

REPORT TO ST PETER'S PCC – CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF THE BELLS AND ARRANGING THEIR OVERHAUL IN 2023-24

Centenary of the bells

The 8 bells of St Peter's were installed by John Taylor & Co. in 1923/4. They are regarded nationally as one of the finest rings of 8 bells in the country. So, we are celebrating the centenary of the bells this year. They were recast in autumn 1923 and were rededicated on 23rd March 1924.

We propose to hold a series of centenary celebration events over the weekend of 23/24 March 2024. We hope to hold a tower open day and a celebration service with the bishop over that weekend with exhibitions and special ringing in the run-up to then.

Overhaul of the bells and replacement of wire mesh

The bells last received attention from a bellhanger over thirty years ago. It is therefore felt desirable that they should now be checked and overhauled by a bellhanging contractor. Following inspection by the Devon Guild Bell Advisers and a representative of one firm of bellhangers, it is felt that the following work by a contractor is necessary:

- Lift bells and check, clean and regrease main bearings
- Remove clappers and some roller pulley boxes. Refurbish in the workshop and refit
- Remove wheels, dip-strip, replace rusted nails and treat with preservative. Refit

The cost of this work based on two quotes so far received is around £15,000

Repainting of the frame is to be carried out by local volunteers – materials £1,000
(compared with £8,100 quoted by bellhanger)

Replacement of the rusted wire mesh used to exclude birds from the bell openings:

Fitting of new mesh and Galebreaker fabric – Morrish Engineering £5,000

Hire of scaffolding – estimate from Rapid Scaffolding £3,500

Total cost of project (approx.) excl VAT* £24,500

*** VAT is reclaimable under the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme**

Fundraising

The ringers' fund can contribute £3,000 at the outset. It is proposed to organise a series of fundraising events following the project appeal launch on Bell Sunday on 14th May. The list of scheduled concerts and events already arranged is noted. We will also approach appropriate charities and grant-making trusts for assistance.

Les Boyce, 25 Feb 2023