

Notes from a meeting between St Lawrence Bellringers and Project Inspire team members.

Held on Friday 19th May 2023 at 8.00pm

Present:

Rev Andrew Cinnamond (AC)

Marian Winckles (MW)

Michael Lee (ML)

Jenny Smith (JS)

Nigel Jones (NJ)

Susan Holmes (SH)

Simon Winckles (SW)

Evelyn Smith (ES)

Alexander Smith (AS)

Non-participating note-taker – Lesley Uzzell

Apologies: Anny Crawford

Multi use of the ringing chamber

1. Update on current position with the faculty submission

AC outlined the process so far and the current position. Design stage 3 was completed at the end of 2022. This was presented to the church community at a meeting in the church building at which the architect was present and questions and comments were taken. The formal application to the diocese – the faculty – has now been made and the statutory consultees have been asked for their comments. The deadline is now past for these comments to be received. The next step is for us to respond to these comments.

JS queried her understanding that the diocesan bell adviser Chris Povey would also be able to comment at this point. NJ replied that he has already made comments to the DAC.

2. Current view of the DAC

NJ quoted from a DAC note to the PCC.

The DAC chair and secretary both understand that the relevant health and safety concerns can be addressed. Last year the Project Inspire team shared a protocol for sharing the space, at a meeting with the bellringers. The DAC has now asked for the ringers to meet again with the Project Inspire team. Noted that the room will retain its title as the ringing room/bell chamber and will only be used when other rooms are not available.

3. Specific concerns related to use of the bell ringing chamber

JS asked whether the chamber would need to be ready for Sunday school 10 minutes before the service at 10:00 AM. JS doesn't feel that the comments raised previously have been yet robustly answered on the use of the space.

AC asked whether there was a definitive list of the ringers' issues. JS noted that the list is on the minutes of the last meeting held between these parties. NJ commented that many of the issues were covered in the draft protocol.

MW noted that the protocol lays out how the space can be used. She asked what stage the plans are at in terms of making people safe in the room and also the equipment remaining safe from damage. NJ replied that the design has been progressed including raising and securing the spider although matters of detail are subject to discussion and detailed design.

SH spoke of a mechanism to lock the ropes on the wall. JS agreed the spider can be raised to the ceiling. She noted that clock hammers also need protection. NJ said this will be addressed at detailed design.

AC noted that Taylors need to give their information in writing which has not yet happened.

MW noted that the diocese has belfry advisors and that she had spoken to Malcolm Taylor for advice. He is lead belfry advisor and would like to visit Lechlade. MW will find his e-mail and past to AC. **ACTION MW**

ES raised the concern that children in Sunday school may climb on things and damage things in the bell chamber or be in danger themselves.

AC asked whether the current bell ringing risk assessment is up to date. JS noted that Paul Cobb has the risk assessment. MW raised a concern that the risk assessment is not on the standard church pro forma - AC to ask Paul Cobb to provide this to the bellringers. **ACTION AC**

JS said it is difficult to predict what risks might be in future plans as these are as yet unknown, and therefore what mitigations might relieve those risks. NJ noted there have been many discussions on safeguarding within the church and children are well supervised during Sunday school and other times.

JS wonders whether it is even achievable to allow Sunday school teachers into the chamber 10 minutes before the service as it takes some time to make the chamber safe.

JS expressed concern for the safety of the expensive equipment as well as the people.

AC agreed that the protocol needs more detail and processes.

JS noted that standard practise is to ring up to 5 minutes before the service begins, although the St Lawrence ringers have agreed to finish 10 minutes prior to the service.

MW felt it would be good to start with the risk assessment to identify what aspects will need mitigation.

ML suggested it could be helpful to have some time with Paul Cobb regarding H&S issues.

AC asked whether there are general guidelines for risk assessments in ringing chambers, JS replied that these are very high level as all buildings, bell chambers, and ringers are different.

SH suggested that the risk assessment and the protocol are separate documents: the risk assessment with risks and mitigations, the protocol with procedures.

ML noted that all new people need to see the documents. He noted that the ringers have a checklist which should be completed after ringing and suggested that the Sunday school teachers should also check that list prior to allowing children into the chamber.

JS also noted that visitors should also follow the same procedures, AC replied that he doesn't envisage anybody outside of the church members being in the chamber. JS however noted that visiting ringers do come in and don't always have Lechlade ringers present. So unsupervised people from outside the church are allowed to be in the tower by the ringing team, and follow the procedures laid out by the Lechlade ringers to leave the tower safe.

AC asked for Anny Crawford's comments, which MW read out (and agreed to provide for these notes, however these not received as yet).

JS expressed concern that the changes may be so much that it won't be worth ringing, it would be easier not to ring than to worry about whether the bells are left safe and secure. She wants the history of the bells to be retained and noted that some members have left so the team is currently short-handed.

SH noted that the detailed level plans are not yet available and explained that there is no space to build a room elsewhere without sharing the bell chamber. AC noted that if the protocol can be amended.

ML asked what would happen if it turned out that it is not possible to make this work: AC noted again that the advice is that it will be possible. NJ reiterated that the bell adviser has said that it would be possible to work together, JS expressed her view that the adviser believes it can only work if the space is not made shareable rather than if it is a multi-use space.

AC reiterated that there will be occasions when it will be needed as there are not enough rooms.

ES was concerned that Sunday school is every single week, and therefore not occasional. SH explained that Sunday school does not happen every week, and that the bell chamber would be the last used space.

JS noted that ringers who are experienced even get injured and that human behaviour is not to follow protocol. If ringers don't feel it's safe it doesn't matter how often the space is used. AC reiterated that the process is to find a protocol that will be workable.

JS commented that the fact that they would have to leave the space for others to use would not leave her comfortable and she believes that the multi-use space cannot be made safe. SH reiterated that the risk assessment is the starting point, with mitigations leading to the protocol and procedures MW agreed that procedures should be matched against the risk assessment and the protocol.

MW is hopeful a way forward can be found but is keen to know more detail and asked when that level of detail will be available. Once the detailed procedures are produced each ringer can make their own decision or whether they feel it can be made to work, and whether they will continue. NJ commented that further detailed design will follow after faculty approval.

SW is also hopeful that a workable solution can be achieved and noted that the ringers do only actually use the space two or three hours a week.

AC suggested that Paul Cobb lead for the church to liaise with the ringers regarding health and safety and asked who the ringers' health and safety lead is. However, as they don't have a committee, they don't have a health and safety lead so it was agreed that MW will be the link with Paul.

ML asked for the timescale of the project, AC replied the DAC were meeting at the end of June which will decide the next steps.

MW asked when the notices will go on the door of the church, NJ replied later this year, with 30 days of consultation.

SH noted the Chancellor will make the decision and there are other spaces which will have to become shared spaces. Not all the low-level detail is decided yet and won't be until after the Chancellor's decision.

ML asked whether the ventilation consultant has sports experience. NJ replied that the company has many areas of experience and are a very experienced consultancy.

SW noted that all access to the chamber will be generally locked.

AS noted, that the church is being modernised for future use and being able to work together is a good thing. Ringers should be prioritised in the ringing chamber and the church should not be closed in order for ringing to take place. He feels it would be good to find a solution.

4. Actions

It was agreed that MW and Paul Cobb should meet to discuss and update the risk assessment. The draft protocol will then be updated to reflect the output of the risk assessment.

The meeting ended at 9pm.