

ARCH – Alliance to Reduce Crime Against Heritage

The ARCH initiative originates with English Heritage and was set up to encourage participation in crime prevention in the heritage sector through involvement of a very wide variety of organisations. The current membership of ARCH includes local Councils , both County and Parish, police authorities, conservation groups and archaeological societies. Most importantly for us as bell ringers the list includes a number of Dioceses, The Church of England as a corporate body, cathedrals and Churches Conservation Trust. The Central Council has joined as a member of ARCH with a view to encouraging ringers in local intelligence work for protecting church buildings including their bells. Most ringers will already be aware of the incidence of theft and damage in their churches and this is one way in which we can all help.

The spearhead of activity is the sharing of information on protection of historic sites and artefacts, advice and the prevention of damage by enforcement agencies. There is an emphasis in setting up what are referred to as “Key Individual Network” (KIN groups) involving local individuals who can contribute to the monitoring and protection of heritage items. Such groups may include local shopkeepers, teachers, young people, park keepers, residents and faith groups. These groups effectively become the eyes and ears for any local threats to buildings and other heritage items. KIN are a key component within Local Policing/Neighbourhood Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. Details of how to contact police/CSP can be found on the web.

The role of the Central Council does not lend itself to localised involvement but information can be obtained by affiliated societies and passed down to local ringers through newsletters and other media. Ringers are often around churches at times when the presence of church staff is minimal or absent and thus may help particularly in the surveillance field. Ringers may wish to become members of local networks and for more information it is suggested visiting the website:

english-heritage.org.uk/ARCH or, to make a direct enquiry to the ARCH co-ordinator mark.harrison@english-heritage.org.uk

Liaison between the Central Council and English Heritage/ARCH will continue through the Tower Stewardship Committee to whom any internal ringing queries should be addressed.

Chris Mew , on behalf of Tower Stewardship Committee

7th November 2012