

Supporting Documentation

Audlem St James – Bells

Note to parish

This bundle includes all the supporting documentation to your faculty application as required under Rule 5.5 of the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019.

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Caroline Hilton, DAC Secretary



9 February 2022

We petition the Court for a faculty to authorise the following-

Please describe the works or other proposals for which a faculty is sought in the way recommended by the Diocesan Advisory Committee in its Notification of Advice.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS

Refurbishment of Bells at St James The Great Audlem

Copies of the Standard Information Form and any drawings, plans, specifications, photographs or other documents showing the proposals must be provided with this petition.

Audlem St James Church

STATEMENT OF NEED

During 2020, following Inspections of the Bells at Audlem St James Church undertaken independently by John Taylor and Co, Blyth and Co, and Whites of Appleton Ltd recommendations were received as follows: -

The Bell installation has done well to serve the Church over the centuries with some periodical restoration, and many of the current features have clearly surpassed their expected working life, given that they have been and are used by the Bell ringers on a regular basis. However, we can now see that the timber Bell frame is not coping with the dynamic loads of the swinging bells and is adversely affecting the tower structure as a result. Additionally, the Bell fittings are now in a rather tired condition and the timber headstocks have come to the end of their useful life. Timely intervention now would save on greater costs for any breakages and damage in the future.

Extensive repairs to the tower to repair cracks in the masonry were undertaken in the last year. The PCC now wish to undertake these recommendations.3/6/2021

St James's Church: Audlem Statement of Significance

Name: PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES: AUDLEM Location: The Square, Audlem CW3 0AH Grade: I
Date first listed: 12-Jan-1967

A Copy of the listing description (legacy record) is included below.

St James Church, Audlem is set on a hill overlooking the centre of the village. The site is thought to have been a Celtic burial ground, and there may also have been a Saxon church here. This would have been a simple structure primarily built of wood. The present church was founded by Thomas de Aldelime in the middle of the 13th century in the reign of Edward 1st, under the jurisdiction of St. Thomas's Priory, Stafford. At the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century, it passed into private custodianship (or patronage). In 1896 Lord Combermere was patron and his right to select a vicar, was purchased from him by the then Vicar, Canon Atkinson, who then gave it to the Bishop of Chester. The numerous memorials erected over the centuries by various local landowners and gentry in memory of family members, perhaps indicates why the church is so richly furnished. Likewise most of the windows were donated as a form of memorial. The different styles of window indicate quality, period made, fashion at the time and the benefactors' likes. The choice of subject is also fascinating, revealing personal links to the deceased person and theological enthusiasm of the donor. The window recognised as the finest is by Charles Kempe, whose "trademark" was a wheat sheaf; whilst a window at the rear of the church is by one of Kempe's students, James Hall and includes the letters of the name AUDLEM.

Brief History of Architectural Changes

1360-1400 A chancel was added to the simple nave, the lower walls date from this period. 1500-1540 A period of great change. The north aisle was moved and the lofty clerestory windows erected with its panelled Tudor ceiling. Note hundreds of small white marks on the chancel walls where soldiers sharpened arrows on the stone before it was used in the building. 1590 The porch was altered, with a panelled ceiling added. On the stone seats of the original porch, are grooves where spears and swords were sharpened. Note the Green Man to the left of the church door, a common folk remnant of our pre-Christian past. 1609 The Jacobean pulpit, which is still in use, was added. 1895 Major restoration took place. Sixteen coats of whitewash and plaster were removed from the walls revealing, an old fresco and a niche. The box pews were removed, with some carvings retained in the chancel furniture. 1960-1975 The nave roof was restored after the ravages of the death-watch beetles. The nave aisle floor was repaired after the collapse of coffins below. 1983-1990 Urgent restoration costing almost £200,000 was put in hand – it included renewing all roof timbers and reroofing the whole roof, with the exception of the nave. 1991-1994 The Lady Chapel was restored, Pews were removed from the north aisle, a new floor was laid and the organ was relocated; a new nave floor was laid. The chancel floor was extended, communion rails were added and a moveable nave altar was introduced.



STRUCTURAL REPORT

Client: St James the Great, Audlem, PCC

Project : Inspection of the existing bell frame

Job No. : 24_1235

Revision :

Date : April 2021

Engineer : Adrian Dempster

WARD ■■ COLE
consulting engineers

c/o Adrian Dempster
105 Nottingham Road
Selston
Nottingham
NG16 6BU
Tel 07971 142829

REPORT OF A STRUCTURAL INSPECTION OF THE BELL FRAME AT THE CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT, AUDLEM, CHESHIRE

1.00 INTRODUCTION:

1.01 At the request of the PCC, the church was visited on Wednesday 7th April 2021 for the purposes of carrying out a structural inspection of the existing bell frame and its supports. Advice had been sought by the church on any necessary repairs or strengthening measures required prior to the existing six bells being part turned and rehung with new ringing fittings. This report relates specifically to the existing bell frame and its support beams and the effects on these when the bells are being rung full circle.

1.02 Details within this report are confined to the structural aspects as detailed in paragraph 1.01 above. The report does not constitute a full building survey and excludes certain items such as those listed below.

- a) The decorative condition of the tower.
- b) The condition of the tower with respect to dampness, dry rot, timber infestation and the like.
- c) The condition of services.
- d) The condition of roof, floor, wall and ceiling coverings.

1.03 No testing of materials, monitoring, breaking out or long-term investigation has been undertaken. We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the structure is free from defect.

1.04 The church is listed Grade I. The oak bell frame, which is considered to date back to at least 1736, when the existing ring of six bells was installed, has been described in detail by three firms of bellhangers who have inspected it and the description is, therefore, not repeated here.

2.00 OBSERVATIONS:



- 2.01 There is a ring of six bells, tenor weight approximately 9cwt, hung for full circle ringing in a timber frame at belfry level. As noted above, it dates from 1736, or possibly before. The bottom sills of the frame sit on the belfry floorboards, which run east west. These are, in turn, supported by the east and west walls and two substantial timber beams above the clock chamber which run north south and are supported in pockets in the north and south walls. Plans of the bell frame and its supporting beams are given in Appendix A to this report.
- 2.02 Clearly, the bell frame has been strengthened in the past in an effort to reduce movement caused by the bells being rung full circle. Horizontal ferrous metal straps have been fabricated and screwed into the tops of the top sills at all of the frame joints. Observations made when all six bells were rung full circle revealed that differential horizontal movement was occurring between the top sills and the tower walls. This was a maximum of approximately +/- 1.5mm in the north south direction and +/- 1mm in the east west direction, indicating that the strengthening measures have not been entirely successful. It should be noted that there are no vertical tie rods connecting the top and bottom sills, which would have been normal in more recent timber bell frames.
- 2.03 In general, the bell frame members are adequate and in fair condition, consistent with their age. The top sills have been cut out in places to allow the bells to swing freely and, although this has reduced the original cross section, there is no evidence of any significant structural distress, nor any significant differential movement at the frame joints.



North West

North East



South East

South West

2.04 The ends of the bell frame support beams were observed from below with all six bells being rung full circle. Minor differential vertical and horizontal movement was noted at all four bearings in the walls, indicating that there is not full contact between the soffits of the beams and the masonry which supports them. Close to the bearing points, the beams have been bolted to the bottom sills of the bell frame. Just below the timber beams, horizontal ferrous metal tie bars have been installed close to all four internal elevations. The ends of these bars extend through the walls of the tower and are secured by pattress plates which are evident externally. In the case of the western beam at its northern end, the vertical bolt is too long and touches the tie bar below, causing some minor vertical deflection of the tie bar when the bells are rung full circle.

It should be noted that there is no evidence that the ringing of the bells full circle has caused any significant detrimental effects on the tower walls.

4.00 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

4.01 In view of the fact that the vertical through bolt connecting the western beam to the bell frame above at its northern end is touching the horizontal tie bar below, it is recommended that the end of the vertical bolt is cut short by approximately 15mm so that it is no longer in contact with the tie bar. This work should be carried out as soon as possible.

It is also recommended that, in the short term, steps are taken to ensure better bearing conditions where the beams are socketed into the walls. This could possibly be achieved by inserting thin slips of slate between the bottoms of the beams and the masonry below.

4.02 In the longer term, it is recommended that the bell frame support beams are more rigidly fixed to the tower walls, using fabricated and galvanised mild steel brackets, through bolts and resin anchors. A suggested detail is given on sheet SK/03 in Appendix A to this report. This will prevent any differential movement occurring between the beams and the tower walls when the bells are rung full circle. Where possible, the beams should also be connected to the bottom sills of the bell frame with galvanised vertical through bolts where the beams and sills intersect.

4.03 In order to reduce the differential horizontal movement between the top sills of the bell frame and the tower walls, it is recommended that substantial galvanised angle brackets are installed and fixed with horizontal through bolts and plates to the vertical faces of the top sills of the bell frame at their intersections. This is a common detail and your chosen bell hanger will be able to fabricate and fix these. Consideration should also be given to installing galvanised vertical tie bolts washer plates and nuts to connect the top and bottom sills of the bell frame where possible. It may also be necessary to install hardwood packs to fill any gaps which exist. Again, your chosen bell hanger will be able to advise on this.

4.04 All the existing ferrous metal straps fixed to the top sills of the bell frame should be cleaned down to remove all traces of corrosion and painted with a suitable paint system. The screws connecting them to the top sills should also be tightened and/or replaced where necessary. The ferrous metal tie bars in the clock chamber should also be treated and painted in the same way.

4.05 It should be noted that it is very difficult to eliminate movement entirely to timber bell frames when the bells they contain are rung full circle. However, it is considered that, if the above recommended measures are carried out, and the bells are rehung with new ringing fittings, the movement should be reduced to an acceptable level.

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF WARD COLE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Dempster', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

A DEMPSTER, B.Sc., C.Eng. M.I.Struct.E. M.I.C.E.

APPENDIX A

Plan on Existing Bell Frame

Plan on Bell Frame Support Beams

**Details of Proposed Strengthening
Measures**

Job Title
ST. JAMES THE GREAT AUDLEM

Checked

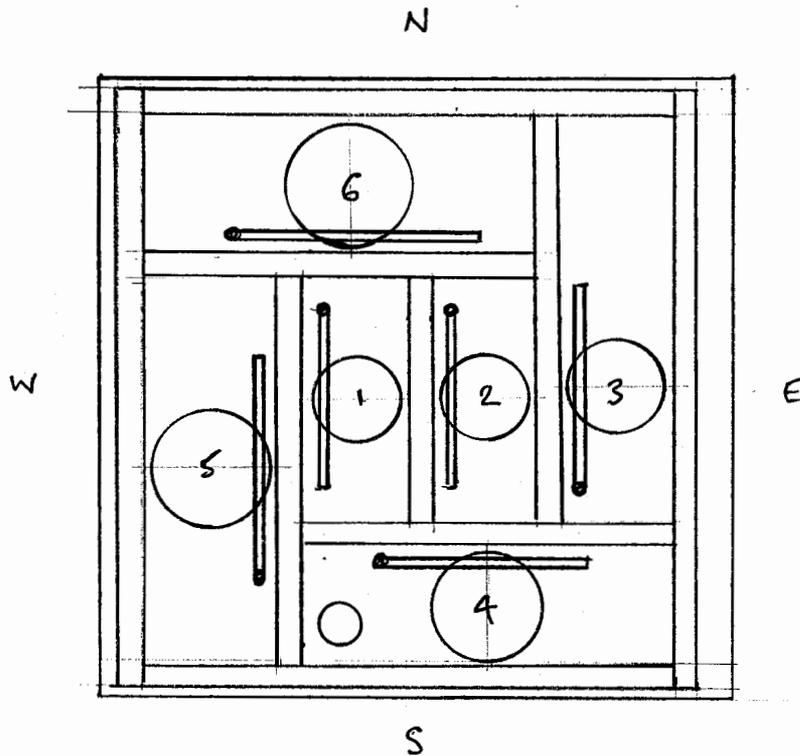
Date

Calculation Title
EXISTING BELL FRAME

Revised

Date

PLAN ON BELL FRAME (N.T.S.)



WARD & COLE

consulting engineers

Job No.
24/1235

Sheet No.
SK/02

Designed
AD

Date
20/04/21

Job Title
ST JAMES THE GREAT AUDLEM

Checked

Date

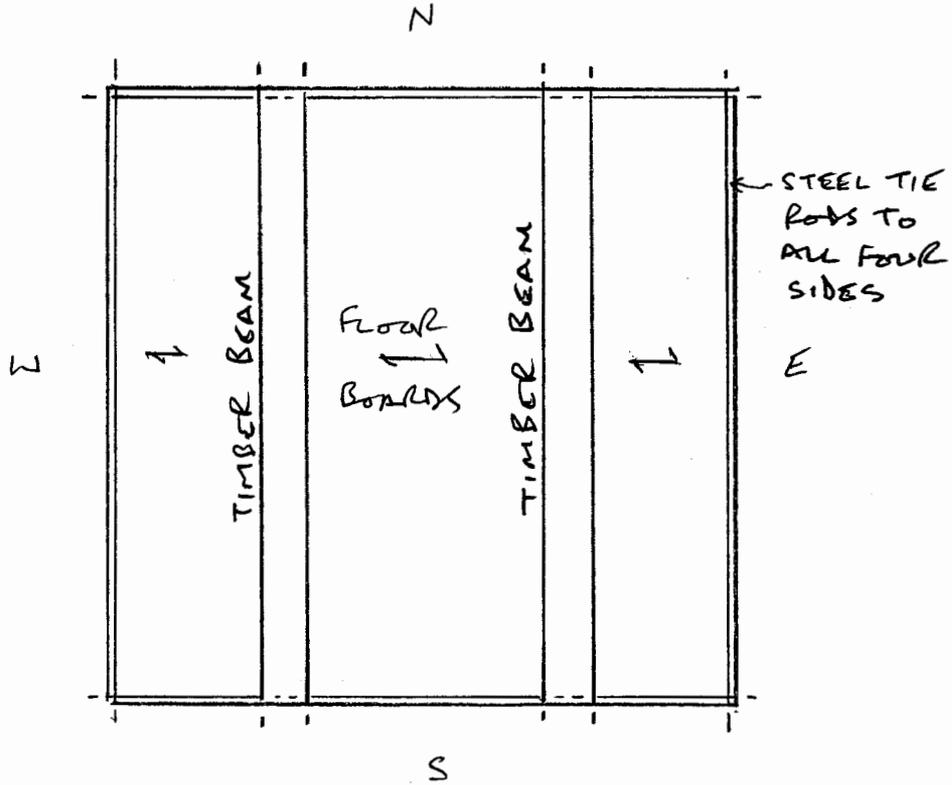
Calculation Title
BELL FRAME SUPPORT BEAMS

Revised

Date

PLAN ON BELL FRAME SUPPORT BEAMS

(N.T.S)

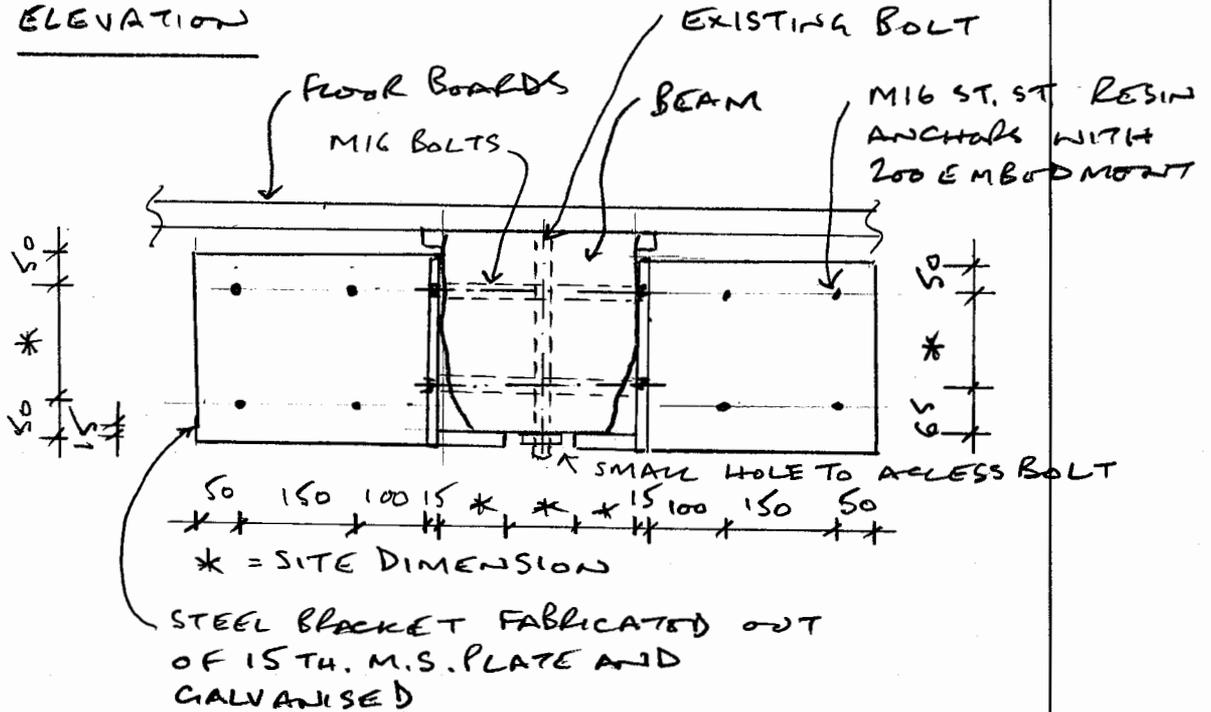


Job Title **ST. JAMES THE GREAT AULANA**

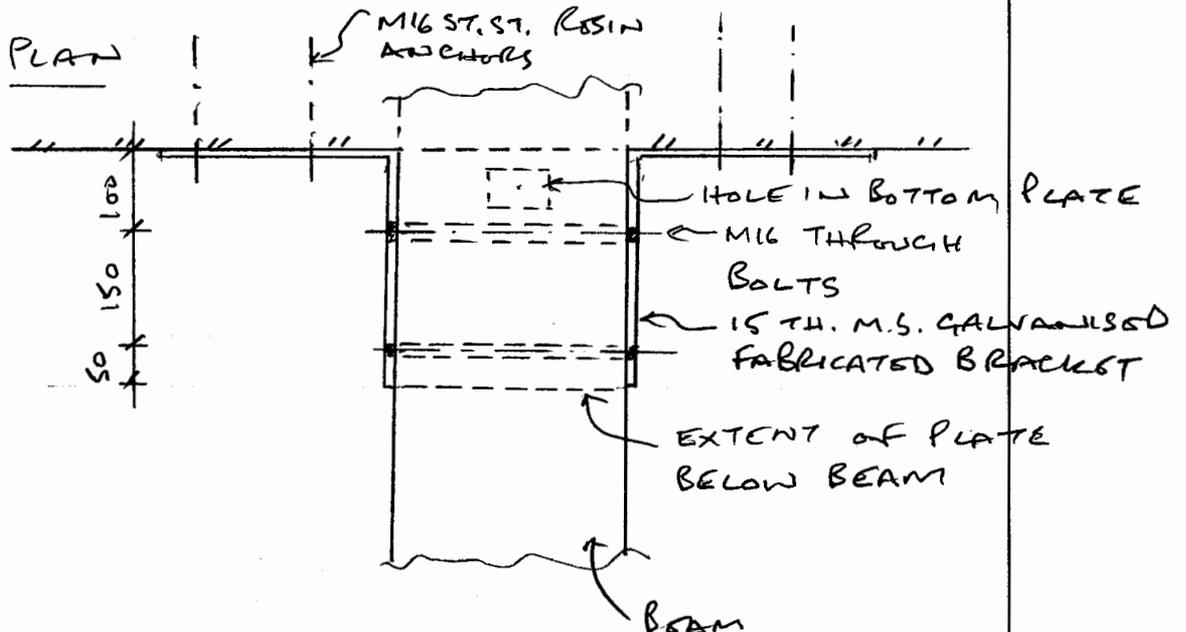
Calculation Title **BEAM FRAME SUPPORT BEAMS**

PROPOSED STRENGTHENING AT BEARINGS

ELEVATION



PLAN



AND THIS REQUIRED

From: Brian White
Sent: 24 June 2021 15:14
To: John and Ruth Kemble
Cc: Chris Hughes; John Vickers; Peter Ellis
Subject: Re: Audlem St James bells restoration

Hi John,

Here is a description of the proposed bell removal method:

The treble and 2nd bells are to be dismantled and temporarily stood on timbers on the top of the frame to allow access to the “shifter” frameside between the treble and 2nd pits. Remove the shifter frameside to allow access to the trapway underneath which can be opened by temporarily removing the floorboards, ensuring safety frames are available for use around the opening.

Using our certified and insured lifting gear, lower the bells to the clock chamber and, again by temporarily lifting boards in the required location (SE corner) and enlarging the trapway area, lower them down to the ringing chamber and then through a newly constructed trapway (to be constructed by others) to the ground floor. We would not place the weight of the bells on any of the floors other than the ground floor where they would be moved out of the building using a hand-operated pallet trolley. Openings should be approximately 1” wider than the diameter of the tenor bell in both directions or larger. Our lifting gear can be positioned where required and suitable support given from above by allowing the blocks to be secured through openings in the floors, all to be made good upon completion.

When the bells are returned, the same procedure would take place in reverse, securing the shifter frameside back in place with all required angle plates, tie-rods and securing ironwork.

Do require any additional information?

Best regards,
Mark

Whites of Appleton Ltd. (Church Bellhangers)

69 Eaton Road,
Appleton, Abingdon, Oxon. OX13 5JJ

Tel: 01865-862549

Web Site: www.whitesbellhangers.co.uk

This email is confidential and may also be legally privileged. If you are not the addressee you may not copy, forward, disclose or use any part of it. If you have received this message in error, please delete it and all copies from your system and notify the sender immediately by return email. Internet communications cannot be guaranteed to be time secure, error or virus free. The sender does not accept liability for any errors or omissions.

Audlem Bell Restoration - Preferred Supplier

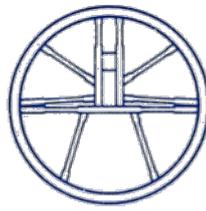
Three bell hanging companies have provided proposals for the bell restoration at Audlem St James the Great church. The bell restoration committee's preferred supplier is **Whites of Appleton Ltd**. The other candidates are Blyth & Co Ltd and John Taylor & Co. The preference for White's is based on the following considerations:

- **Reputation.** We have consulted bell ringers in Cheshire and North Staffs with wide experience of other bell restorations. All three of the candidates are known to have done good work. However, White's reputation is consistently excellent: as one senior ringer put it, "No-one has anything bad to say about White's"; another said that White's workmanship is first class, and delivered on time. Taylor's reputation is not so consistent. Blyth's are a relatively new company, so have not had time to establish a widespread reputation.
- **Technical proposal.** With regard to the bell fittings, the proposals from the three companies are similar. However, their proposals for work on the frame differ greatly. White's propose strengthening and stiffening the existing frame. Blyth's add to this the fitting of steel beams in the clock chamber to underpin the frame. Taylor's say that underpinning beams are a minimum, but recommend complete replacement of the frame. We therefore had to employ a structural engineer with wide experience of church buildings and bells, to provide an independent view. His proposal essentially agrees with White's, with some specific support for the ends of the clock chamber beams; he did not find that underpinning beams are needed, and he said that replacement of the frame is completely unjustifiable. In this and some less important technical matters, White's have displayed the greatest competence, and the greatest respect for the antiquity of the current frame.
- **Cost.** We asked all three suppliers to submit estimates, based on the independent engineer's recommendation for frame improvements. They are:
 - Blyth's: £43,835
 - Taylor's: £42,789
 - White's: £43,967

The three are remarkably similar. While it appears that Taylor's is the lowest, they propose to cut costs by refurbishing the existing bell wheels; the other suppliers propose new ones. Taylor's acknowledge that refurbishment may not be possible (and, in our view, it might not be best in the long term), and estimate that providing new wheels would add up to £2000; this would make them the most expensive. Given this and other uncertainties, we view all three contractor's estimates as roughly the same, and do not think cost is a major factor in deciding which to choose.

- **Cost reductions.** All three proposals state that cost reductions may be possible, mostly based on use of free local labour and/or free transport for the bells to/from the contractor's works. Taylor's proposal includes the largest reductions for local labour, but it is by no means certain that sufficient local volunteer labour could be provided at the right time (ie, people capable of doing full time physical labour for weeks at a time). White's propose the largest reductions for transportation, but again do we know whether local people with means to transport about 2 tons of bells will be available at the right time. These uncertainties about volunteer labour are increased by the Covid-19 pandemic; Blyth's do not quantify reductions because of this. We have therefore decided to ignore these possible reductions when considering costs.

In summary, White's is our preferred contractor because of their unexcelled reputation, and their technical competence in providing a proposal for work on the frame that closely matched that later recommended by our consulting engineer. We have less confidence in Taylor's and Blyth's because their initial proposals for the frame included unnecessary and costly additions, and because of their less consistent reputations. We consider the prices of the three proposals to be more or less equivalent, and thus not an important factor.



Estimate

5th January 2022

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JAMES THE GREAT, AUDLEM, CHESHIRE

REHANG THE BELLS WITH NEW FITTINGS IN THE EXISTING BELL FRAME

DISMANTLING

Following a site meeting, discussion and agreement with the Church Authorities, attend the Tower with our Bellhangers and all necessary tools, lifting equipment and protective materials to ensure the floors, trapways and doorways are not damaged, providing all required ramps, timber, barriers and pallets.

Using our tested and insured lifting equipment and all required supports, dismantle the six bells and their fittings, lower them to the ground and remove all old fittings from the Tower. Temporarily remove the "shifter" frameside section in order to allow the bells to pass through to the chamber below. Old fittings can be left in the church if required.

Take detailed measurements of the bell frame and tower in order to manufacture the new fittings to the correct dimensions.

Carefully move the bells to the lorry via the churchyard and transport the bells to our Works (Goods-in-Transit Insurance is provided).

Leave the site cleared of all protective materials and in a clean and orderly manner.

BELLS

Enlarge the centre holes to enable clapper adjustment and remove as much as practically possible of any remaining cast-in crown staple roots to relieve stress and reduce the chances of the bells becoming cracked in the crowns.

Cast machined level resin pads on the crowns of the bells ready to receive modern headstocks.

Fill any resultant staple voids with resin and accurately machine the insides of the crowns to provide level and flat seating pads for the new independent staple units. The bells are to remain untuned at the client's request.

Following levelling and balancing, drill the bells for their new support bolts as required, reusing any existing holes where possible.

BELLS (cont.)

Voice the bells to establish their optimum clapper strike points.

When rehung, turn the bells to present unworn surfaces to the blows of their respective clappers.

BELL FRAME

Cut the excess thread from the foundation/lower cill vertical bolt in the western beam to eliminate contact with the adjacent tower wall tie-bar.

Check over and tighten all existing ironwork. Paint all accessible existing ironwork with a high-grade external paint system.

Fit additional galvanised bolts at the accessible intersections of the lower cills and foundation beams, using hardwood packing to take up any gaps.

Fit galvanised vertical steel tie-rods in all optimum positions between the upper and lower cills and braces to reduce frame movement and tighten the brace joints.

Fit heavy galvanised steel angle plates in the pit corners at top cill level to increase frame rigidity.

Fit heavy galvanised steel angle plates to the four ends of the two existing central foundation beams where they enter the tower walls, securely bolting them to the timber with galvanised steel bolts and securely bolting them to the tower masonry with stainless steel resin anchor fixings, as per the Structural Engineers specification (ref. 24/1235 SK/03). Insert hardwood packing to take up any gaps.

Level, bed and securely bolt heavy steel bearing foundation plates to the top cills of the bell frame, ready to receive the new bearings, ensuring the "shifter" frameside is correctly positioned when doing so.



Bells rehung in an existing strengthened and restored oak bell frame (Magdalen College, Oxford).

RINGING FITTINGS

Design, manufacture and fit new full-circle ringing fittings to optimum graded leading dimensions, as follows:

Cast iron hollow-section headstocks with fixed steel gudgeons turned in true alignment, heavy-duty double-row self-aligning ball bearings in totally enclosed dust-proof housings with end-float facility and adjustment screws to facilitate the setting and maintaining of even clapping.

Insulation pads to fit between the bells and headstocks.

8.8-grade galvanised steel supporting bolts, nuts, locknuts and insulation washers.

Independent crown staple units, each fitted with a "maintenance free" stainless steel clapper pin.

Machined and profiled ductile iron clappers, each with a machined Tufnol bush resiliently mounted in Neoprene rubber at its point of swing and fitted with a greasing point.

Traditional hardwood wheels each fitted with two steel angle braces, stainless steel rim screws and galvanised fixings.

Hardwood pulley units containing hard-wearing nylon sheaves each revolving on twin "sealed for life" ball bearing races. Also fit new floor units in the clock chamber as required, fitting adjoining flapping boards with rope hoops to reduce lateral rope movement and to create the optimum rope circle with minimum draw. This to be done in conjunction with positioning the bearing plates accordingly for the same reasons, most noticeably moving those of the 5th bell northwards by the required amount.

Dry straight-grain ash stays and sliders and hardwood runner boards.

Slider brackets with facilities to take up pivot wear and to prevent the sliders from lifting.

Near-silent solid machined ceiling rope bosses and timber floor rope bosses.

A set of best quality flax bell ropes each with a close-woven pure wool sally and a pre-stretched Terylene top end.

All timber fittings to be treated with bat-friendly insecticide/preservative and all non-galvanized metal ringing fittings to be painted with three coats of high quality exterior grade paint.

REHANGING

Transport the bells and their fittings from our Works to the Church.

Attend the Tower with our Bellhangers and all necessary tools and lifting equipment. Reinstall the protective materials, ramps, coverings and barriers.

Hoist the bells into the Tower and hang them, complete with their fittings, in the strengthened bell frame, firmly bolting the self-aligning ball bearings to the new steel bearing foundation plates and ensuring the "shifter" frameside is correctly reinstated with all required ironwork.

Modifying or replacing the existing rope-ways to provide the optimum and correctly spaced ringing circle in the ringing chamber with comfortable clearance from the tower walls, fit the new pulley units, flapping boards, bosses and bell ropes, set up the clappers for even clapping with our laser timing meter, adjust the handstroke and backstroke sets, test-ring the bells both singly and "in peal" with the local ringers and leave them in good order for full-circle ringing following any required final adjustments.

Make good any unused former rope hole positions with treated hardwood panel. Clean the bell chamber, clock chamber and ringing chamber and transport all debris away from site.

Remove all protection materials and coverings from the tower and church, and leave in clean and tidy order.

Twelve months after the completion of works, carry out a free inspection and maintenance/service visit.

For the sum of:

FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED & THIRTY-FIVE POUNDS
(£44,335.00)
PLUS VAT

POSSIBLE EXTRA

Re-tune the bells to bring the ring as a whole into tune and the individual partial tones into better alignment.

For the additional sum of:

£3,224.00 + VAT

NOTES

These estimate figures are based on current prices and are therefore subject to fluctuation.

EXCLUSIONS

This estimate specifically excludes the following:

- 1) The construction and preparation for easy lifting of bell trapways in all floors, taking into account the location for a clear drop to avoid obstructions below.
- 2) Any required works to the clock and clock hammers.
- 3) Any required electrical works (e.g. emergency lighting for safety reasons).
- 4) The removal of bird debris and the bird-proofing of the tower windows prior to work commencing.

TERMS OF PAYMENT

- 1) 33% when the bells have been dismantled and transported to our Works.
- 2) 33% on completion in our Works.
- 3) The balance, less any deductions due, when works are complete in the Tower.

POSSIBLE DEDUCTIONS

- 1) **Fit & able-bodied** local labour to assist us with dismantling & lowering of the bells and old fittings (minimum 3 persons). **£1,054.00**
- 2) Transporting of the bells from the Church to our Works (inclusive of loading at the Church). **£980.00**
- 3) Transporting of the bells and fittings from our Works to the Church (including off-loading into the Church). **£1,002.00**
- 4) **Fit & able-bodied** local labour to assist with the hoisting and rehangings of the bells (minimum 3 persons). **£2,728.00**
- 5) Lodgings and all meals to be supplied for our Bellhanger(s) whilst on site **£44.00 per day per man**

HEALTH & SAFETY

The deductions given in (1) and (4) assume that we will only send one/two Bellhanger(s). If the number of helpers is below the number requested, we reserve the right to send an extra Bellhanger and adjust the deduction accordingly. We reserve the right to withdraw the options for local labour assistance under circumstances such as COVID-19 restrictions. For health and safety reasons someone **MUST** be present in the tower at all times when only one Bellhanger is present. If this at any time is not the case, he will leave the site and the deductions will be adjusted accordingly.

PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR INSURANCES COVER LOCAL PERSONS ASSISTING WITH THIS PROJECT UNDER THE INSTRUCTION OF OUR BELLHANGER(S) BUT NOT WORKING IN THE TOWER ON THEIR OWN. THE INSURANCE COVER IS SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A HEALTH, SAFETY AND MEDICAL FORM BY EACH ASSISTANT.

TO COMPLY WITH HEALTH & SAFETY LEGISLATION WE WILL SUPPLY HARD HATS FOR ANY VOLUNTARY LABOURERS. HOWEVER, THEY WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUPPLY THEIR OWN SENSIBLE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR. SOFT FOOTWEAR SUCH AS TRAINERS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

THE DIRECTORS AND STAFF OF WHITES OF APPLETON LTD. ACCEPT NO RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY ON SITE WORKS UNDERTAKEN WHEN THEY ARE NOT IN ATTENDANCE.

A FACULTY MUST BE OBTAINED BEFORE ANY WORKS COMMENCE

Audlem St James – Bells - Correspondence with parish and others

Attachments are listed according to the numbering on the supporting documents list

- Attachments in brown are included within the overview section
- Attachments in blue are included within the proposals section
- Attachments in purple are included within the PCC section
- Attachments in black italics are superseded and not included within the application

Date	Message
<p>21/08/2020</p> <p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Peter Ellis</p> <p>With attachment</p>	<p>As a result of concerns for the Bell Hanging at St James Church Audlem our Bell Ringing Team commissioned a report on the condition of the Bells. Reports were received from three Companies John Taylor, Blyth. and Whites of Appleton. Each Company recommended similar actions for complete refurbishment.</p> <p>Due to the complexity of the reports and the fact that substantial work has recently been completed on the Tower we felt it appropriate to consult both the Diocese and our Architect before proceeding with a faculty application. The Wardens and Bell ringers are of the opinion that a full refurbishment should be undertaken.</p> <p>I am therefore attaching a copy of the Taylor report with the request for advice on the next steps to be taken.</p> <p><i>Report and Quotation of John Taylor & Co dated 16 July 2020</i></p>
<p>02/09/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>Thank you for your message with report, and my apologies for the delay in responding. I will end this to the diocesan Bells Adviser for review and will also add this to the agenda for the forthcoming DAC meeting taking place on 18 September. We will get back to you as soon as we can with feedback.</p> <p>One thing I note is that you mention you received three reports, of which you have supplied the one by John Taylor & Co. Would it be possible for you to also send me the reports from Blyth and Whites of Appleton? It would be helpful for comparison.</p>
<p>02/09/2020</p> <p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Peter Ellis</p> <p>With attachments</p>	<p>Please find reports attached.</p> <p><i>Report of Blythe and Co dated 11 May 2020</i> <i>Superseded Whites of Appleton report conclusions</i></p>
<p>02/09/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>Many thanks for sending those over</p>
<p>25/09/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>DAC Advice</p> <p>I am writing to let you know that at its meeting of 18 September 2020 the DAC considered the details you provided relating to the above proposals and wished to offer the following informal advice:</p>

<p>From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>a) It asked the parish to obtain the written comments of the Church Architect regarding the proposals</p> <p>b) The church architect's feedback will then be referred (by the DAC office) to the Bells Adviser for further comment</p> <p>During the discussion, it was the Committee's consideration of the structural/architectural elements of the proposals regarding the bell frame and access to remove the bells for their restoration that lead to the above informal advice. (The proposed works to the bells themselves were positively reviewed.)</p>
<p>08/12/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Nick Rank of Buttress</p>	<p>I have reviewed the report from John Taylor and Co concerning the proposed work to the bell and frame at the church. I am content that they have satisfactorily assessed the work within the tower and I am happy for them to proceed in accordance with their report.</p>
<p>08/12/2020</p> <p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Response from Nicholas Rank Architect as received</p> <p><i>Email of Nick Rank as above</i></p>
<p>09/12/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>Thank you for your message with the architect comment regarding the proposed work to the bells and frame. In line with the previous DAC advice I will relay this to the Bells Adviser and bring this matter back to the DAC for their further consideration. The next DAC meeting takes place on 18 December and as the submissions deadline has passed, we may possibly be able to squeeze this on as an extra agenda item – however if this is not possible then the next DAC meeting will take place on 22 January and it would definitely be included on the agenda for that.</p>
<p>11/12/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>We have now heard back from the DAC bells advisor and DAC reviewing architect ahead of the meeting next week. These comments and those of your church architect will be brought before the committee for further discussion, so please let us know if you wish to add your own response. We acknowledge that the architect and advisor are not in agreement at this stage, the Committee will consider the merits of each view.</p> <p>The bells advisor commented as follows</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“I note the concerns relating to the frame by the reviewing architect and the comments of the Church Architect.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It is really important to note that at the end of the proposed work we are aiming to have a ring of bells that can be easily rung and will remain in a good state for many years into the future.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Taylor's report clearly documents a number of major issues with the bell frame, some of which are related to the original design used at the time of manufacture (the need to cut away</p>

parts of the frame sides to allow the bells to swing), but mainly due to the age of the frame.

The report shows significant movement of the frame in all directions which is unacceptable and which must make ringing accurately quite challenging. This level of movement will deteriorate over time causing more issues. It also discussed that the bells will be rehung in new headstocks, thus requiring more of the frame to be cut away to allow them to swing within the frame (they would be hung closer to the headstock to improve the timing and 'go' of the bells and therefore swing with a smaller radius).

The report further details that they are unable to find a trapdoor in the belfry floor. In some cases there is no trapdoor, the floor having been completed after the installation of the bells - if this is the case then access will have to be created to allow removal of the bells.

It is clear to me from this report that the bellframe is reaching the end of its useful life. Strengthening work can be undertaken which may or may not improve the situation. However it is likely that the installation will then continue to slowly deteriorate over the coming years. This deterioration will make ringing slowly more and more difficult and the frame will then require replacement (if there remains an active band and adequate funds). I do not believe this frame will continue to function for another 200 years even with all possible bracing and strengthening.

This is a difficult decision but it is important to remember that the function of a ringing installation is to ring and call people to Church. Ringing will only continue if the instrument used is of sufficient standard to allow easy, accurate ringing and easy teaching and development of new ringers. Currently this installation does not meet these criteria (hence the request for refurbishment).

Maintaining an old, failing frame risks having a set of bells that are slowly rung less often as they become more difficult to ring. This can over time lead to a reduction in the number of ringers and eventually no local band and a silent tower.

I agree that it is entirely appropriate to preserve parts of the frame for future historical reference as proposed by Taylor's in their report. However I feel that preserving the whole frame with strengthening will at best improve the situation for only a few decades and at worst only partially improve the situation.

	<p>Completion of these works including a new bellframe will deliver a bell installation that will be easy and accurate to ring, allow teaching and hopefully continued ringing at this site for many years to come.”</p> <p>The architect commented</p> <p>“My advice remains the same, just because it is a bell frame doesn’t mean that 277 year old primary fabric from a Grade I Listed building can be removed without detailed justification. It will be over to the church to prove beyond doubt that the bell frame has had its day and cannot be adapted to modern usage.”</p>
<p>11/12/2020</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Many thanks. I think the reports you have from the three tenderers cover our views at present.</p>
<p>23/12/2020</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>DAC Advice</p> <p>I am writing to let you know that at its meeting of 18 December 2020, the DAC considered the comments of the church architect on the repair, and resolved to offer the following informal advice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Committee appreciated the virtues of replacing the bell frame, but there are strong arguments against this. The Church Buildings Council, which the DAC will be obliged to consult, has a strong presumption against the replacement of historic bell frames but may accept amendments to an existing frame. (It will therefore be easier for the DAC to recommend refurbishment than replacement.) b. The parish should obtain an independent view from a structural engineer regarding the feasibility of retaining and strengthening the existing bell frame. This will need to be carried out before the DAC office consults the Church Buildings Council, as the findings will need to be included with the consultation documentation
<p>22/01/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>Further to the DAC advice relayed to you in Katy’s message of 23 December (below), we have received the following announcement this afternoon from the Church Building Council regarding grants for conservation work to historic bells or bell frames. I wished to draw your attention to this in case it may be of use to you .</p> <p><u>Bell grants</u></p> <p>The next closing date for bell and bell frame grants is 22 February 2021 for decisions in May 2021. Full criteria and an application form are available online. Please encourage applications from churches planning conservation work to historic bells or bell frames.</p>
<p>27/01/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Further to the Diocesan recommendation to employ a Consultant to advise on the bells refurbishment it is proposed to use the following:-</p> <p>Mr Adrian Dempster, CEng MICE MIStruct E from Nottingham. Adrian is a structural engineer, a bellringer, and is or has been structural advisor</p>

	<p>to the Diocese of Southwell. He has been a director of Ward Cole, consulting engineers; though he is now semi-retired, he continues to work part time as a consultant for them. He has been consulting engineer to other bell restorations, and some years ago produced an excellent report on his inspection of the bells and tower at Crewe (St Mary).</p> <p>Please confirm that Mr Dempster would be acceptable to the Diocese for this purpose</p>
<p>27/01/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>Mr Dempster's credentials look sound to me, he appears to me to be a good choice to advise on the bell frame. I've found evidence of his advice on other proposals nationally. Can you please clarify his involvement in Southwell DAC, as I have seen documentation which lists him as Reverend, and I'm not sure that is the same person, or whether he is both ordained and an engineer?</p>
<p>27/01/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>The following is the DAC committee Membership as listed on The Diocese of Southwell. As you can see it lists Mr Adrian Dempster as a member.</p> <p>https://southwell.anglican.org/church-life/churches/your-church-building/diocesan-advisory-committee/</p>
<p>22/04/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p> <p>With attachment</p>	<p>I response to your email of 23 December 2020 I now attach a copy of the Consultants report on the Bell frame. I have today forwarded a copy to our Architect Mr N Rank and invited his comments.</p> <p>4) Structural Report of Ward Cole Consulting Engineers dated April 2021</p>
<p>27/04/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>I am about to send this for architect and bells advisor review, but it occurred to me that they may ask what the parish's opinion is, in the light of the report, would you now wish to replace or repair the bellframe?</p>
<p>27/04/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Sorry yes it is the intention of the church to retain the existing frame</p>
<p>11/05/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>With apologies for the delay, we have now heard back from the DAC bells advisor regarding the report. I was hoping to send the architects comments at the same time, so had been hanging on for them, but they are not yet received. The proposals will be discussed at the next DAC meeting, 21 May.</p> <p>The bells advisor commented</p> <p><i>"Many thanks for letting me see this report and informing me that the Parish now wish to retain the frame.</i></p>

	<p><i>This is an excellent and comprehensive report from someone with good knowledge of bell ringing.</i></p> <p><i>I am pleased to note that he feels that strengthening of the frame and work on the anchor points will allow the Parish to retain the frame and allow the frame to function well for full circle ringing.</i></p> <p><i>I am happy to agree that this is the best way forward."</i></p> <p>I notice you haven't completed the online faculty application yet, it might be a good idea to do that quite soon, as I would expect the DAC to be supportive of the proposals in the light of the report.</p>
<p>11/05/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Sorry but I am still awaiting a response from the Architect.</p>
<p>11/05/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>That's fine, I meant I was waiting for the DAC reviewing architect's comments, rather than Nick's to you, but both would be helpful</p>
<p>11/05/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Nick Rank of Buttress</p>	<p>Thank you for your email. Ward Cole are well know as engineers for the expertise in connection will bells and towers and their report makes sense. I am happy for the proposed work that they recommend to go ahead, it won't have any significant impact on the historic fabric of the tower.</p> <p>I am arranging for Steve Welsh, who worked with me on the tower masonry work, to pick up on the lead ridge issue.</p>
<p>28/05/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>DAC Advice</p> <p>I am writing to let you know that at its meeting of 21 May 2021, the DAC considered the report on the bell frame, and resolved to offer the following informal advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Committee was supportive of the revised proposals to strengthen the bell frame rather than replace it b) As this is a Grade 1 listed building, the DAC office will now carry out the necessary consultation with the Church Buildings Council
<p>25/06/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>Please could you complete the petition form on the online faculty system, and submit the application? I will then be able to refer the proposals to the CBC</p>
<p>25/08/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>DAC Advice</p> <p>I am writing to let you know that at its meeting of 24 August 2021 the DAC Standing Committee considered the proposals for the refurbishment of the bells and bellframe.</p> <p>Due to the Grade 1 listing of the church the responses of the full DAC had been sought prior to the meeting (the details for the repairs having</p>

	<p>been previously circulated to the full DAC). The Sub-Committee was content with the proposals and noted the majority of the DAC had responded prior to the Standing Committee and all the respondents had voted to recommend the proposed repairs.</p> <p>I can therefore advise you that subject to receiving satisfactory feedback from the Church Buildings Council (CBC), the Committee resolved to recommend the scheme, with the following proviso:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) The works to the bell frame to be under the direction and subject to the inspection of the Church Architect</p> <p>This means that when we have support for the proposals from the CBC, Caroline will be able to raise the Notification of Advice so the application can progress onto the stage where public notices can be displayed.</p>
<p>13/10/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Please can you advise me as to where we are up to with our faculty application for the bells. Are we still awaiting consultations or should I be doing something?</p> <p>Many thanks My PCC are becoming impatient!</p>
<p>19/10/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>I'm sorry for the delay, we are waiting for the Church Buildings Council to comment, they did say they may need to visit you to see the bells and bell frame, I will ask for an update. There isn't anything you need to do</p>
<p>08/11/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p>	<p>Do you have any further information on the above? We are receiving requests for information from the Cheshire Guild of Bell Ringers and various trusts. We have heard nothing from the Church Building Council?</p>
<p>08/11/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>I received an apology from the case worker at CBC this morning, sent yesterday, saying she was sorry for the delay, is working on the case now and would let us know as soon as possible. So hopefully we will hear very soon.</p>
<p>15/11/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>I have passed your contact details to Jacinta this morning so that you can arrange a visit to discuss the bells proposals Hope that's Ok, and that some progress will result</p>
<p>17/12/2021</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p> <p>With attachment</p>	<p>Please see attached advice from the CBC regarding the bells and bell frame. I've put this on the agenda for the January 21st DAC meeting, and hopefully we can progress this then</p> <p>CBC advice</p>
<p>20/12/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p> <p>With attachments</p>	<p>Is there any further information required at the moment for our Faculty/Advice/consultation that would be helpful before the DAC meeting? We have requested and are currently awaiting an updated tender from our preferred tenderer. (See attached documents)</p> <p>5) Description of proposed bell removal of Whites of Appleton Ltd dated 24 June 2021 6) Preferred Supplier report of parish dated 30 September 2021, Whites Latest Tender (awaiting update)</p>

<p>05/01/2022</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>Happy new year, thanks for sending these, I've put the proposal on the agenda for the next meeting and will send these documents for review. I'll let you know if there are any queries.</p> <p>Please can you confirm as to whether you intend to tune the bells, as described in the attachment, as that was opposed by the CBC in their advice?</p>
<p>05/01/2022</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Peter Ellis</p> <p>With attachment</p>	<p>I have just this morning received the attached quotation which includes reference to the tuning of the Bells. I hope this helps to clarify the situation. It is currently the intention of the Church to follow the CBC advice and not to re tune the Bells although as you can see that Whites are still recommending that this be done.</p> <p>7) Quotation and proposals of Whites of Appleton Ltd dated 5 January 2022</p>
<p>05/01/2022</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>Thanks Peter, that's great, I've sent it on to the reviewers</p>
<p>06/01/2022</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>We have now heard back from the Bells Advisor and DAC architect as follows</p> <p>The Bells advisor comments as follows, he is aware that you are not intending to retune the bells, but sent this reply before he had seen the second email and revised quotation.</p> <p><i>"Thank you for including the very helpful report from the CBC and further reports from the Church and Whites Bell Hangers.</i></p> <p><i>I note that the CBC consider the bells and frame to be worthy of listing and of significance. I apologize that I was not fully aware of all details relating to these bells when first asked for advice. I presumed that appropriate bells/frames were already listed, and I wonder whether this document means that CBC are now intending to list them (or whether this needs to be done by the Church). In the future I will look more closely at unlisted bells before replying.</i></p> <p><i>I am happy for the work to proceed to repair/strengthen the frame and replace the fittings as outlined in the report.</i></p> <p><i>I do agree that there would need to be a very strong case made by the Church to recommend tuning of these bells as they appear to be untouched (from a tuning point of view) since the time of installation. It appears from the CBC report that the ringers and Church are happy with the sound of their bells and therefore tuning is not required.</i></p> <p><i>I note that work will need to be done to allow the bells to be taken down from the belfry (required to allow cleaning and the preparation work and fitting of the new headstocks). It appears that there is a route via the clock chamber to the ringing room (though this will require dismantling part of</i></p>

	<p><i>the frame and lifting some of the floor boards). However, as is common with many Churches, it appears that the original entry route through the ringing chamber floor was covered during the fitting of the floor boards. Some floor boards would therefore require lifting (and later re-fitting) to allow the bells to be removed. It would be sensible from a bell ringing point of view for a trapdoor to be left in place to avoid a repeat of this issue in the future. I am aware that this would require advice from the DAC architect as this structure is of the same age as the bells. The only alternative way of removing the bells would be via the louvres - a route that has the same issues of requiring work done to the historic structure (and would be significantly more expensive)."</i></p> <p>The architect reviewer commented</p> <p><i>"I will defer to the Bells Advisor on all aspects of the Bells' refurbishment.</i></p> <p><i>The unanswered questions, apart from whether or not the bells are to be retuned or not are :</i></p> <p><i>What are the proposals for the new hatch? I presume that the original is not in existence so a drawing will be required. Is any other built fabric affected by the route of the bells and is any protection required to eg. historic floor finishes? I would recommend that the Church Architect oversees all the issues relating to the collateral fabric.</i></p> <p><i>In my experience, bell frames are generally exposed to the elements and I wonder if the Bells Advisor thinks that galvanised fixings are OK; my instinct would be for a suitable stainless steel?"</i></p> <p>The Bells Advisor advises that painted galvanised fixings as described in Whites schedule are standard and although will need attention every ten years or so, should last hundreds of years.</p> <p>Please could you contact your church architect, Nick Rank regarding the access hatch? The DAC will consider the CBC and above advice at the next meeting, but the access hatch is really the key point for now</p>
<p>26/01/2022</p> <p>To: Peter Ellis From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>DAC Advice</p> <p>I am writing to let you know that at its meeting of 21 January 2022, the DAC considered the report of the Church Buildings Council regarding their recent visit, and resolved to recommend the proposals for the bells and bellframe, with the following proviso:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The works to be under the direction and subject to the inspection of the Church Architect <p>The Committee also wished to offer the following informal advice:</p>

	<p>a. The parish should record the details of how the access hatch is designed and installed and to also share this information with the DAC office to keep on file</p> <p>This means that Caroline will now be able to raise the Notification of Advice, which will allow you to generate the public notice</p>

Audlem St James – Bells - Consultation with Church Buildings Council

Date	Message
<p>28/06/2021</p> <p>To: CBC From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>The following consultees have been invited to view the following Application on the Online Faculty System by Katy Purvis:</p> <p>Reference 2020-056061 concerning Audlem: St James the Great (Church Code 609325).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultchurchbuildingscouncil@churchofengland.org <p>Dear Consultee FOA Church Buildings Council</p> <p>Audlem St James (Grade 1 / 14C / 1856) Bells and bell frame refurbishment</p> <p>You have been invited under part 4.5 of The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019 to consult on the above Faculty Application. A response to the consultation will be taken into account if it is received within 42 days of the date of this email.</p> <p>The deadline for your response is 09/08/2021 The proposals are for full refurbishment of the bells and strengthening of the 1734 bell frame, which was initially to be replaced. A recent structural engineers report has indicated that it can and should be repaired, so this is now the preferred option.</p>
<p>14/07/2021</p> <p>To: Abu Pasha From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>I sent this application for formal consultation on 28 June 2021, as below. I was just checking the OFS to see if there had been any online response, and it tells me there are no invited consultees. The email below is logged in the messages tab. The parish are expecting the consultation period to end on 9 August, so please can you investigate as to whether the invitation has been sent?</p>
<p>14/07/2021</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: James Miles</p>	<p>Looking at the case history, the invitation for formal consultation was sent before the case was moved into the formal consultation stage. Whilst the email has the wording, which was manually written, the invite was not included in the list of formally consulted bodies, as the "Formal Consultation Invite" button was not used.</p> <p>Having checked our casework system, the case is logged as a formal request, and a response will be given by the 9th August.</p>
<p>09/08/2021</p> <p>To: David Knight, Keri Dearmer From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>We referred this case to you via the OFS back in June, however there was a slight mixup, and I am not sure you received it. I queried this with James Miles as attached and he assured me that it was logged as a formal request. Please could you let me know if you wish to comment on the proposals, as attached?</p>
<p>18/08/2021</p> <p>To: David Knight, Keri Dearmer</p>	<p>I'm sorry for resending this, I am aware that one or both of you may be away. Our original deadline for a response was 9th August. This matter is due to be discussed at the DAC standing committee meeting on Tuesday next week. It has been supported by the DAC and is due to be</p>

From: Katy Purvis	recommended subject to your comments, so it would be very helpful to know if a response is on its way before then.
18/08/2021 To: Katy Purvis From: Keri Dearmer	Thank you for your email. Jacinta is looking at this case, hopefully she can give you an update on timescales.
18/08/2021 To: Katy Purvis From: Jacinta Fisher	I apologise for the delay in responding. This case is not straightforward, so I am getting advice from two bells committee members. We may also wish to visit the church to see the bells and frame. How urgently do the parish need a response?
18/08/2021 To: Jacinta Fisher From: Katy Purvis	Thanks for letting me know, the parish don't mind waiting, it's not desperate, if a visit and further consideration is necessary, that's fine, I will report that to the committee. I think we thought the DAC had ironed out the complicated bits to their satisfaction, so were expecting a positive response from yourselves. We may have underestimated the issues, so it's especially useful to have your expert opinion and we can wait as long as needed.
21/10/2021 To: Jacinta Fisher From: Katy Purvis	Please could I ask if there is any progress on this case, the parish have asked me for an update this week?
07/11/2021 To: Katy Purvis From: Jacinta Fisher	I sincerely apologise for this delay. I am working on it and will get back to you asap.
09/11/2021 To: Jacinta Fisher From: Katy Purvis	Thanks Jacinta, look forward to hearing from you
12/11/2021 To: Katy Purvis From: Jacinta Fisher	I have been looking into the proposal for bell tuning at Audlem, St James and I think it would be best if the Council could visit the parish to chat to them and to view the bells. Who should I contact to arrange this?
15/11/2021 To: Jacinta Fisher From: Katy Purvis	Thanks for your email, please could you contact Peter Ellis, Churchwarden, I'm sure he will be happy to help
17/12/2021 To: Katy Purvis From: Jacinta Fisher	I attach the Council's advice regarding the bells at Audlem, St James. I apologise for the delay in responding. <i>Letter as below</i>
With attachment	

17/12/2021

To: Katy Purvis
From: Jacinta
Fisher

Thank you for seeking the Church Buildings Council's advice over the proposed works to the bells at the above church. This was considered under the Council's delegated advice policy, following a visit to the church on 8 December and its advice is set out below.

The church has a complete ring of 6 bells by Abel Rudhall dating from 1736, three of which are maiden bells. The bells were originally cast with loop canons, but these were all removed in 1891 by Taylors during a refurbishment of the bells and fittings. The Council noted that three of the bells have been tuned at some point, although they have never been machine tuned. They hang on a frame that is either of the same date, or substantially of this date incorporating older elements. As 1736 was the first year that Abel Rudhall traded, the complete 1736 Audlem ring and coeval timber frame are of high significance as work from a particular early stage in the work of this founder. Although Rudhall's work is well-represented in Gloucestershire and adjacent counties, it is rare in Cheshire. Although the bells and frame are currently unlisted, the Council considers that the bells and frame are worthy of listing due to their age and completeness. This is a significant ring.

The Council enjoyed its visit to hear the bells being rung out on a clear December morning and is grateful to the Audlem ringers for arranging to meet and to ring. Following the discussion during the visit, the Council understands that the bell ringers are relatively content with the historic sound of the bells and that they are more concerned with replacing the bell wheels and other fixtures, thus making the bells safer and easier to ring.

It is proposed to tune the bells. Since the bells are of one date and show no signs of modern tuning, and three are tonally as cast by Rudhall, the bells are tonally significant as the early work of their founder and, although not proven, extremely likely to be tonally as installed in 1736. There is no reason not to consider that the tuning was applied soon after the bells were cast. The Council would strongly advise against their tuning on account of tonal significance. It also does not consider that the statement of needs made a strong enough case to justify tuning. Nothing about the sound of the bells suggests that there is a strong case for tuning.

The Council notes that it is proposed to retain the frame. Given its significance and taking into account the engineering advice received by the PCC it considers that this is the appropriate course of action. It would ask that full details of the proposed works to the frame are set out clearly and submitted with the faculty petition. The Council would not be content with any proposals that saw the frame removed. Of the works proposed, the Council is content to defer further consideration of the matters relating to the frame, replacement bell fixtures and associated repairs to the DAC, unless its advice is specifically needed on the frame.

I hope that this advice is helpful.

17/12/2021

To: Jacinta Fisher
From: Katy Purvis

Thanks very much Jacinta, I have been looking forward to seeing your advice, particularly on the bell frame. We will take this back to the DAC in January.