



Changes to the Church of England Faculty Jurisdiction Rules

A Guide for Bell-Ringers

Introduction

Ringers are probably aware that a 'faculty' may be required prior to work being done in a Church of England Church. The faculty process exempts churches from listed building consent and conservation area consent that could apply elsewhere. When alterations are proposed, the parish must present the proposals to the Archdeacon. For minor alterations, the Archdeacon may authorise the work but more major projects will be judged by the Chancellor of the diocese, taking advice from specialists in the Diocesan Advisory Committee. The faculty is the legal authorisation of the work by the Chancellor.

The faculty system is a judicial system, so these notes reflect this style. Parishes and ringers intending to do any work in their tower or on their bells are advised to consider the full implications of the amended rules that take effect on 1st April 2020.

An article by David Knight, Church Care, on faculties and these recent changes appeared in *The Ringing World* issue 5682, page 287 with a short addendum regarding clock bells on page 337, issue 5684.

Background

The *Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015* were introduced with the intention of simplifying the faculty process and reducing the burden of administration, in particular for churchwardens and others in parishes with responsibility for church buildings. The major innovation of the 2015 Rules was the introduction of Lists A and B for items that could be undertaken without a faculty, subject to some general conditions stipulated in the schedule.

- Items in List A may be undertaken by a parish without a faculty and without the need for any form of consultation.
- Items in List B may be undertaken without a faculty provided the archdeacon is consulted and has given written authorisation.

With a few years' experience of working with the 2015 Rules, the Church Buildings Council's Rules Committee proposed further simplifications and these were agreed at the July 2019 General Synod. The revised 2015 Rules, known as *The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019*, come into force on 1st April 2020 and replace the 2015 Rules.

Changes most likely to be of Relevance to Ringers

The items in both List A and List B have been amended, in some cases to widen their scope, in others to clarify their meaning. In particular, all maintenance of church buildings, as well as repairs that do not affect the fabric or historic material, is brought within matter in List A. More major repairs to church buildings continue to be covered by items in List B. The existing requirement that such repairs must be identified as routine items in the most recent quinquennial inspection report is removed. Instead, it is replaced with conditions that relate to the nature and scope of the proposed repair.

A number of items have been moved from List B to List A. In some cases, a distinction is made between listed and unlisted buildings, with a wider range of works to unlisted buildings being included in List A. A significant number of new items have been added to both Lists.

In addition to changes in Lists A & B, there are significant changes to the process required for consultation of stakeholders prior to starting faculty proceedings.

Note that one of the general conditions when a faculty is still required, even if the work is in List A or B is ‘... the sale or other disposal of an article of architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest...’ – this may affect ringers undertaking what would otherwise be deemed to be routine maintenance or “having a good clear out and tidy up”.

Full details of the new legislation are available:

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/1184/made

and explanatory notes can be found on the Church of England web site under ‘The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019’:

www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/GS%202137X%20FJ%28A%29R%20Exp%20Notes.pdf

The Revised List A

The following extract is taken from Schedule I, Table 1 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2019. This extract relates to bells; the section on clocks is also included as church clocks are typically housed in the church tower and in many cases use the ringing bells as clock bells. As stated above, items in List A may simply be undertaken by a parish without a faculty and without the need for any form of consultation. The underlining indicates changes in the text between the 2015 and the 2019 versions.

A3. Bells etc.		
	Matter	Specified Conditions
1	The inspection and routine maintenance of bells, bell fittings and bell frames	No tonal alterations are made to any bell No bell is lifted from its bearings
2	The repair and maintenance of clappers, crown staples (including re-bushing) and bell wheels	Works do not include the re-soling or re-rimming of a bell wheel No bell is lifted from its bearings
3	The repair or replacement of bell stays, pulleys, bell ropes (including in Ellacombe apparatus), rope bosses, sliders or slider gear	No bell is lifted from its bearings
4	The repainting of metal bell frames and metal bell fittings	No bell is lifted from its bearings

A4. Clocks		
	Matter	Specified Conditions
1	The inspection and routine maintenance of clocks and clock dials	Works do not include re-painting or re-gilding of clock dials <u>or repainting clock movements</u>
2	<u>Maintenance and like-for-like repairs, without removing the clock from the church, of:</u> <u>(a) ratchets, clicks and click springs on flies</u> <u>(b) locking levers</u> <u>(c) pulleys</u> <u>(d) broken hands</u> <u>(e) clock hammers and their springs</u>	

3	<u>Replacement of:</u> <u>(a) weight lines</u> <u>(b) suspension springs</u> <u>(c) fixings of clock dials</u>	
4	<u>The reinstallation of disconnected hands and numerals</u>	<u>Works do not include re-painting or re-gilding of clock dials or repainting clock movements</u>
5	<u>Repairs to bell cranks and clock bell hammers</u>	
6	<u>The upgrading of electrical control devices and programmers</u>	<u>Any work to an electrical installation is carried out by a person whose work is subject to an accredited certification scheme (as defined in rule 3.1(6))</u>

The revised List B

The following extract is taken from Schedule I, Table 2 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2019. This table prescribes matters which may, subject to any specified conditions, be undertaken without a faculty if the Archdeacon has been consulted on the proposal to undertake the matter and has given notice in writing that the matter may be undertaken without a faculty. The Archdeacon may impose additional conditions in the written notice. The underlining indicates changes in the text between the 2015 and the 2019 versions.

B2. Bells etc.		
	Matter	Specified Conditions
1	The lifting of a bell to allow the cleaning of bearings and housings	Regard is had to any guidance issued by the Church Buildings Council <u>No modification is made to the manner in which any bell may be sounded</u> <u>No historic material is modified or removed</u>
2	The like for like replacement of: (a) bearings and their housings (b) gudgeons (c) crown staple assembly (d) steel or cast iron headstocks (e) wheels	Regard is had to any guidance issued by the Church Buildings Council The works do not involve the drilling or turning of the bell <u>No modification is made to the manner in which any bell may be sounded</u> <u>No historic material is modified or removed</u>
3	The replacement of: (a) bell bolts (b) a wrought iron clapper shaft with a wooden-shafted clapper	Regard is had to any guidance issued by the Church Buildings Council <u>No modification is made to the manner in which any bell may be sounded</u> <u>No historic material is modified or removed</u>
4	The treatment of timber bell frames with preservative or insecticide materials	
5	The re-pinning or re-facing of hammers in Ellacombe apparatus	Regard is had to any guidance issued by the Church Buildings Council <u>No modification is made to the manner in which</u>

		<u>any bell may be sounded</u> <u>No historic material is modified or removed</u>
6	<u>The installation of an electric silent ringing device for the training of ringers</u>	<u>Any work to an electrical installation or electrical equipment is carried out by a person whose work is subject to an accredited certification scheme (as defined in rule 3.1(6))</u> <u>The device is installed in a location not normally visible to the public</u> <u>No alteration is made to the fittings of the bells other than the installation of electric contacts and wires</u> <u>The device does not adversely affect the church's protection against lightning</u>
7	<u>The installation of louvres in a belfry as a sound control measure</u>	<u>Any fixings are made into mortar</u>
8	The introduction of peal boards in a location not normally visible to the public	

	B3. Clocks	
	Matter	Specified Conditions
1	Alterations to striking trains to prevent striking at night	No part of the clock movement is affected
2	<u>The repair or replacement of electrical or electronic clocks manufactured after 1950</u>	

Some specific examples for ringers

- Replace a broken stay, worn pulley, broken rope – all remain in List A, routine maintenance so no need to inform the Archdeacon or go through the faculty process
- Replace a wrought iron clapper with a wooden shaft clapper – remains in List B, consult the Archdeacon
- Repair clock bell hammers – now added to list A
- Take down and reposition 2 old peal boards fixed on ringing room wall (not normally visible to public) and add a new peal board in the space created after rearrangement – remains in List B
- Install new louvres to reduce noise in new housing development next to church – now added to List B, but note that fixings must be made into mortar
- Installation of simulators as training aids for ringers – now added to List B, but comply with the 'Specified conditions'

Roland Backhurst and Alison Hodge
Central Council of Church Bell Ringers
Stewardship & Management Workgroup
October 2021