



TOO LOUD: Hot under the collar about the continual ringing of New Plymouth's Kibby Carillon are (from left), Betty Liffiton and Nigel and Sue Black. But the district council has had a change of heart after receiving several complaints.

Photo: MAARTEN HOLL

Council drops a clanger with new carillon playing times

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By ANTONY PALTRIDGE

THE old saying "for whom the bell tolls" has been given new meaning for some New Plymouth residents, who are being driven to distraction by the constant ringing of the city's carillon.

But help will soon be on the way. Following the intervention of The Daily News yesterday, the New Plymouth District Council has decided to reduce the number of times the bells peel.

Robe St residents Nigel and Sue Black, along with neighbour Betty Liffiton of Bulteel St, said the problem began in November last year when Marsland Hill's Kibby Carillon began playing several tunes every hour from the morning through to the early evening, seven days a week.

The trio, who have all lived nearby for more than 20 years, said they had no problem with the carillon when it played tunes twice a day as it did in the past. Nor did they have any problem with the occasional recitals.

But the regular and constant peeling of bells was driving them around the bend. Mrs Black said she had to call

the council to complain about the regular playing of the Happy Wanderer and its irritating "val de re, val de ra" chorus.

All they wanted was for the bells to go back to their usual twice a day ringing.

Mr Black said the sound was so loud that he would have to turn up the radio to hear the news.

The carillon now plays two tunes for four minutes about nine minutes past the hour.

But Fulford St resident Carla Shaw, who also lives nearby, said she liked the regularly playing of the carillon. "It's nice to sit up there and hear it play and it's really cool for the kids."

NPDC parks director Grant Porteous said the carillon had recently been upgraded and it was clearly working a lot better than it used to in the past.

"We had had a number of complaints that it was not being played frequently enough so we thought we would trial operating it on an hourly basis, but clearly, on the basis of the feedback we are getting from you, and some complaints, that is probably too much.

"From today, we are going to change the programme so that it rings four times a day and see how that works, but we are more than happy to hear from people directly. Let us know so that we can match the service to community demands."

After hearing of the new approach, Mrs Liffiton said she was very pleased. "I would much prefer it to go back to two times, but four times is better than 10."

Mr Black was also pleased. "I think compromise is better than nothing."

The Kibby Carillon was first played in May 1971 by the late Ray Ashworth. It was donated to the city by George Kibby in memory of his wife Mabel and was built by a Dutch company.

Ironically, after the carillon was built the then city council initially refused to release all the money owed to the manufacturer because they believed it was not loud enough.

One of George Kibby's grandchildren, Marsh Kibby, said last night that he hoped a compromise had been found that pleased both those who did not enjoy the chiming, and those who did.