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GUIDELINES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF REDUNDANT/SURPLUS BELLS

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 One of the objects of the Llandaff & Monmouth DACBR is 'to assist in providing, restoring and maintaining in good order bells within the two dioceses'. As an adjunct to this, the Association has customarily endeavoured to preserve any bells that are in churches being made redundant or are surplus to requirements in anticipation of being able to pass them on to a new home. Up until now, this has been done on an opportunistic basis, the prime consideration being to prevent the bells from being lost to the Diocese or sold as scrap. However, with the changing redundancy environment, it is likely that more bells will become surplus to requirements. It is now considered prudent to set out some guidelines for the acquisition of such bells, so providing the optimum chance of re-housing them. By setting out a structured approach for our successors in the Association we should avoid burdening them with the liability of having bells in storage for many years with no plan for disposal.
- 1.2 These guidelines are set out primarily to acquire and dispose of sets of full circle ringing bells. However, this guidance is equally applicable to sets of chiming bells or single chiming bells regardless of size and weight.
- 1.3 As a foundation for the guidelines, the Association seeks to act according to certain basic principles by which it is anticipated any actions will be carried out according to best practice.

2.0 OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Association is conscious of the fact that the Bell Restoration Fund is a charity and that no action should be taken which is contrary to the rules of the BRF or to the rules of the Charity Commission.
- 2.2 The Association is conscious of the fact that the guidelines will need to operate in tandem with the policies and practice of the Church in Wales who own the bells.
- 2.3 The Association will liaise closely with the Representative Body of the Church in Wales [the RB] and relevant Advisory Committees so that it can be kept informed whenever bells are likely to come up for redundancy or disposal, and can maintain mutually beneficial discussions during the ensuing process. For reasons set out in the following section it is strongly advised that an application to remove bells is made before the church is formally declared redundant.

- 2.4.1 An application to remove bells from a **closed** church requires completion and submission of a Prior Notification Form (Form1 Part 1) available from the relevant Diocesan Advisory Committee (Llandaff or Monmouth). This form is used to seek preliminary advice from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAG) before petitioning for a Faculty. On approval of Form1 Part 1 by the DAG, a main application (Form 1 Part 2) is supplied for completion together with the public notices for display (Form2). The secretary of the DAG may agree to submit the Prior Notification Form and to submit the Faculty Application as an internal process. If this is not the case, the General Secretary should complete and submit the forms.
- 2.4.2 An application to remove bells from a **redundant** church requires planning consent from the local authority. As many churches are listed buildings this requires application through formal Listed Building Consent (LBC). Experience suggests that application through LBC is less likely to be successful than through the Faculty mechanism.
- 2.5 The Association (through the Bell Restoration Fund) would not normally wish to own the bells. It sees its role as a facilitator to help re-house bells, and would therefore be storing bells on behalf of the RB. However, if circumstances arise which require the purchase of bells in order to preserve them, then the BRF, with approval of the Association Management Committee, can purchase bells with a view to subsequently recoup all expenditure or incorporate this value within its grant scheme.
- 2.6 Wherever practical, the aim would be that bells surplus to requirements or coming from closed churches should be rehung in churches within the Diocese from which they came; failing that, disposal should be to churches within other Dioceses of the Church in Wales. If no recipient church can be identified in Wales consideration should be given to churches outside Wales, either directly or through the offices of the Keltex Trust Consideration might also be given to facilitating the sale to non-ecclesiastical buildings if, by this means, the bells can continue to be rung. If the bells are owned by the Association then every attempt should be made to recover all costs involved in their procurement even if this results in recovering value through scrapping.
- 2.7 Each case should be considered on merit, rather than hard and fast rules to be applied universally. Notwithstanding, acquisitions must not be made which might be construed, now or in the future, as dealing in scrap metal.
- 2.8 Wherever practical, the aim should be to minimize costs in the removal or acquisition of bells without compromising quality or safety. Notwithstanding, professional fees may be incurred including but not limited to removal, insurance, travel and storage. All such fees and expenses would normally be agreed by the BRF Trustees on the understanding that they are subsequently recouped on disposal, either directly or by incorporation within the grant scheme applied to any recipient church or diocese.
- 2.9 The Association does not wish to incur on-going expenses and so relies upon the goodwill of volunteers.

2.10 Time limits should be set for further action following the acquisition of bells in accordance with the guidance set out in the following section.

3.0 GUIDELINES

3.1 The following points and pertinent notes should be considered when the opportunity arises to acquire bells:

3.2 The ease of re-housing the bells should be of prime consideration and should underpin any decision as to whether or not to acquire them.

- i) Bells with frame and fittings would be of more interest than those without.
- ii) Consider the weight and number of bells in a peal - an 8cwt six would probably be easier to rehouse than an 18cwt eight.

3.3 Consider the safety aspects and the ease with which the bells can be removed.

- i) Members of the Association who volunteer to assist with the removal of bells should not put themselves or others at risk.

3.4 Consider the costs of removing the bells, their transportation and storage

3.5 Timelines

- i) Assess the probability of re-housing the bells within 3 years
- ii) Assess the probability of re-housing them within 6 years

If the probability is low, then the Association should not take them as they may become a liability.

3.6 As soon as the Association hears that bells are to become available, enquiries regarding potential recipients should begin immediately so that a decision regarding acquisition can be taken quickly, in consultation with the RB. The initial 3-year period starts once the bells have been removed.

3.7 Actions to be taken within Timelines

- i) Attempt to re-locate within the L&M Dioceses within 3 years
- ii) Attempt to re-locate within Wales within 6 years
- iii) If after 6 years no recipient is found, then advise the RB to contact the Keltek Trust
- iv) As a last resort, advise the RB to approach Founders to sell bells for scrap

N.B. These timelines are for guidance only and the Association can deviate should circumstances require.

3.8 Bells of historical interest

- i) If bells are of serious historical interest then every effort should be made for acquisition and preservation as above.

- ii) Note that acquisition of historical bells may be difficult as CADW has to approve every Faculty application, and the RB must abide by CADW rules in order to retain Ecclesiastical Exemption. Also, a Planning Authority may have a particular policy, e.g. that bells should remain within a church even after redundancy.

3.9 Insurance

- i) Public liability insurance is required when bells are removed from a church. The Association should ensure that appropriate insurance is in place, preferably through the RB or alternatively through a qualified bellhanger or through individual personal cover such as householder insurance.
- ii) The secure location(s) for storage of bells and fittings is made on a restricted and confidential "need-to-know "basis by the General Secretary, which would usually preclude the requirement for insurance.