

## Longworth Tower and Bell Project. Report 2021

The Longworth Bell Restoration Project has been renamed The Longworth Tower and Bell project, to include the work needed to be done on St. Mary's Church tower parapets and tower louvres (windows), which was identified after the Quinquennial inspection report last year.

The Bell committee consists of 10 members with Rev Talisker as Chair, 3 residents of Longworth, 3 PCC members and 3 bell ringers. This will continue as a sub committee of the PCC, which has overall responsibility for the project.

Despite this now being a larger project, as it includes the tower repairs, we are very excited that the committee and PCC have unanimously approved that the number of bells in the ring be increased from 6 to 8 bells. This takes the project from being primarily about restoration, into a new and future-facing approach, looking at increasing bell-ringing facilities and opportunities in the area.

This increase to 8 bells will enable Longworth Church to have the opportunity to act as an official bell-ringing teaching centre, and to host seminars and training sessions for new and returning bell ringers. This will become especially important and necessary in the coming years throughout the diocese to replace ringers lost as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is expected that many older ringers will not return to towers after 12-18 months without ringing, and we need to train new recruits to ensure the very English art of full-circle ringing continues into the future.

As the project now encompasses masonry repairs to the tower, further grant money can be applied for from additional sources, which means that the estimated £100,000 increase on the total cost of the project is very achievable. Our architects are now drawing up plans for the new work, and existing tenders adjusted where needed. We hope to finalise all the grants this year, and apply for the necessary permissions for the work, and hope (God willing) to commence work some time in 2022.