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*Dear Archbishops,*

**The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory in Europe (VE Day 70)**

I am writing to highlight an opportunity for churches to play a role in this year's commemorations for Victory in Europe Day.

The Government and its partners will be arranging a variety of events to mark the occasion which will range from the lighting of beacons across the UK, to a service of thanksgiving and parade in central London.

The ringing of church bells has long been part of commemorating the moment in 1945 when peace broke out and brought an end to nearly six years of war and chaos across Europe. VE Day 70 is an opportunity to remember the sacrifice and sheer determination of the people who saw us through this dark period, give thanks to all those who so bravely played their part and celebrate peace and reconciliation.

The Government would like to invite churches to contribute to the weekend's events with a ringing of bells, where they are able and in a manner of their choosing. We are proposing 11am on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May as a single moment to do this. However, we recognise that churches will have their own commitments that might not make it possible for all to deliver a ringing of bells at that precise moment. Therefore, we of course understand if churches wish to select another moment, during the weekend of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May to join in.

I do hope that you will be able to make this opportunity to participate known to churches and we would be delighted if they wished to join in with the national commemorations, in this way, and indeed through other means, such as services of remembrance or thanksgiving.

I am copying this letter to the Archbishop of York and Anglican Diocesan Bishops in the Church of England. I am also writing in similar terms to the Deans of English Anglican Cathedrals, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, Greater Churches Network and to the Royal Peculiars. I have also written to the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, inviting them to engage with their equivalent church networks.

**Rt Hon William Hague MP**

**FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE  
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby  
Archbishop of Canterbury**