



**Belfry Advisory Committee
Minutes of meeting at St Mary the Virgin, Sweffling
6 February 2009 at 7.30 pm**

Ringling took place before the meeting and refreshments were provided.

Present

Jonathan Stevens (JS) (Chairman), Chris McArthur (CM), John Pereira (JP), Michael Rolph (MR), David Salter (DS), Bruce Wakefield (BW)

Minute Secretary: Suzanne Stevens.

1. Welcome

JS welcomed members to Sweffling and thanked them for attending. Some members were unable to come because of the snow affecting parts of the county.

2. Apologies for absence

Winston Girling, Alan Moulton, Chris Nunn, John Taylor.

3. Minutes of the 10 October 2008 meeting (previously circulated)

These were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

- 4.1 Role of BAC to be discussed by the sub-committee
- 4.2 BAC members' area on the website. JS had discussed this with Chris Garner, Webmaster, who said that it was much easier to use email. He had had experience of setting up a members' area on another website, and it was a lot of effort for only a little gain.

5. Bellhanger feedback on the revised Grant Terms and Conditions

The Terms and Conditions had been sent to all the bellhangers by recorded delivery. JS had been contacted by Taylors Eayre and Smith who said that everyone who needed to have the information had been shown the document.

Alan Hughes from Whitechapel had also contacted JS. There was some discussion between them about the grouting in of the ground beams. Alan said he had seen every way possible of doing it, and when it was done well, all methods were fine. He suggested it would be better to say that there should be no differential movement between the frame and tower.

The committee discussed this and felt that as it cannot be guaranteed that methods other than shuttering and poured grout will be done well, it would be better to leave

the condition for now and consider it when the conditions are revised in the future. JP felt that it could seem that there was no movement at the time, but later movement might be more obvious. JS sees the conditions as a useful guide to parishes, particularly those without experience of the technicalities of bell projects.

JS reported that the part in the conditions which says that bellframes should be galvanised as stated in the Council for the Care of Churches handbook was incorrect; it does not state this. The relevant sentence would be deleted from the conditions.

6. District Reports

6.1 North East

Chediston. Snow prevented completion by Friday 6 February, the installation should be ready for the local test ring by 13 February.

Fressingfield. The treble is not yet on the top of the frame.

Halesworth. They are waiting for the faculty before rehangng the treble.

Wissett. They have been successful in getting a Lottery Grant so have nearly raised sufficient funds.

6.2 North West.

Eye. They are putting in the faculty application. It is intended that a ten bell frame be put in at the same level as the existing, or down 12 – 18”.

6.3 South East

Easton. The third is currently unringable. It has two pulleys but will be modified on 29 March so it has only one.

St Lawrence. The bells were due to come out at the end of January but have not come out yet.

Stutton. The clapper fell out of the tenor and was bent, so it has been straightened and the tenor has now settled down. There had been complaints that the second was peculiar at times if the backstroke was not tight. In this instance, the rope was not on the pulley and a loop of rope caught the frame. JP has put a board up and this has rectified the problem.

Woodbridge. The sixth needs a new pulley fitted and BW requested some assistance with this. Help was offered by members of the committee.

Woolverstone. JP has carried out work at this three bell tower; the frame has been tightened up and new pulley blocks fitted.

6.4 South West.

Sudbury All Saints. Winston Girling (WG) had sent a big thank you to those who had helped at this tower. The headstock has been taken off. New gudgeons have been made and bearings supplied by Tony Baines. The new headstock is in JS's workshop, waiting to be taken to All Saints.

Woolpit. The tenor is cracked and a rehang is planned.

7. Technical Advisor's Report

JS reported that test rings to approve grants have been carried out.

Elmsett. A very fine three! They go like tops. They are hung in a grillage frame. The tenor can slip wheel but is fine when the rope has warmed up. There are plans for another two bells.

Ixworth. There was serious oddstruckness, and frame movement both vertically and horizontally. They have kept the old frame. Whites of Appleton have returned to address the oddstruckness. JS is to return to re-test before releasing the last part of the grant.

8. Grant Applications

There were no new grant applications, but there had been a request to extend the grant period at Bardwell. This was not seen as a problem by the committee as the work was about to start.

9. Change of meeting day.

MR requested that the BAC change to a different weekday. After discussion about practice nights it was decided to change to a Thursday.

10. Any Other Business

BW reported that at Woodbridge, the lighter ladies can sometimes pull off the first and second and sometimes not. There appears to be no cause; it is not related to the weather. BW hoped that there might be some ideas as to why this should be. A suggestions were made including that there might be a sticky slider. It was felt that the bells needed to be observed to assess the problem.

DS stated that he was compiling a list of grants given, and that this was 90% complete. WG was adding details of the bellhanger and the work carried out. DS said that nearly £250,000 had been given in grants over the years. The list will go on the website when it is finished which will hopefully be this year.

DS is also writing a document about what the BAC can do to assist parishes, and why certain things are suggested, for example, in the terms and conditions of grants. He hopes to finish this before the next meeting.

10. Action List

None.

11. Date and venue of next meeting.

Thursday 11 June 2009 at Chediston. 7.00 pm ringing, 7.30 pm meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm.