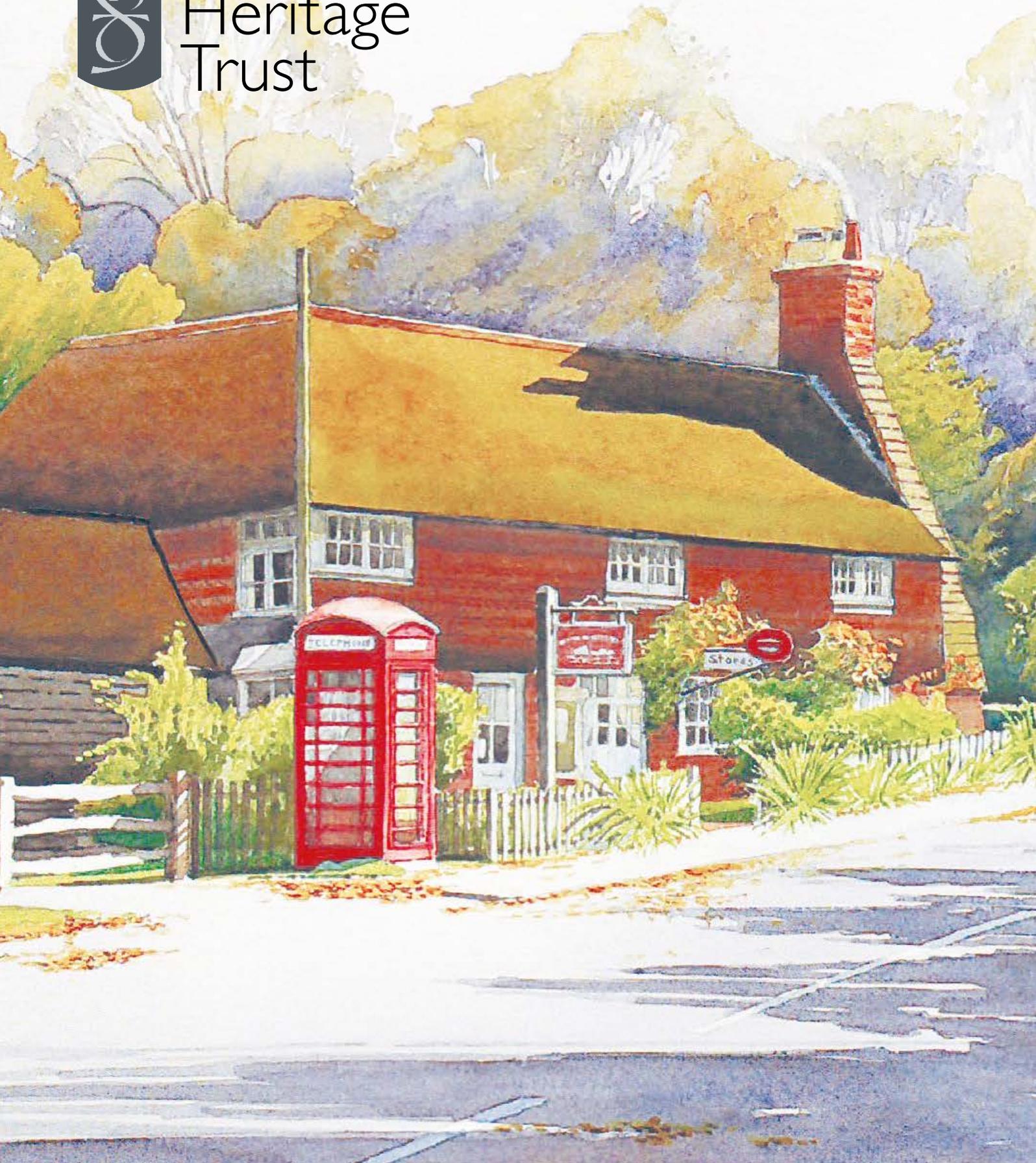




Sussex
Heritage
Trust



K6 TELEPHONE BOXES



Foreword by

Dr John Godfrey DL

Chairman, Sussex Heritage Trust

The red K6 public telephone box, first seen on the streets in 1935 and in continuous production for over 30 years, came to be an iconic and much-loved feature of the British landscape and street scene, as synonymous with Britain as the red pillar box, the red London bus and the red uniforms of the sentries at Buckingham Palace. The development of mobile technology has made many of these telephone boxes redundant, yet they are still regarded with affection in their local communities.

This guide explains the history of the K6 boxes, provides information on their survival in Sussex and offers advice on how local communities can become involved in their future management, both to serve their original purpose and also for a range of new functions. I commend this guide to people in Sussex who share the Sussex Heritage Trust's enthusiasm for the conservation of these important examples of our national and local heritage and take this opportunity to thank those involved in its preparation, including Victoria Williams, who has led this project on behalf of the Trust, Michael Scammell, Historic Buildings Officer of the South Downs National Park Authority, and Trevor Leggo, Chief Executive of the Sussex Association of Local Councils, who has kindly arranged for its distribution to all town and parish councils in East and West Sussex.

Front Cover image "Wiston Post Office & Tea Rooms 2003" by Neil Holland RIBA



Introduction

In the spring and summer of 2015 the Sussex Heritage Trust carried out a survey into the survival and condition of red K6 telephone boxes in East and West Sussex.

We are grateful to all the parish and town councils and preservation societies that took part.

The planning of Chichester, Wealden, Brighton & Hove and the South Downs National Park had already been covered by their conservation officers and details of listed telephone boxes in the two counties are given on the Heritage Gateway website: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>. However, the existing information was far from presenting a comprehensive picture. The Trust therefore set out to contact parishes, towns and preservation societies in the remaining 10 districts of East and West Sussex: Adur, Arun, Horsham, Mid Sussex, Crawley, Worthing, Lewes, Hastings, Rother and Eastbourne.

The survey was done through a simple electronic questionnaire asking about the location, ownership, use and condition of the telephone boxes within each area. 148 organisations were contacted and 61 replied. As a result of their response and the information collected previously, 181 red telephone boxes have now been identified.

The condition of the boxes in some of the earlier surveys and on the Heritage Gateway website is not recorded. However, of the parishes that gave details to the Sussex Heritage Trust, 41% had telephone boxes that were judged to be in good condition, 35% were deemed fair and 24% were felt to be in a poor state. A South Downs National Park survey of 2012 found 20 (57%) K6 boxes to be in a vulnerable condition, 11 (31%) not at risk and 4 (11%)

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critically at risk. Both surveys indicate a slow decline, worse in some areas than others.

The survival and refurbishment of phone boxes in East and West Sussex seems to be down to steps taken by parish councils either to work with BT or to adopt a box and provide it with a community use. The Sussex Heritage Trust survey found 13 examples of parishes that had taken over their local telephone box. Several boxes are now used as community information points. A couple have been set up for book exchanges. Others house defibrillators and two are maintained as heritage features, one restored with 1940s equipment by a local enthusiast. Another has been moved to form a key feature in a new housing development. One contains a cash machine.

In some cases parishes have come to a joint arrangement with BT. In one example the telephone box belongs to the parish council but BT own and service the phone. Other boxes are owned and maintained by BT but cleaned and painted by the parish. Some parishes have successfully lobbied BT to carry out refurbishment.

These are positive stories about saving phone boxes but the Trust has also heard the frustration and, at times, anger about telephone boxes that have been removed with little consultation, notices saying there is not enough use to continue service, boxes left without equipment, permission refused to change the location and the general vulnerability of run down boxes. The detailed response received by the Trust shows that the state of these historic features of the landscape is of concern to local communities.

We hope that by producing this publication Sussex Heritage Trust will raise the profile of red telephone boxes as a significant conservation issue and help more towns and villages to become actively involved in their preservation.





The creation of an icon

In the days before mobile telephony, public telephone kiosks scattered around the nation offered the only means of instant communication. In the United Kingdom, telephone services had been brought under the wing of the Royal Mail in 1912, for many years one of the largest agents of the State, only really rivalled by the Army and the Royal Navy.

The first British telephone kiosks were introduced in 1920. The K1 was a simple, boxy design, cast in concrete and painted cream with red glazing bars. These little boxes were not widely admired and some local authorities, particularly in London, actively objected to their installation. In Birmingham, the Civic Society took the trouble to produce an improved design of its own, while in the capital, the Metropolitan Boroughs Joint Standing Committee organised a design competition for a new kiosk type in 1923. Although this initiative was not successful, it usefully raised awareness of the problem. The Royal Institute of British Architects and the Royal Academy offered support and in the following year the Royal Fine Art Commission held a limited competition.

The winner was Giles Gilbert Scott, an architect at the height of his powers. Scott had recently been made a Trustee of the Sir John Soane Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields and this biographical detail offers insight into the inspiration for his winning design. Soane was an early C19 architect whose highly original work stretched the conventional bounds of classicism. His particular signature was the shallow dome, which features on the memorial he designed for himself, still to be seen in St Pancras Old Churchyard, London. Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that the new kiosk reflected this monument.



The timber prototype of his design still stands sheltered under an arch at the entrance of Burlington House, home of the Royal Academy. The GPO adopted it as the K2 and made over 1,000 examples for use in London, manufactured in cast iron at the Lion Foundry, Kirkintilloch. Many may still be found in the capital; all the survivors are statutorily listed.

The original K1 continued to be installed elsewhere, although a revised concrete version of Scott's design, the K3, was introduced in 1929, intended for national use. These kiosks are now of the highest rarity; thin reinforced concrete is not as durable as one might imagine.

While the K2 had established the fundamental classical archetype for the British telephone box, the kiosk we recognise today was only designed in 1935, to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. Scott (by then Sir Giles), was commissioned to design a smaller, lighter kiosk to be rolled out nationally. Originally known as the 'Jubilee' kiosk, its official designation was K6 and it was erected in enormous numbers throughout the United Kingdom and in many dependent territories. By the outbreak of World War II around 35,000 were in use.

Manufactured in cast-iron, the new kiosk was more compact than the K2, occupying significantly less pavement space. It was also little more than half the weight, which facilitated transportation and quick installation. The design was also somewhat simplified, with slimmer surrounds and a lower shallow dome. The glazing incorporated margin panes, rather than the Georgian pane proportions of the earlier type.



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There were objections to the new design – and particularly its bright colour – at the time. The GPO favoured red as it is spotted in a crowded street scene easily. In addition, red had soon become their corporate colour in the early years of the penny post. Interestingly, Scott had originally proposed silver for his designs. For some architecturally sensitive locations, K6 kiosks were painted grey, usually with red glazing bars. A small number in deeply rural locations were painted in Post Office Telephones green.

The K6 was produced for thirty years at Kirkintilloch and later at the Carron Foundry, Falkirk. The design changed very little over that time, although St Edward's Crown replaced the Tudor Crown in 1953 and kiosks north of the border featured the Scottish Crown after 1955. By 1968, when the K6 was finally replaced by the modernist K8, over 60,000 kiosks had been made.

Decline and fall

The modern K8, simple in design but still cast in iron and painted red, was used to service areas of new housing as well as redevelopment schemes in established areas. They were not intended for an active programme of K6 replacement, though some of the 11,000 K8 kiosks produced almost certainly did supersede K6 examples in locations prone to persistent vandalism.

In 1981 Post Office Telephones was rebranded as British Telecom (BT), prior to privatisation in 1984. The new enterprise had a strong modernising ethos, symbolised by an early proposal to paint the entire public kiosk estate in a vivid yellow. This caused a widespread public outcry, reflected in a Parliamentary debate which resulted in abandonment of the idea.

However, any reprieve was only fleeting. In 1985 the KX100, a new lightweight kiosk design in glass and aluminium was unveiled; unlike



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the K8, this was intended to replace all previous kiosk types in a rolling programme. English Heritage responded by listing all central London K2 kiosks and other rare early survivals, thereby ensuring retention and preservation of the most historic stock. However, because they were so numerous, the list selection criteria chosen for the Jubilee K6 was very restrictive and thousands were replaced.

The position today

In East and West Sussex around 75 kiosks, all K6, were listed. In addition, a little more than one hundred K6 kiosks, predominantly in rural areas, appear to have been 'forgotten' and survived the replacement programme.

Today, almost everyone has a mobile phone. Consequently, the public telephone network has seen a massive fall in usage, resulting in the total removal of thousands of kiosks. While BT has a responsibility to maintain its listed phone boxes, it is understandably keen to divest others to local management and particularly to parish and town councils.





THE DESIGNER

Sir Giles Gilbert Scott OM (1880-1960)



Sir Giles Gilbert Scott came from a family of architects; his grandfather, George was a prolific Victorian, one of the first architects to fully utilise the railways and the telegraph to build a practise which spanned the whole nation. He was a titanic figure in the Gothic Revival movement, building and restoring countless churches, as well as secular buildings and memorials. Giles father, also named George, was a far more private man and a convert to Catholicism, who sadly lapsed into mental illness, though his design talent is often considered more distinctive and original than George Senior.

Giles came to prominence in 1903, at the early age of twenty two, when he won the architectural competition for the design of the new Anglican Cathedral at Liverpool. While the selection committee was prepared to overlook the fact he was a Catholic, it could not ignore his lack of site experience. Consequently, G.F Bodley was appointed as joint architect, though he was to die suddenly in 1907, leaving Giles in sole charge of a project which would dominate the remainder of his life. Indeed, he spent so much time in Liverpool that he was to marry a receptionist at the Adelphi Hotel!

Giles served as a Captain in the Royal Marines during the Great War, constructing sea defences on the Channel coast. While works resumed at Liverpool in 1919 he found time for many other



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commissions, a number of distinctive Catholic churches around the country, college buildings in Cambridge and Southampton, as well as the architectural rendering of Battersea and Bankside power stations. He is also remembered for his iconic kiosk designs for Royal Mail Telephones, the K2 of 1924 and the 'Jubilee' K6 of 1935, which was destined to become a symbol of the nation as well as a number of its dependent territories.

He was knighted by King George V in 1924 and appointed to the Order of Merit by King George VI in 1944. His marriage was long and happy, resulting in three children, one of whom became an architect. He died at the age of seventy nine and is buried, alongside his wife, outside the west front of Liverpool Cathedral.





Taking on a K6



It seems to make sense that a local body, comprised of local people, is likely to take better care of an asset seen every day, than a large national company which operates remotely – perhaps from very many miles away.

BT Payphones run an ‘Adopt a Kiosk’ scheme and local authorities including parish councils can take one on for the nominal sum of £1. The payphone is removed but the electricity supply remains. The decision to take responsibility for a K6 is, of course, entirely yours but most of the tasks likely to be necessary to maintain it are relatively simple and are outlined in the service manual, published by BT and included in this information pack. Virtually all kiosk components, fixtures and fittings are still available new or refurbished from specialist suppliers and may also be found second-hand on well-known internet auction sites.

A fairly high proportion of surviving K6 kiosks are included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest. It is fairly straightforward to check if yours is listed by going online and using the search facility on the Heritage Gateway. Alternatively, you can ask your local Conservation Officer.

Refurbishing and painting a listed kiosk in the standard Currant Red, cleaning, vegetation removal or minor day to day repairs will not normally require Listed Building Consent, but any alteration which has some impact on its character may trigger such an application, which would be made to your local District Council.

To consider a specific example, suppose a kiosk door has lost one or more of its glazing bars and you would like to fit a better



replacement door or a new cast insert frame to restore the kiosk to its original appearance. This work would affect character even though it would be wholly beneficial. Some Conservation Officers might be inclined to regard this alteration as ‘de minimis’, so not require an application for consent. Others might ask for a formal application and although you might be tempted to think them a little officious, they would not actually be wrong. In cases of doubt, a call or e-mail to your Council Conservation Officer should establish any need for consent and is probably a useful precaution.

On the other hand, things that would always require Listed Building Consent would include total removal or relocation of the kiosk, or a fundamental change of paint colour – from grey or green to red, or vice-versa. If you are changing the use of the kiosk and would require an alternative word to ‘telephone’ in the glass panels at the top, this amendment would probably require consent. Continuing use of the upper-case classical letter face would improve your chances of success, though this may require the services of a traditional sign-writer.

As the adoption scheme involves removal of the payphone you will need an alternative public use in mind which your community would find more helpful. Kiosks housing defibrillators, tourist information, miniature art galleries, interpretation sites or book exchanges are all uses which have sprung up in the past. Such uses will normally require a planning application for Change of Use from your District Council – and applies whether the kiosk is listed or unlisted. Before making such an application, it would be prudent to ensure that the proposed change had a very high level of support within the community, as objections could obviously prejudice the outcome.



K Series information pack

The below information is supplied by BT solely as a reference document and does not form part of any agreement regarding transfer of ownership of a kiosk from BT.

It is strongly recommended that for any painting, structural repairs or inspections of the kiosk, work should be carried out by companies who are experienced in working with these structures. This information is provided as reference material only and the information contained within is subject to change without notice.

The K Series Kiosk

K6 kiosks are the familiar red cast iron structures that have been operational since the 1930s. The kiosks are constructed from a number of individual castings made from cast iron, interconnected by mild steel threaded fixings. The door comprises of a wooden framework with a cast iron or aluminium glazing frame. These require regular painting and inspection.

Safety Considerations and Precautions

Lead Paint Precautions

The possibility of previous coated organic and inorganic lead paint may exist on a red payphone kiosk and all relevant health and safety aspects and legislation should be considered and implemented for dealing with such hazards.

Fume or dust from lead or lead compounds can be absorbed by inhalation or ingestion and sometimes through the skin. Excessive absorption, evidenced by high lead content in the blood, leads to lead poisoning.



All waste should be disposed of ensuring that it complies with the current Environmental Protection Act waste disposal policy.

Paint Selection

Suppliers of Industrial Paints that have supplied paint to BT are:-

- Trimite Ltd, Arundel Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 2SD
- Joseph Masons, Nottingham Road, Derby, DE2 6AR
- International Paint, Stonegate Lane, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE 10 OJY

All paint should be applied in accordance with the manufacturer instructions.

Alternative suppliers of paints may be acceptable.

Painting

The primer for repainting housings should be a universal primer for wood and metal.

All internal & external surfaces to be painted should be primed, clean and dry. No painting should be undertaken when surfaces are damp.

All bare wood or metal surfaces shall have had a minimum of one prime. The primer should be brush applied. No paint should be applied to the door hinges or closer arm joints. The primer and paint should be applied in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

External quality fillers should be used as required. Fillers used should be single pack Polyester or Epoxy Resins and compatible with the paint system. The appropriate safety precautions as indicated by the manufacturer should be complied with.



It is recommended that two coats of finish paint should be applied.

White colour paint is recommended inside the kiosk within the ceiling area down to the level of the ventilation openings and a clean horizontal break line should be applied.

Black colour paint should be applied to the external base of the kiosk if it is already coloured black.

British Standard Colour References for Paints used previously by BT.

Currant Red BS381C- 539C	Black BS4800 - 00-E-53
White BS4800- 00-E-55	Gold BS4800
Green BS4800	Grey BS4800

Kiosk Structure

The structure of the K6 kiosk should be examined for cracks and breaks, if damage is found an experienced kiosk repair company should be immediately employed to remedy the damage.

Glazing

Glazing replacement should be toughened glass, certified to BS 6262.

The glass should be bedded in clear silicon mastic, a minimum thickness to glazing bars being employed so as to minimise excess mastic being visible. K6 standard glazing frames should be used to retain the glass with the accompanying rivets and washers to secure the frames.

Glass door Push / Pull should be fitted adjacent to the handle position in the correct orientation.

'TELEPHONE' glass mounted in the kiosk transom positions should also be bedded in clear silicon mastic. A fixing finish of clear silicon mastic, smoothed to a neat bevel from the glass/polycarbonate to the frame should then be applied to secure the glass in place.



Kiosk Door / Hinges

The kiosk door is made of a hard wood construction. These need to be inspected to establish whether the door is in sound and safe condition. The door should be inspected to ensure it is free from rot, that joints and rails are sound and free from significant damage, and that the door is free from warping. The strap hinges and fixings should also be inspected for any damage or excessive wear. If the door or hinges are found not to be in a good condition, they should be removed and replaced.

Electrical Precautions

A competent and suitably qualified person should carry out any electrical works in the first instance. After any electrical works has been completed an electrical test should be carried out and a certificate issued showing conformance and compliance. A scheduled electrical maintenance plan should then be adopted to ensure regular compliance and certification for the life of the kiosk.

BT Suppliers

There are a number of companies in operation that carry spare parts for these kiosks and can carry out refurbishments, for example www.x2connect.com

<http://www.enqlishphoneboxes.com/>

<http://www.unicornkiosks.com/>

Similarly BT has used the following company to carry out painting and various repairs in the past.

<http://www.mitie.co.uk/>

While BT does NOT recommend or vouch for the work or products of any particular company listed above for any repairs or parts, it will be necessary to approach a specialist company to ensure that correct parts are provided. Any of the above listed companies will be able to assist while alternative companies and



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suppliers can also be sourced.

The following is a list of the various component parts found in a K6 series kiosk and may be of use as reference.

K6 ROOF TELEPHONE SIGN	K6 POWER GUARD WASHER+ SCREW M8
K6 ROOF LIGHT COMPLETE	K6 POWER GUARD PLASTIC
K6 ROOF LIGHT INTERFACE	K6 ELECTRIC'S BOARD
K6 ROOF SIGN	K6 SERVICE CHAMBER
K6 GLAZING FRAME LARGE	K6 FACIA PANEL BLACK CASH
K6 GLAZING FRAME SMALL	K6 SPACEFRAME MECH PANEL
K6 GLASS WINDOW LARGE	K6 FACIA PANEL BLACK CARD
K6 GLASS WINDOW SMALL	K6 BACK COMPLETE
K6 WINDOW RIVETS	K6 DOOR CLOSER
K6 DOOR HANDLE	K6 DOOR CLOSER ARM KIT
K6 DOOR HINGE	K6 GLASS DOOR PUSH/PULL
K6 DOOR SHACKLE PLATE	K6 DOOR LH GLASS
K6 DOOR SHACKLE PIN	K6 DOOR RH GLASS
K6 DOOR STRAP SHACKLE	K6 DOOR
K6 DOOR STRAP	K6 COVER LINE AND EARTH



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Listed kiosk information

In the event that the K series kiosk is listed there are responsibilities attached to the ownership of a listed building which must be adhered to. This can stipulate the colour, component type and materials used, also any physical repositioning of a kiosk.

Further information can be obtained from,

English Heritage

Customer Services Department

PO Box 569

Swindon

SN2 2YP

England,

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.2>

Cadw

Welsh Assembly Government

Plas Carew

Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed

Pare Nantgarw

Cardiff

CF15 7QQ

<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/default.asp>

Historic Scotland

Longmore House

Salisbury Place

Edinburgh

EH9 1 SH

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index.htm>

The Department of Local Government and communities publishes guidance for planning authorities and owners of listed buildings. Planning and Policy Guide (PPG) 15 contains the current guidance. It is available at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicyguidance/>