

Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Belfry Advisory Committee

Minutes from meeting held on Friday 17th March 2023 at Barham, 19.30hrs.

Thanks to Barham parish for allowing us to ring the new six prior to the meeting.

Present – C Davies (Chair), C McArthur (Sec), J Flatters (TA), N Whittell, C Birkby, and K Mossop.

Welcome – Kevin Mossop was welcomed to the meeting from NE District but his colleague Pete Lock also NE, sent his apologies. The meeting agreed that they should both join BAC, and this will be ratified by management in due course.

Apologies – C Nunn, J Taylor, W Girling, C Girling, K Salter, M Steggles, A Moulton, Z Wright.

1. Previous minutes from BAC meeting at Laxfield 6th September 2022 agreed as accurate and signed by chair. No matters arising.
2. **Management feedback** – Combs grant has been withdrawn. Currently the PCC do fully support the second phase of this project although the four chimers are now back working in the original oak frame from Taylors. Bells for the full circle ten are still available by Keltic Trust but funding and other issues mean the project is currently stalled. Westhorpe is however fully funded, and Taylors will start work soon. BAC will provide two helpers for removal and the rebuild, working alongside Taylors, and we have clarified with the parish that the £5000 grant will only be paid on completion of the project.
3. **Grant Applications Received** – None but note appendix to these minutes. Blythburgh are imminently applying for a grant to paint the frame and rectify fittings/bearings. This follows BAC assistance, but the next phase will involve professional bellhangers. We will support this project and the meeting agreed when they applied a 5% grant recommendation would be applicable. Regular ringing at this tower from NE members takes place, along with locals.
4. **Health and Safety** – No progress as the Taylors contact had a serious health issue but this is likely to be sorted by the next meeting. Action: CIM to put on guild website basic risk assessments for BAC members.
5. **Technical Advisors Report** – See individual districts reports. However J Flatters has been much involved at Monks Eleigh with a parish proposal to rehang a nice six. Refurbishments are not possible, and it will be a new frame that the parish fully support and are taking forward with other church repairs. It was also reported that sound control issues had arisen at Hitcham with a property close to the church, local authority are involved.
6. **Bell Maintenance Training** – We have received a request for this BAC training, and it was agreed we would put this in a package at potentially Newmarket and Framlingham. However, this will be in the late autumn after the Central Council complete similar training on 3rd September. C Birkby will be involved with the Sep. rollout and is to feed detail into the appropriate “What’s On” edition.
7. **Northeast District** – Blythburgh have had pulleys rebuilt and other adjustments.
8. **Northwest District** – Oakley have had stays replaced. Westhorpe continues to progress well with a rehang. Thornham Magna have been inspected and the bells remain very old but safe

to ring for the time being. Higham rope replaced. Wilby work on Hastings stays completed to improve the go of these bells.

9. **Southeast District** – Work at Hemingstone has resulted in a recent donation of £350. Burstall has been inspected for the Coronation ringing and are satisfactory for three bell chiming. Copdock has building work currently, that involves a new gallery. New rope bosses to be fitted by BAC shortly to assist the parish, although in the medium term they need a complete rehang. Framlingham College are looking at a new small ring for the students and structural possibilities in the chapel are being considered. Otley have had maintenance and BAC will supply rope bosses as these are missing from the top floor. Bearings are 1930 and will be renewed in the medium term by the parish. Campse Ash had corrective work on a slider, and we noted significant water leakage into the bells and frame. Tuddenham checked at start of a new band and reasonable for local ringing with maintenance advice given.
10. **Southwest District** - St Gregory's Sudbury have a newly rehung eight, that BAC helped Taylors with extensively. They now ring very well but subsequently C Davies and M Steggles installed a new sound proofing plywood floor, to reduce unacceptable sound levels in the ringing chamber. St Peters Sudbury are to have a new church gallery with a six-bell alternative ringing position. However, the ten will still be rung from upstairs as needed although access to the church on a commercial basis is likely to be an issue in future. Hintlesham have had all new bearings fitted by N Whittle and other remedial work. Local ringers do exist, and the bells are used extensively in view of weddings at next door Hintlesham Hall.
11. **AOB** – Stowmarket new ten are coming back starting Monday 22 May and **will require people to help Nicholson's**. C. McArthur to sort a roster of helpers nearer the time but volunteers have already kindly come forward.
12. **Next Meetings – Tuesday 13th June at St Gregory's Sudbury and then Friday 6th October at Hintlesham**. Next meeting in new year to be at Troston. It was noted that some members have not been in touch for a long time or attended meetings. It was concluded that the secretary would call these members and ask if they wished to continue with active membership of this committee.

Appendix

The day after our BAC meeting 17th March 2023, a postal guild grant application was received by C Davies from Blythburgh parish for remedial works including frame painting by Nicholson's. In view of the discussion the previous night and our agreement, the Chairman is to take this application to management with BAC endorsement. Views to contrary should be sent to C Davies in the next ten days.