

SUFFOLK GUILD OF RINGERS BELFRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Committee meeting held at St. Mary's, Gislingham, on Friday, 9th February, 2007.

Present: Winston Girling, Alan Moulton, Chris Nunn, Neville Whittell, Carol Girling, Michael Rolph, John Taylor.

The Chairman expressed thanks to the ringers and Church authorities at Gislingham for allowing us to ring and use the Church for the Meeting. Special thanks to Sonia who provided us with tea and biscuits.

Apologies for absence: Julian Colman, Chris McArthur and David Greenfield.

Confirming Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting held at Parham on 6th October, 2006 were confirmed and signed.

Matters arising: None.

District Reports.

North East: Michael Rolph said that there are moves to have a test ring at Cratfield. Alan Moulton reported that Burgate are now keen to restore their bells. Chediston are making slow progress towards full restoration. Fressingfield bells should be removed in July this year and it will then be possible to see exactly how the bells can be put back. The fact that the bells at Gislingham were now up and running was noted by the Committee and declared a great success, resulting in a glorious peal of eight bells. Congratulations to all concerned. The Chairman reported that Mettingham (four bells) had approached the Guild Secretary to ask about a grant to rehang the bells in the old wooden frame for chiming with chiming hammers only. The Committee felt that as grants were only normally offered for restoring bells for full circle ringing, this did not comply.

North West: Chris Nunn said that Ixworth are still fund raising, as are Bardwell.

South East: Stonham Aspal - Winston Girling said that the architects/engineers have submitted a plan of work to stabilise the outer frame supports of 7 and 8. This includes using chemical anchors to secure a new frame cill to the top of the tower wall. There is no further information about the cracks at Wickham Market. Alan Moulton mentioned Clopton, where the architect has stopped ringing because the frame is reported to have caused cracks in the tower wall. It was suggested that if it can be arranged the Committee hold the June Meeting at Clopton with a view to a possible test ring and assessment of the situation. Alan Moulton mentioned that frost has cracked some masonry in the tower at Burgh.

South West: Assington - discussion - no further information. Sudbury All Saints - Neville Whittell asked about progress on rehangng the 7th which cannot be rung because of a severely decayed headstock. This bell weighs one ton and is a Pre-Reformation bell with canons. The Diocesan Advisor has said that he wished the bell to be removed from the tower for drilling out the crown staple. This would involve fitting RSJ's above the bells to lift the 7th and would increase the cost out of proportion. Winston Girling said that he had spoken to a Churchwarden who had said that unless the bell repairs are done up the tower, they will not allow the work to go ahead. He (the Churchwarden) was happy for quotes to be obtained for the work to be done up the tower. A discussion then took place about the possibility of work, which could safely be done, in the tower (fitting a new wooden headstock and ball bearings, and leaving the crown staple in place for now. All the other bells have cast in crown staples in any case.) Alan Moulton said he would be happy, as Diocesan Advisor, for this work to take place, and it was suggested that if the Parish wished, Tony Baines should be approached to quote for the work to fit a new wooden headstock. He was the ideal person to do the work and there were people who could make the new headstock. Winston Girling said that, as there was now a way forward, he would pursue the matter as necessary.

Grants: already dealt with earlier in the Meeting.

Date and Place of Next Meeting: Proposed Clopton, 7.0p.m. Friday, 15th June, 2007, subject to permission to hold a trial ring on the bells.

Any Other business: None

The Meeting closed at 8.50p.m.

Winston S. Girling

Chairman