

## Sponsorship and donations

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Town: .....

County: ..... Postcode: .....

Please delete as appropriate:

I wish to sponsor a: .....

I wish to make a donation to the fund.

I enclose a cheque for: £.....

Cheque number: .....

Please make your cheque payable to "Alvechurch PCC" and write "Bell Fund" on the back.

If you wish your donation to remain anonymous, please tick this box.

## GiftAid

Gift Aid allows us to recover the tax you have paid on the money that you are giving to us. It makes a real difference to your contribution so please complete this section of the form if you can.

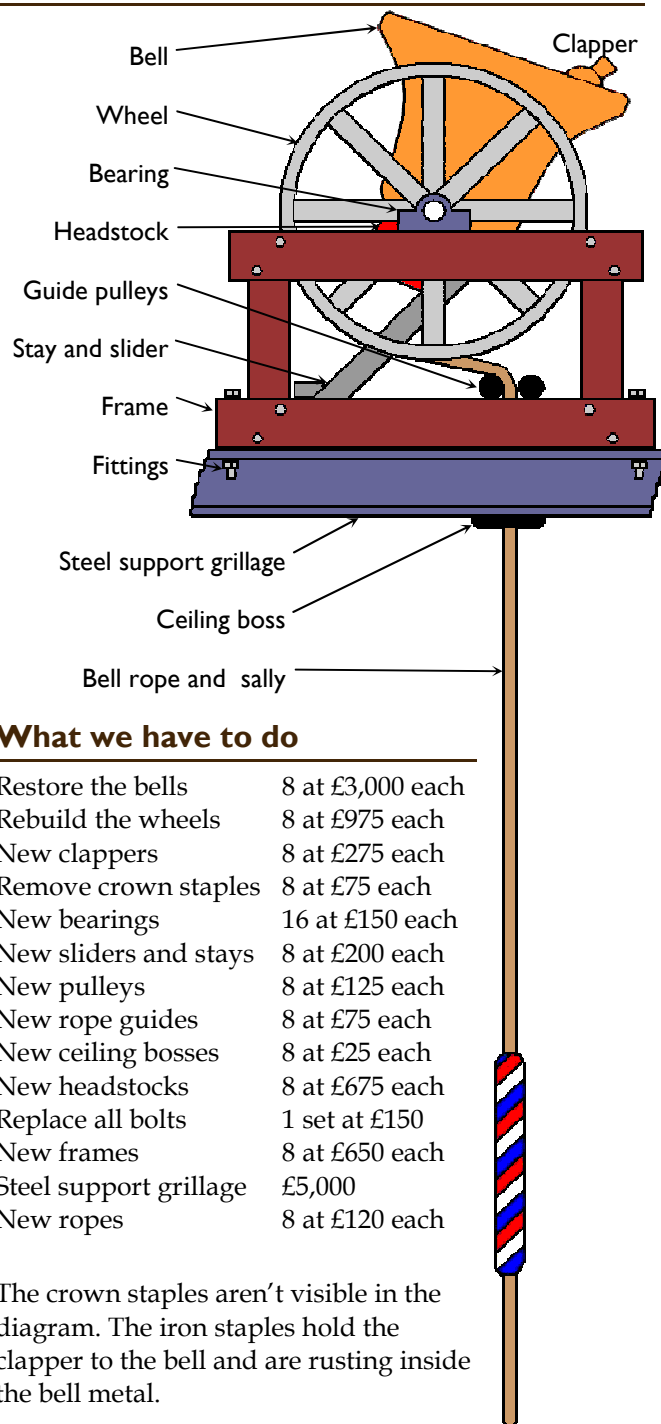
Name: St Laurence Church, Alvechurch

- I am a UK taxpayer.
- I would like the tax to be reclaimed on the attached donation to charity through the Gift Aid scheme.
- I pay income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount of tax to be reclaimed.

Signed: .....

Date: .... / .... / .....

## The major components in the tower



## What we have to do

Restore the bells	8 at £3,000 each
Rebuild the wheels	8 at £975 each
New clappers	8 at £275 each
Remove crown staples	8 at £75 each
New bearings	16 at £150 each
New sliders and stays	8 at £200 each
New pulleys	8 at £125 each
New rope guides	8 at £75 each
New ceiling bosses	8 at £25 each
New headstocks	8 at £675 each
Replace all bolts	1 set at £150
New frames	8 at £650 each
Steel support grillage	£5,000
New ropes	8 at £120 each

The crown staples aren't visible in the diagram. The iron staples hold the clapper to the bell and are rusting inside the bell metal.

# Restore the Bells of St Laurence

The bells of St Laurence church in Alvechurch, Worcestershire, date from 1711 and have been ringing across the village to mark weddings, funerals and special events for nearly 300 years.

There are eight bells ranging in weight from 4 to 12 hundredweight (200 to 600 kg) and the ringers ring them in the traditional English style of Change Ringing.

The bells have survived three centuries but are showing signs of wear and must be repaired before they become too dangerous to ring.

The biggest problem is that the frame which supports the bells is working loose inside the tower and a steel supporting grillage must be inserted underneath it. To do this work we have to remove all the bells and whilst they are out of the tower we plan to send them off for a complete overhaul and tuning. When they come back we'll use new bearings and hardware to mount the bells back in the tower.

Our aim with this project is to do all the maintenance necessary to enable the bells to ring through their fourth century and beyond. We have an estimate of £60,000 for the work and need your help in raising this money as quickly as possible.



## History of the bells

The tower of St Laurence church was built in the 15th century and we know that the top section was rebuilt in 1676 after a storm. The original five bells were recast in 1711 by a local bellfounder in the village of Edgbaston and the rector John Jephcott augmented them to a ring of six by adding the tenor.

The bells of St Laurence have seen many changes in their 300 years of service. The tenor bell was melted down and recast by an Oxford founder in 1845. We don't know why they had to take such drastic action but the bell needs attention again 160 years after being remade. Two more bells were added in 1891 to commemorate the appointment of Rev. Jex Blake as the Dean of Wells and this brought the tower to the full ring of eight bells which it holds today.

Our restoration work will be the biggest project in the tower since 1891 and will be the first time that the five oldest bells have been out of the tower since 1711. We plan to have the work completed by 2011 so that we can celebrate their 300th anniversary with a peal on the restored bells.

The bells would be of little use without the ringers. The ringing team has always represented a wide cross-section of village life. The current team range from schoolchildren to pensioners and all give their time to make sure that the bells continue to ring across Alvechurch.



Alvechurch ringers by the tower

## The St Laurence Bell Fund

The Bell Fund is operated by a committee drawn from the ringing team with the Rector of St Laurence as the ex-officio Honorary President. The terms of reference agreed with the Parochial Church Council mean that everything raised by this appeal will be spent on the bells at St Laurence.

Please send your contribution (with the GiftAid form if appropriate) to:

St Laurence Bell Fund  
16 Warbank Close  
Alvechurch  
Birmingham  
B48 7PA

Phone: 0121 445 1300  
Email: [fund@alvechurchbells.org.uk](mailto:fund@alvechurchbells.org.uk)



The bells in the tower at St Laurence

## More details

The ringers are always pleased to welcome visitors at our Tuesday night practice. Come up if you want to see what we do or if you'd like to learn about ringing.

The Bell Fund has two sites on the web. Our main pages at <http://www.alvechurchbells.org.uk> carry news and pictures of events and you can add your own comments to the informal reports at <http://alvechurchbells.blogspot.com/>

## Please help us

Donations are always welcome but we are also looking for people who would like to sponsor a bell or one of the other components of the restoration. The parts and typical prices are illustrated overleaf.

Sponsorship of a complete component such as a bell might be very suitable for a commercial organisation or for a family wishing to commemorate a loved one or an important event.

All sponsors will:

- Be invited to attend the re-dedication service.
- Be invited to visit the site to view progress.
- Have their name and a dedication recorded in a commemorative Roll of Honour.
- Have their names published in the Village magazine when the bells are reinstalled.

If you sponsor a bell or the frame then you will also be able to:

- Be photographed with your component.
- Read a lesson or choose a hymn at the dedication service.
- Have the bells rung for you on a suitable occasion.

Components will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. If the component that you have chosen has already been taken then we'll let you know as quickly as possible and offer an alternative.

If we exceed our target then the excess money will be put towards our next major project which will be to modify the windows and roof of the tower so that the bells will sound more evenly across the village.

Practical help is as useful as financial contributions. We have already accepted offers of transport for our bells to and from the foundry, the repainting of all the small brackets and fittings, and the provision of our web site. Please talk to one of the ringers if you feel you would like to get involved in our project.