



**Belfry Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting at St Margaret's, Reydon
22 September 2011 at 7.30 pm**

Present

Jonathan Stevens (JJS) (Chairman), Chris Davies (CD), Chris McArthur (CMcC), David Moyes (DM).

Minute Secretary: Suzanne Stevens.

1. Welcome

JS welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies for absence

Martin Croucher, Carol Girling, Winston Girling, Alan Moulton, John Pereira, Neville Whittell.

3. Minutes of the 16 June 2011 meeting (previously circulated)

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

4. Matters arising from the minutes

- i) In Item 15, Guild Officers had been requested to send an acknowledgement of the return of Gislingham's grant.
- ii) SE District Report. Charsfield; CMcC suggested that the bell in the porch be sold and the money spent on items needed in the quinquennial report. He will look into trusts etc; will need a faculty to do anything with it.

5. Correspondence

None.

6. Technical Advisor's Report (JS)

This last period has not been especially busy, although advice has been given to Thrandeston, Boyton and the new Vicar at Kelsale. A full tower inspection and test ring was carried out at Bramfield. I have dates with Theberton and Mendham booked and Tattingstone has asked for a visit. The major project demanding attention has been Helmingham with physical help, organising competent helpers and checking the pockets, grouting and, with Neil Thomas, Chris McArthur and John Pereira, setting up the striking.

7. District Reports

7.1 North East

Wrentham – DM reported that in May a rope caught in the guides and it couldn't be got down. Couldn't get a response from minister. Tower is a disgrace; sticks everywhere, water getting in and dead birds.

Blythburgh – the 4th is making a noise on the pulley. Michael Rolph came to help. Grease needed replacing. He offered to do it four times but had no response.

7.2 North West.

Stowmarket – WG reported via email that there were new bearings on 3rd, all ground pulleys had been replaced and a serious fault in the frame had been secured by plating.

Tostock - all clappers removed, new staples and re-bushed by Taylors and now replaced. WG's was surprised that Eayre & Smith clappers needed this after only 10 years.

Thornham Magna - checked and bells and frame tightened. Needs new pulley blocks.

Eye & Rickinghall – need doing.

Hinderclay – bell is back in and paid for.

7.3 South East

Offton – WG reported that the clappers were removed and re-bushed/refaced by Taylor's and now replaced.

Helmingham – JJS reported that a lot of people were at the test ring. There was a considerable amount of volunteer help from the BAC and Giles Croucher from Rendham was a big help in putting the bells back. Tom Scase helped take them out.

Wickham Market – JJS met Ray Lewis. The Church doesn't want to autowind the clock which has implications for internal sound.

Brandeston – the ropes guides have been done and this has improved things for novices.

7.4 South West

St Peters, Sudbury – are ringing again.

8. Grant Applications

8.1 Clopton. Meeting with Alan Moulton and JJS. JJS made suggestions. Want to retain original frame with new lower in tower. The room lower in the tower they want to use as the ringing room. No enthusiasm to retain frame; have been told it is not possible to preserve it. The drawings show the new installation as clockwise not anticlockwise. There are beams. AM and JJS suggested they are retained lower in the tower and used so they are in context, with the new floor over it so the sound down to ringing chamber can be controlled. Also suggested that the wrought iron clappers are re-used as at St Lawrence and Helmingham. None of these suggestions are in the plan by Andrew Nicholson.

JJS replied to the letter of application. He would like the above points addressed. There is the GMC in a couple of weeks. Should he ask for the grant at the meeting so parish has a good start to the project **or** should he wait until these points have been addressed? He would normally suggest around £5,300. They have given the order to Andrew Nicholson.

CMcC asked if it were possible to influence decisions after the money had been awarded and the job done. JJS said that there had been some success at Fressingfield but it was easier for it to be sorted out beforehand. JJS is keen for the Guild to retain some influence over the project which can be done if it gives a grant.

BAC members felt that the ball should be put back in Clopton's court to agree the conditions. They will need volunteer labour from the Guild so it maybe possible to influence things there.

Regrave – estimates from White's £93,000, Nicholson's £93,000 and Taylor's £103,000 (this includes the building work). CD has meetings on 14 October with the Trustees and

ringers and 14 October with the Churches Conservation Trust. The auction of a building plot with planning permission and a cottage (Albert Driver's legacy) will take place on 3 November. Things are moving quite quickly but English Heritage is being quite difficult. JJS will have a word with Graham Pledger.

9. Campsea Ashe

JJS explained that the job isn't quite right and it has not been possible to finish it. A ringing floor has been put in and there is a light six using the tenor as a service bell. There is a separate floor so that sound can be controlled and work can be done on the bells.

However, the tower refused to complete the work required after the inspection. They had had a large part of the grant. CMcC asked why the tower wouldn't do the work. JJS explained that the team leader, Tim Holmes, was very protective of the project and wouldn't accept that there could be anything that needed improvement. JJS had not been happy with the padstones; they were not as specified by the grant conditions. They should have had metal in them. He was prevented from seeing them during the project, was not allowed on site while the work was being done and was told he was not permitted to speak to any of the contractors. The incumbent was of no help.

The retainer was not given as they had not kept to the contract. DM was surprised that the incumbent had not been of help as he had been a big supporter of the bell project at Reydon.

JJS explained that long term there could be an issue with the padstones.

The Guild Chairman, Philip Gorrod (PG), joined the meeting.

There was some discussion about the project and it was generally felt that lessons could be learnt from it. PG suggested that payments should only be made up front on receipt of a binding undertaking and that this aspect of the Guild's grant giving should be reconsidered.

JJS was asked when the inspection takes place. It is usually during the work and when the bellhanger's work is complete. Generally, bellhangers are using JJS more during projects.

10. Update on work done in previous bell restorations (DS)

DS not present at the meeting.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Action List

- **DM will talk to Alan Moulton about Wrentham**
- **JJS to speak to Graham Pledger re Redgrave**

13. Date and venue of next meeting

Thursday 9 February 2012. Helmingham. 7.00 pm ringing, 7.30 pm meeting.

JS thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.