

Suffolk Guild of Ringers Belfry Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 7.30p.m. on Friday, October 8th, 2004, at **St. Mary's, Dennington (6)**

Those present: Winston Girling (chairman) Alan Moulton (technical advisor) Chris Nunn David Salter Neville Whittell John Periera David Greenfield David Moyse Chris McArthur and Dr. Bruce Wakefield.

Apologies were received from: Julian Colman Richard Coe Dr. S. Harrison Michael Rolph and David Webb.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending. The Chairman and Technical Adviser had been asked to look at the bells prior to the Meeting as there are moves to have some restoration undertaken, which would include modern bearings. The Committee also rang on the bells and thank Mr & Mrs Jensen for this and for the use of the Church for the Meeting.

Minutes: The Minutes of the previous meeting held in June 2004 had already been circulated to members and were agreed and signed.

Matters arising: Rumburgh (5) Chris Nunn asked about progress on this restoration. David Moyse and David Greenfield and others have been assisting with this work. The bells are away and due back next month (November)

George Pipe: The Chairman had received a letter from George stating his wish to resign from the Committee, and a letter of thanks has already been sent. The Committee endorsed their grateful thanks for all that George has done.

District Reports

North East: Gislingham (6) Reports and estimates from bellhangers are already in to restore this heavy 6 to full circle ringing. An application for grant would be put before this Meeting later. It is proposed to rehang in a new steel frame in the intermediate chamber, and to specialist weld the cracked 3rd and 4th. The bells are at present on the floor in this chamber as the old wooden frame above is unsafe. This restoration is excellent news and I am sure many will eagerly await the return of this reputedly excellent six after so many years of silence. **Laxfield (6)** Alan Moulton said that there is tacit agreement to rehang in new steel frame under existing frame and PCC seem keen to go ahead. David Salter said there would be a meeting of all parties involved within next 2 or 3 months to discuss way ahead. **Brome (5)** David Salter said he would find out the position re the ladder alterations at this tower. **Parham (chiming only)** Neville Whittell asked about progress on proposals to augment and hang for full circle ringing. Alan Moulton said that £50,000 out of £70,000 already raised, Faculty applied for and Hayward Mills chosen to do work.

North West: Thurston (5) The Chairman thanked all who helped with this restoration and at Wickham Skeith. David Salter asked about the problems with the 'go' of the two tenors at Thurston. Alan Moulton said that Eayre & Smith (bellhangers) are going to look at the possibility of reducing the thickness of the pad between the bell and the headstock on the 4th. 4 and 5 have canon retaining headstocks fitted and in view of the weight of the tenor compared to the smaller bells it will be necessary to ring these bells a bit slower. Problems with the trapdoor and associated floorboards are to be looked at also. **Wickham Skeith (6)** Restoration well under way, bells all back in the tower. New fittings on original Day frame. Local recruits being taught at Bacton. Concern was voiced about canon retaining headstocks on these bells, but as they all have them hopefully there will not be any problems with overall timing. **Mildenhall (10)** Front six having some work done and back four not rung much because of tower cracks. Alan Moulton said that the Towers and Belfries Cttee (Central Council) structural engineer was being asked to assess the integrity of the tower.

South East: Chris McArthur and John Periera both spoke about problems at **Tattingstone (6)** where 4 and 6 scrape the wooden frame and a new rope is needed. Work is in hand to resolve these matters. **Copdock (6)** John Pereira reported that the architect has said that there are serious cracks in the tower and the only ringing allowed at present is for Services

and special occasions. **Woodbridge (8)** Dr. Bruce Wakefield said that ringing has now commenced again (stopped because of scaffolding) **Easton (6)** Chris McArthur and Alan Moulton said that problems with stiff pullies on the 3rd were being resolved.

South West: Sudbury, All Saints (8) Question re what is happening about re-hanging the 7th. Richard Knight is collating. Money being raised but no progression on work. Alan Moulton said that he is not happy about the crown staples on this pre-reformation 1 ton bell with canons being drilled out in the tower as there could well be problems. It was pointed out that a bellhanger has apparently said that he could do the work up the tower which would reduce costs. The Chairman suggested that perhaps the Parish would like to consider obtaining further reports from more bellhangers than they have at present, including the one who has said that he could do the work in the bellchamber. The Committee agreed that this should be suggested to Richard. Alan Moulton said he would be happy with further reports being obtained and would of course look at them. David Salter reported that the recent towers open day raised **£783** towards this project, and he felt that at least 2 more quotes should be obtained. He also asked if anyone knew whether anything was likely to go ahead at **Hitcham (6)** Neville Whittell said that since Peter Blofield had died not much seemed to be happening re this unringable peal. The Chairman said that he had visited a number of times. The bell frame was now much weakened by decay mainly due to the ingress of water through the tower roof over a long period of time. The fittings on this heavy six (16 cwt) were also derelict although the large tower was solid and appeared to be in excellent order integrally. The roof has now been repaired, and there is no reason why they should not be completely restored and hung in a new steel frame if the Parish decided to go ahead at some stage in the future. **Rattlesden (6)** Alan Moulton said that the PCC have agreed to go ahead with obtaining quotes for re-hanging. Also at **Felsham (6)** meeting with vicar to decide what can be done to rehang this time expired and difficult six. **Assington (6)** David Salter asked if anything is known about these bells where a local resident (Churchwarden?) has had ringing stopped altogether, a situation which has prevailed now for many years, and even refuses to let anyone look at the bells. Neville Whittell said that he is waiting to hear from Donald Mills, of Bures, who is interested in getting these bells ringing and may now have gained permission for us to go and look at them. As far as is known there is very little, if anything, wrong with the installation.

Technical Advisor's Report: Alan Moulton had nothing further to report.

Applications for Grants: An application by **Gislingham** was discussed and will be reported accordingly to the GMC on 16th October.

Date and Place of next Meeting: 7.30p.m. Friday, 11th February, 2005, at St. Michael and All Angels & St. Felix, Rumburgh – ring first – **subject to permission, and bells being available - will confirm when granted.**

Any Other Business: The Chairman reminded the Committee that he will need to vacate the post at the next AGM and it will be necessary to find someone else to do the job.

The Meeting closed at 9.0p.m.

Winston S. Girling Chairman

AGENDA for 11th February, 2005.

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Confirming and signing minutes
- 3) Matters arising
- 4) District Reports NE NW SE and SW
- 5) Technical Advisors report
- 6) Application for Grants
- 7) Date and Place of next Meeting
- 8) AOB