

# West Rainton Parish Council - 20 July 2017

## Item 16

### St Mary's Church Clock and Chimes maintenance funding arrangements

#### Report of: G Keedy, Project Officer

The tabling of this report is prompted by a recent request from Parochial Church Council (PCC) Secretary, St Mary's Church to draw up a formal agreement with the Parish Council to confirm financial responsibilities for servicing and maintaining the church clock and chimes.

For background, the Parish Council has funded servicing and maintenance of St. Mary's Church clock for some years. This work is undertaken by Smith of Derby (clockmaker).

From Parish Council minutes and other documents readily available, Project Officer has been unable to identify when any decision to fund servicing and maintenance (and scope) has been made, nor trace a formal agreement or correspondence with the PCC on this matter.

The earliest reference identified showing the Parish Council has paid for this work is March 2005. But it is possible that the current arrangements have been in place for many years prior to that date.

Advice has been sought from the Society of Local Council Clerks to help inform the Council's position.

Formal advice is:

"A parish council is usually restricted from contributing to the upkeep of church property. But, Section 2 of the Parish Councils Act 1957 makes specific provision enabling a parish council to contribute to the maintenance costs of a public clock.

Many councils rely on this section to pay for the upkeep of a clock on a church tower or in some other equally public location.

However, unless the clock belongs to the parish council or the parish council has given a commitment to contribute to its maintenance there is no obligation on the parish council to finance it now".

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/5-6/42/section/2>

Parish Council should note that there is currently specific budget provision for the annual servicing of the clock.

Parish Council is asked, in light of professional advice received to:

- 1) Consider its' current position relating to the funding of repairs and annual servicing of St. Mary's Church clock;
- 2) Take a view on where financial responsibility for repairs and annual servicing of church chimes should lie;
- 3) Subsequent to its' decisions at 1 and 2, consider the request from the PCC to enter a formal agreement.