



**Belfry Advisory Committee
Minutes of meeting at Fressingfield
1 October 2009 at 7.30 pm**

Committee members inspected the new installation and had a ring before the meeting.

Present

Jonathan Stevens (JS) (Chairman), Winston Girling (WG), David Greenfield (DG), Chris McArthur (CM), Alan Moulton (AM), David Moyse (DM), Chris Nunn (CN), Michael Rolph (MR), David Salter (DS), John Taylor (JT),

Minute Secretary: Suzanne Stevens.

In attendance: Carol Girling.

1. Welcome

JS welcomed members to Fressingfield and thanked Malcolm Roberts for meeting us.

2. Apologies for absence

John Pereira, Bruce Wakefield, Neville Whittell.

3. Minutes of the 11 June meeting (previously circulated)

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

4. Matters arising from the minutes

- 4.1** Website. JS reported that the members' area on the website did not seem to have been a success as he had still been asked about the minutes of the last meeting which were available in the members' area. After discussion about reasons for it not being used, it was agreed to give it another try this time.

5. Correspondence

None.

6. Technical Advisor's Report (Jonathan Stevens)

12 June. Went to Stradbroke to advise on reducing the volume of the tenors in the ringing chamber. Have got permission from the diocese to do the work on an experimental basis; if successful the parish can ask for a faculty to keep the work in place.

9 July. Visited Shelland to advise on replacing headstock and turning bell.

16 July. Inspected and reported on Ramsholt's single bell.

25 July. Inspected Stuston a derelict four and reported to parish; have not heard back.

29 July. Test ring and inspection at Beccles as they were concerned about a knocking. The front six need their worn plain bearings replaced.

12 August. Chased Fressingfield sound modulation.

15 August. Test ring at Bardwell and report to parish. Disappointed that yet again the striking has been given no attention. Hayward Mills due to return tomorrow to rectify this and other concerns.

29 August. Monk Soham test ring and inspection as they have had a request to ring a peal on the bells.

4 September. Morning. did maintenance with Chris Garner at Marlesford and sorted striking.

Afternoon. Safety inspection and test ring at Orford following uninvited work and report from Stuart Harrison. Found much odd struckness, worn pulleys and cracked stays.

12 September. Test ring at St Lawrence. Found, again, oddstruckness, no ceiling bosses and excessively long rope guide spigots.

22 September. Repaired soling on treble wheel at Ufford.

28 September. Had meeting at Helmingham with Mrs Haas. Now have to draw up lighting and power spec; design sound control and have Parish's permission to talk direct to Architect and Structural Engineer.

7. District Reports

7.1 North East

Chediston (JS) are actively looking at sound control as there have been complaints.

Wissett (JS) are meant to be finished but a headstock was broken at the works so is having to be remade. It is a worry as Taylors, Eayre & Smith have just gone into administration.

Covehithe (DG) The bells are in a bit of a state. He and DM have not been up for 8 years. DS said that there have been two peals in recent times. They are OK up the top but they are not looked after. The 3rd is not held on the headstock very well. They need attention. There is no band and no enthusiasm.

Wrentham (DG) is in a state and the belfry is a mess. A louvre is broken and so is the wire netting so it is knee high in sticks. Alison Evans raised £1,200 with an organ recital lasting 10 hours, but nothing has been done with the money.

7.2 North West.

Brome (JS) are going to have wide pulleys to accommodate sallies as bells now rung from higher in the tower.

Gislingham (JS) the Suffolk Guild grant is to be returned because the condition of allowing 4 peals per year will not be met as the PCC will not allow any. Much diplomatic work has gone on, but the outcome is that the grant will be returned.

Eye WG has been to Eye and will be going back later in October. Rung only for weddings and other special occasions. He will strip the pulleys out and do other work to improve them. AM stated that there is an agreement to lift the frame.

Glemsford (WG) Called to look at 4th which was 'knocking' as it turned. Traced to a loose bedplate which was tightened and cured problem. Also fitted new leather lining to clapper assembly as the clapper had serious play all round, including up and down the bell.

Cotton (WG) there are now new pulley blocks and guides; going to re-route rope on fifth to give it a better line. Bier is now out of the ringing chamber and in the church. The birds need sorting.

Thornham Magna (WG) these have been lightened and sorted. A new stay has been fitted. There was an infestation of flies in the ringing room.

Wetherden (WG) the 2nd has been slipping wheel. They have Gillett ball bearings. One of the bearing plates on a wooden headstock, the gudgin has gone through the plate in a cone shape and is very loose. Neville Whittell will sort this out by cutting it off at the narrow end and putting a high tensile bolt through it. It has a bullock frame and there is much movement despite the tie rods. They need rehangng.

Bardwell (CN) has taken 6 weeks to carry out the rehang. It was the first time Hayward Mills had had the frame made by a fabrication firm because it was cheaper. It hadn't been assembled in the workshop so once on site there were places where it had to be adjusted to fit. The angle of the sliders is very steep.

7.3 South East

Dennington (JS) The wheels are made and are at Whitechapel.

Ufford (JS) has had reports from Whitechapel and Nicholsons who suggest replacing the headstocks on the back four, but the church has decided not to proceed.

Easton (CM) work has been done and not much wrong was found, but the 3rd came down and had seized up. It was suggested that the pulleys might be causing the trouble.

Charsfield (CM) have 4 hung dead. The remaining bell is in the porch. CM thought that this ought to be dealt with and it was agreed that he should do so. There is not much ringing and potential trouble with the neighbour.

7.4 South West

Clare; a broken clapper is being attended to.

8. Grants

8.1 Heritage Lottery Fund leaflets were passed round. There has been a suggestion that there should be a talk at the Guild AGM by the person who deals with this in this area. Open meeting to include parsons etc. There are large amounts of money available if the application is right; community involvement will be funded. There are different funds; one, which gives grants of up to £50,000, is not available for big fundraisers. The BAC was asked by the Chairman if it would support such an idea. It was agreed. It was suggested that it was important to choose the venue carefully.

On the website, helpful information is building up for parishes.

8.2 Applications. None.

9. Routine Maintenance

9.1 Maintenance Guidance Notes. JS mentioned and passed around the Derby Association training notes. He suggested that these or our own could be put on the website and sent to Districts.

9.2 Training Seminars. These were seen as good, but WG and DS pointed out that they needed good numbers of volunteers.

9.3 Newsletter articles. Volunteers required to provide articles when asked. AM agreed to do one in due course, though not immediately. It was suggested that one article should tell about work that has been done by the BAC to show what it does, but no boasting, list or complaints! Most members agreed to write when asked.

9.4 Belfry record cards. Discussion postponed until a later date.

9.5 Artificial hemp. A stock of 200 metres is available at £1.50 per metre. WG will keep it as he lives centrally. To use it, treat like pre-stretched terylene.

9.6 Rope pool. Website could be used to list who has spare ropes available rather than someone having to store them all. This could be helpful with the current delay at Ellis'. WG has some spare sallies.

10. Sound Control

AM reported that he and JS had been to Duffield in Derbyshire the previous Saturday to the Central Council Course on Sound Control. It had been very interesting and they had learnt some astounding things. It was demonstrated that sound comes out of the tiniest gap and that when altering the sound in the ringing room it is possible to reduce the sound through the rope holes by an astonishing amount. It was very useful to have figures for sound attenuation for various thicknesses of boarding, and different size boarding in the louvres. The louvres must be completely sealed when shut or they have no effect. This may not be new knowledge to everyone, but AM hadn't realised quite the extent of the difference that proper sealing makes. AM described the box that was put round the rope. It was not a continuous pipe that was put round the rope inside the box, but one with 40mm holes. This allows a clear strike note, but reduces the sound level.

The delegates were mostly Diocesan Bell Advisors. All had projects where new frames had been put underneath old and the sound was not loud enough. This was felt to be because of the sound absorption by the old frame.

It has been shown that ordinary DIY fibreglass or rockwool insulating material is as effective as Sound Slab.

Members could receive the course notes if they were on email, but they couldn't be supplied to those without, as they ran to 100 pages.

11. Update on list of work done in previous bell restorations

DS reported that this work was still in progress but it will be finished by the end of 2009.

12. Any other business

- WG thanked everyone re All Saints Sudbury and JS for making the headstock so well. The church is very grateful.
- AM spoke about Taylors, Eayre and Smith going into administration They are looking for a buyer but there are bells in the workshop owned by Taylors. If anyone wants bells they may be available at reduced prices. There is a demo bell that might make a treble for somewhere.
- DS said that at Blythburgh there is a lot of noise from the pulleys. JS said that he had mentioned it to Peggy.
- JT raised concerns about unfinished work at Mendlesham. Members were invited to give their views on this after the meeting as it did not affect the bells directly.

13. Action List

- JS is to send out the notes from the sound control course.
- DS will finish the list of work done in previous restorations.
- CM will deal with the bell in Charsfield porch.

14. Date and venue of next meeting.

Thursday 4 February 2010 at Hacheston. 7.00 pm ringing, 7.30 pm meeting.

SMJS was thanked for providing refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm.