**APPG on Metal, Stone and Heritage Crime**

Meeting Minutes

5 June 2018

**Attendees:**

Graham Jones MP (GJ)

Early of Clancarty (CB)

Dame Caroline Spelman MP (CS)

David Knight, Church of England (DK)

Kevin Thomas, EIG (KT)

Stacey Frier, Historic England (SF)

Jake Kelly (JK)

Antonia Grey, BMRA (AG)

Tony Stead, BMRA (TS)

Apologies: Lord Faulkner, Dame Cheryl Gillan MP, Mark Harrison (Historic England), War Memorials Trust.

At the first meeting the group decided to focus on incidents of crime targeting heritage metal and stone, and the potential impact on victims.

KT: Incidents of church thefts are definitely up. For example, last week there were 11 whereas 12 months ago there were just six. We are encouraging churches to take steps protect themselves. However, most police forces not interested.

We install motion sensors, some of which are linked to videos. These can take pictures and send alerts to selected people who then call police and/or send a key holder out. But the key holder is often a warden who is elderly and potentially not the best person to send out in this case. If the church has an alarm then the cover is unlimited but if there is no alarm, it only has limited cover. Some churches don’t have insurance due to the cost – they just don’t have the funds.

We are seeing is that the result of the roof alarms is that we are displacing crime to churches that are not protected. But there are certain areas that are high crime spots.

Churches are beginning to replace the lead with other materials. Historic England has shifted and may allow a move away from lead, but it is also a planning permission issue too. (In one case, a particular police force advocated replacing the lead).

CS: Something the Group could do is to tackle the patchy decision-making process amongst Local Authorities. Often the decision is taken at a lower level by someone who may not understand the full picture. There are also a lot of people involved in decision. For example, my planning authority heavily fined one church for breach of planning because it replaced the lead. The decision was taken by the conservation officer in local authority who did not know. Can we work with the Local Government Association to set out best practice?

GJ: Perhaps the relevant parties such as EIG and Church of England should come together to develop documents for LGA, or update the current documentation held by Historic England?

ACTION: The group will send out documents to all buildings at risk though Heritage England.

GJ: We should also send out a letter to local authorities. The letter should have a paragraph from the Secretary of State as well as statements from Detective Chief Constable Paul Crowther (of BTP) and Heritage England to setting out the risks and explaining options. The letter could also be sent MPs to get them to take cause up in their constituency.

ACTION: APPG to write to local authorities and MPs and send letter out before summer.

*Data*

Data shows that 70,000 buildings affected by crime, 30,000 seriously. The metal theft report by the NPCC, indicates a rise as well as a lean towards organised crime-led events.

The group agreed that it needs more intense action but to get this, there needs to be more data about incidents and prosecutions. We also need to better understand the reporting structure of metal theft and the different types. If possible, the reasons for not reporting, reputation damage, insurance excess, etc. also need to be examined.

*AOB: SMDA Review*

Respondents at the meetings expressed concern that no changes at all were made during the Review undertaken by Home Office. And while the document suggested that the Home Office is open to discussion, there was little belief that any changes would be made.

GJ: I suggest we look to getting more MPs into these sessions and then after a six-month period or so, review the position. Perhaps we should consider having a debate and asks some questions in the House about the Act and effectiveness of the Review.

ACTION: APPG to invite MP to attend sessions.

Next meeting. TBC after recess.