



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FOR THE CARE OF CHURCHES**

**BELLS  
AND BELL FRAMES**

Church bells are an important part of stewardship and our heritage. The DAC has a Bells Adviser who is willing to help PCCs address issues and provide support and advice. Please contact the DAC Office for further details.

Bells listed for preservation or earlier than 1700 should not be recast.

When a bell of this age is damaged welding can be an option, however if it is beyond repair it should be taken out of use and preserved and a new, or replacement bell, found to take its place in the ring.

When a bell is re-cast it is customary whenever possible to reproduce the inscription on the old bell on the new one with the date of recasting added.

Whenever work is being carried out on old bells it is recommended that any cast-in crown staples (or the stubs of those removed at some earlier date) should be drilled out and if necessary, an independent crown staple should be fitted. This will eliminate the risk of cracking due to the iron staple expanding and contracting at a different rate to the bell metal.

There has been a great advance in tuning methods in recent years however re-tuning especially when it involves listed bells is generally discouraged.

Tuning involves the removal of metal from a bell thus tuning or retuning produces a small but irreversible change both in appearance and sound.

The case against tuning therefore involves balancing the desirability of leaving as found on the one hand against the potential benefits on the other.

When estimating for major work on bells, Bell-Hangers should give the date, and founder of each bell and any points of interest, including the inscription. They should also give the approximate age of the frame.

Most old bells and bell frames are listed for preservation by the Council for the Care of Churches and bell-hangers must draw attention to this where it is applicable. The advice of the Council for the Care of Churches must be

sought when proposals involve any alterations to historic, listed bells or the removal or alteration of a bell frame.

No bells should be re-hung, or frames altered in ancient towers save under the guidance of an architect skilled in handling such work and by a reputable bell-hanger.

No wooden frame should be scrapped and replaced without the consent of the Council for the Care of Churches and an architect's certificate stating that repair or re-use is impractical.

Synthetic bells (bell tones reproduced electronically or recorded bells on tape disc or any other medium) are not recommended.

Steel bell-frames should be inspected every 5 years and if necessary scraped and repainted with rust inhibiting paint.

*Further information concerning Church Bells and the Law can be found on the Church Care website ([www.churchcare.co.uk](http://www.churchcare.co.uk))*

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