skills, reads all the requirements, meets the criteria!
- <u>Project finance</u> – tracks expenditure and income, risks (money formally will probably be dealt with by the PCC Treasurer)
- <u>PR</u> – designer, artist, author, social media and web user
- <u>Reviewer</u> – meticulous, pedantic
- <u>Contractors</u> – bell hangers, builders, carpenters, architect, structural engineer, frame designer, bell foundry, bell suppliers, clock company, electricians, carpet layers, painters …
- <u>Labour force</u> – volunteers with various skills and equipment / tools, from community, church and ringers, not just techies! Encourage young people (with parental consent if <18)
- <u>Others that may be available</u> – consider anyone -- historians, craftspeople, musicians, artists, statisticians, tradesmen, landowners, chefs …… there is potential in everyone!

5 – Stakeholder engagement

Local parishioners, community groups, neighbours, existing / potential church users, schools / colleges

Victorian Society, Georgian Society, donors of existing bells and their descendants – have vested interests

Put the project in context for each stakeholder from their viewpoint – benefits, history, family connections, facilities, landmark events

Regular publicity and communications, newspapers, promotional events, church magazines, leaflets

Don't leak information before timed press releases, respect any confidentialities

Link into local / national events / key dates

Irregular exhibitions, open days, demos, "have a go at bell ringing", special events, other events, project launch, dedication service

Routine use of website, social media,

Be imaginative, this is your church bell project (but you don't own them)!

Where are the ringers? Recapture lapsed ringers locally, capture new ringers, how will they be trained?

> *TOP TIP 5 - get all stakeholders engaged, enthused, involved, use their skills and contacts*

6 – Technical and contract specification

All constituent parts – what to retain, repair, replace. Scrap the rubbish but protect what may be historical ephemera and archive items. Optimise use of surplus – create souvenirs, sell, salvage, recycle, scrap as a last resort.

What is included, timescales, standards, quality, who does what, where, how ….

Check the order in which work is done, is the order logical and compatible with church users

Noise control inside and outside – often overlooked, should not just be an "add-on" afterwards

Options – eg simulator, dumbbells

Finishing – paints and varnishes, ventilation, heating and lighting, emergency lighting and exits, flooring and ceiling, mats, rope spider, boxes, notice boards, cupboards, curtains / blinds, white board, chairs, table, coat hooks ….

Contractor selection – compare like for like in detail, not just generic "install / refurbish 8 bells at XYZ church"

Who engages sub-contractors, who is prime, who is responsible to whom?

Who will check the job "on completion", against what specs, by when, relate to payments

Watch out when making contract variations, how will they affect all parties, timescales, costs etc?

> *TOP TIP 6 - get quotes for the same detailed agreed project specification*

7 – Permissions and approvals

There are many hurdles, with legal and financial implications

Ringers don't often own the tower and bells so it is Incumbent, PCCs and Church Wardens who must be involved in discussing all projects, obtaining permissions and raising money, and agreeing to go ahead

Major projects almost always require Diocesan Faculty Approval through Archdeacon and DACs, with Diocesan Bells Adviser - NB DBA primary role is to advise the DAC and Chancellor, not the ringers or church, so there can be a conflict of interest. (Faculty is a legal process and is Church equivalent of Planning permission)

Local authority planning, listed building consent many be needed

Funders will impose their own Terms and conditions

NB Cathedrals have separate procedures, and non CofE towers have some different stakeholders and rules

> *TOP TIP 7 – Remember, the Incumbent and Church (usually) OWN the tower and bells, not the ringers*

8 – Money matters

Work out all project costs with realistic contingencies

Research likely sources of grants, matched funding – what is / is not permitted in the match?

Cheaper rarely equates to the same quality for less money, what is different?

Define phased payments for completed stages

Watch out for cash flow – many funders pay on completion, but contractors want money up front or as stage payments

Some grants have to be spent by a deadline or within a set period

Exploit VAT exemptions if possible, use HMRC rules on gift aid, exploit Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme through charity status of the PCC

Use a specific "Restricted fund" for bells project money so it can't be accessed for other projects (NB A "Designated Fund" can be diverted to other projects by the PCC)

Bidding for / requesting money – don't use the same letter / leaflet for all, focus each letter

What are their interests, answer ALL the questions.

Drafting and checking takes a long time – start well ahead of closing dates

Put greatest effort / money into activities that will generate large sums

Small activities eg cake sales, coffee mornings, don't usually raise a lot of money for the effort involved, but they can be used to generate interest and awareness

Phased payments – make sure the last payment really will get the job completed!

How much will be retained for snagging after project completion and a period of use?

Legacies may be valuable but cannot be relied on when they will deliver

> *TOP TIP 8 - Customise funding requests to meet each recipient's criteria and interests*

9 – Standards, legal issues, quality

All projects must be *legal, decent, honest and truthful*!

Health and safety, risk assessments, checks for bats, birds, vermin with protection / removal as appropriate, insurance (including volunteers, age limits), safeguarding, GDPR, fire regs, lightning protection, physical security during and resulting from the project, noise during project, dust, routine and emergency access, vehicle access, manoeuvres and parking, cranes and lifting gear, scaffold, electrical supplies, altering services – water, electricity, gas, church disruption, CDM regulations, Building Regs

Adequate washing, changing, eating facilities for those involved, accommodation for longer term contractors

Consider current Covid specific restrictions throughout

> *TOP TIP 9 - Projects must be compliant with all rules and regs – failure to do so could have serious repercussions*

10 – Documents, records, reports, completion, thanks to all!

Create project filing system for all involved

Take many photos to compile a "history in pictures", useful and interesting!

Supply reports, as required, to funders, stakeholders

Maintain planning calendar and diary of completed events / activities

Project management software may help sharing and progress tracking

Keep records of lessons learned to share with others, learn from others

> **TOP TIP 10** - *Keep excellent, complete records, with backups*
>
> *Use "thank you" liberally, and celebrate*

Further information –

"Organising a Bell Restoration Project" booklet obtainable from CCCBR shop
https://cccbr.org.uk/product/organising-a-bell-restoration-project/
For bellringers and others undertaking major bell related projects. Booklet published in 2016; this is being updated as some details are out of date.

Stewardship & Management Workgroup CCCBR

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Fund raising – some suggestions

The following national organisations may be willing to offer financial support for bell related projects:

1   THE BARRON BELL TRUST https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/barron-bell-trust

Preference given to churches where the services are Low Church. Do not apply until at least 50% of money has been raised. Preference for applications where there is an intention to increase the number of bells to at least six.

2   CHURCHCARE https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/our-conservation-grants

Mainly gives grants for ancient bells and bells of historic interest, repairs to listed frames and bells.

3   THE SHARPE TRUST http://www.sharpetrustees.org.uk/trust.htm

Supports maintenance and restoration of bells in England and Wales

4   THE NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST (formerly Historic Churches Trust)

https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/our-grants

Supports structural repairs only, not bell restoration. Most grants are given in rural areas

5   KELTEK TRUST www.keltektrust.org.uk

The Trust helps churches to locate and acquire second-hand bells. The Trust also helps those wishing to dispose of surplus and redundant bells

6   HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND www.hlf.org.uk

The fund has made grants for bell restoration particularly where the bells are listed for preservation and/or the original bellframe has been kept in use. Grants are not given for new rings of bells or recasting existing bells. The HLF has a variety of programmes which might suit a project if it has a heritage angle. Application can be made for ALL HLF programmes but bear in mind that they are very keen though that heritage is the key aspect of the project, and will want to see good community involvement.

7   THE LECHE TRUST http://www.lechetrust.org/

8   GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION https://garfieldweston.org/

Particularly interested in projects that demonstrate community involvement

9   ALL CHURCHES TRUST https://www.allchurches.co.uk/

10   PARISH RESOURCES – an extensive website with a wealth of information, not just about grants!

https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Bells-Windows-Organs-Other-Specific-Funding.pdf

Also consider grant awarding bodies in the relevant local area: For example in the Birmingham area:

Heart of England Community Foundation www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk

Birmingham & Black Country Community Foundation www.bhamfoundation.co.uk

Barrow Cadbury Trust www.barrowcadbury.org.uk

Millennium Point Charitable Trust www.millenniumpoint.org.uk