

Report from the Tower Stewardship Committee for the Central Council Meeting May 2007



This is the first report of this Committee to Council. We comment on work carried out so far and planned of the next year.

Work to date

It has been increasingly obvious in recent years that bell ringers cannot exist “in isolation”. There are a number of external factors that now impinge on the activities of ringers. As such we must be aware of these factors, able to effectively communicate with the relevant authorities and able to manage these factors to the benefit of ringers.

The Tower Stewardship Committee, as well as having met twice in Birmingham in the past year, has had an ongoing dialogue between members electronically. The committee has already identified a number of areas that require its attention:-

- Child Protection
- Church Law
- Health and Safety
- Fire Assessment and Protection
- Tower management generally
- Insurance

The committee is collating and assembling information relating to the above issues, some of which have been subject to recent discussion in *The Ringing World*. It is the aim of committee to disseminate this information to all towers in the country as a set of leaflets in a pack, via the territorial associations affiliated to the Central Council, as well as putting them on the Council’s website. We have near-final drafts of these leaflets and at present are looking at seeking sponsorship to help with the production and distribution costs. We have decided to use leaflets and the internet to distribute the information for ease of updating. We have surveyed affiliated societies and found that most respondents asked if updates could be made available via the Council’s website.

Senior members of the Council, together with representatives of this committee and the Towers and Belfries Committee, held a liaison meeting with Ecclesiastical Insurance. A full report of this meeting has been published in the *Ringing World*. One of the major items that came out of this discussion, and has been recently highlighted by a number of letters to the *Ringing World*, is the need for ringers to have full and proper lines of communications to the authorities



who own and are responsible for the church buildings and the rings of bells, i.e. in most cases, incumbents, Churchwardens and PCCs. We cannot afford to hope that any request from the authorities (such as for CRB checks to be carried out) will just “go-away”, and it is in ringers’ own interests to co-operate.

Future work

The committee is now working on obtaining funding for, finalising and distributing the leaflets. At this point we will review both any further work immediately needed and whether or not to recommend to Council in 2008 that the Committee should continue. We are currently of the view that the leaflets will need review and updating in the light of any comments received, but we are not yet convinced of the need for the Committee to exist permanently. It is clear that there will be a need for permanent liaison with Ecclesiastical Insurance, and possibly other bodies, but there are other ways this could be achieved.

Ernie Runciman (Chairman)

Robert Cooles

Michael Davies

Janet Edwards

Kate Flavell

Colin Holliday

Mary Snape

Robert Wood