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

Meeting Minutes

12 June 2019

**Attendees:**

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| Graham Jones, MP | David Knight, Church Care, Church of England |
| Tony Lloyd, MP | Richie Iwanoff, BT |
| John Grogan, MP | Kevin Thomas, EIG |
| Jake Kelly | Graham Sievers, VPS Security Services |
| Antonia Grey, BMRA and Secretariat | Eddie Tulasiewicz, National Churches Trust |
| Robin Edwards, Onis Consultant | Peter Kocen, ENA |
| James Kelly, BMRA | Alison Spooner, SRL Traffic Systems |
| Mark Cleland, BTP | Malcolm Johnstone, SRL Traffic Systems |
| Susie Burrage, BMRA and Recycled Products Ltd | Peter Almond, SRL Traffic Systems |

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Apologies from: Nick Dakin, Dame Caroline Spelman, Lord Richard Faulkner, Mark Harrison,

**2. AGM Matters**

* Given the meeting coincided with a significant vote in parliament, it was decided that the AGM item on the agenda would be postponed to allow for MPs to be approached to fulfil the requisite positions.
* No expenses were put forward by the Secretariat.

**3. Metal stone and Heritage Crime update.**

* Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
* Since last meeting, there has been a significant growth in metal, stone and heritage crime. The latest Office for National Statistics Property Crime figures for year end March 2018 shows that there was a 25% increase in metal thefts, including heritage metal. However, these figures are over a year old and all those present agreed that the figure was likely to be far higher.
* The victims of crime in the room reported that while since the implementation of the SMDA the type of theft shifted to larger, organised crime led attacks, there has recently been a return of the petty or opportunistic MSH-related crime.
* It was agreed that the current Act is deficient and has many vagaries. For example, that act of paying cash for scrap is only illegal for scrap metal merchants (site and mobile).
* Assumptions are also made that stolen metal will go into a scrap metal yard when this is not necessarily the case. The metal and stone (heritage or otherwise) may be stolen to order for reuse or it may be being sold in a reclamation or salvage yard, which do not fall under the scope of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act. Some will also be shipped overseas.

**Action**: Examine the possibility of using a Private Members Bill to bring reclamation or salvage yards under scope of the SMDA or an equivalent legislation.

* Those present were in agreement that more could be done by Government. However, there is little point in changing legislation if there is no enforcement. The issue remains that there is not enough data available to show the depth of the problem. Neither does it seem that Government is aware of the National risks involved, such as to the Emergency Services Network which could go down for up to eight hours due to battery thefts.
* The way crime is coded from force to force varies and there is not enough supplementary data being captured as to what exactly is being stolen, such as catalytic convertors, batteries, power cable, etc. MSH crime needs to be registered in a consistent way across all forces. Write to get clarity.
* It was agreed that the lack of enforcement is created uneven playing field for legitimate businesses that merit more support from Government, local police services and local authorities. At the same time, the proliferation of ‘cash for scrap’ adverts on social media and networking sites is concerning and not being checked or policed.

**Action**: Graham Jones to write to Facebook and Gumtree to inform them of their obligations and the relevant police forces asking them to do the same.

* It was also recognised that due to funding cuts, there is a lack of knowledge amongst enforcers such as local police and local authorities. It was noted that Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) led a very effective campaign which resulted in few church roofs being stolen. This could be a first step in training.

**Action**: Graham Jones to write to Lorne Green, PCC in Norfolk, to ask him to share his approach so it can be disseminated to other PCCs as an example of best practice, whilst reminding police services about the need to visit yards. BMRA also offered to support training of local police officers and local authorities, where appropriate.

**Action**: Graham Jones to write to Members of Parliament whose constituencies have seen high levels of MSH crime requesting them to contact their local Chief Constable and PCC to ask for action.

**Action**: BTP is currently working to identify a metal theft lead in every police force. Where appropriate, they will share this data.

* The group agreed that the general discussion needs to be wider, referencing metal crime not just theft. The impact of metal crime being such as damage caused to churches, needs to be factored in to sentencing. Judges should be taking into account these consequences.

**Action**: Graham Jones to write to the Law Lords to ask for clarity in terms of sentencing related to MSH crimes, with particular reference to LASPO.