

Item 15

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council 12th April 2019

St Mary's Church Clock and Chimes maintenance funding arrangements

Report of: Mark Ramshaw, Parish Clerk

At the Parish Council meeting held 20th July 2017 the report (Appendix A) was presented to Parish Council. The following recommendations were considered:

- 1) Consider its' current position relating to the funding of repairs and annual servicing of St. Mary's Church clock;
- 2) Take a view on where financial responsibility for repairs and annual servicing of church chimes should lie;
- 3) Subsequent to its' decisions at 1 and 2, consider the request from the PCC to enter a formal agreement.

The minutes from the meeting state: 'Parish Council resolved to approve the replacement of the Chimes at a cost of £2500 as a one-off arrangement providing that the repairer would offer a 24month warranty for the product. Parish Clerk to speak to the repairer.'

At that time no agreement was reached with regards to where financial responsibility lies for repairs and annual servicing of the clock and chimes. It was agreed to carry out the repair as a one-off repair.

The Parish Council is currently paying for the servicing of the clock and chimes via Smiths of Derby who are the contractor. The cost of this in 2018 was £205 plus VAT.

As a result of a further recent instance of failure with the equipment, Smiths from Derby visited the site and reported on two faults:

The Bell Sound system and the time side auto wind unit

1. Bell System –

The fault found related to the programme memory which was duplicated in the first programme and as a result the controller was not instructing the system correctly affecting the night silencing . The engineer corrected this and tested the unit several times and it worked correctly.

2. Auto wind –

The engineer found the weight run down but the winding mode light on. He tested the motor and in doing so activated the system and it wound up.

However we are informed that this is a common fault with units of this age. The contact in the motor/gearbox builds up carbon and insulates the brushes so they

cannot activate. When they are tapped it clears the brushes but the build up continues.

The engineer tested the unit several times and it worked every time. We have been informed that they can no longer obtain motors for these models due to their age and they have been replaced with a newer model . Should this fault persist then it may be necessary to upgrade to the new system of auto wind.

Parish Council should note this visit and repair was carried out free of charge.

We have been advised that there are two ways of approaching the situation, which can be summarised as follows:

If the auto-wind fails again before the annual service visit is due, which is normally around September each year, then they could attend on site and fit a new motor as a "one-off" visit at a charge of £428 plus VAT and the service visit would then be carried out later in the year and charged accordingly

Should the clock remain in working order until the service visit is due then the motor could be changed proactively with the service visit in September, at a charge of £218 plus VAT – but we would still receive a second invoice for the service visit at the agreed price.

There is a 24 month warranty with this repair.

Parish Council should note that there is no formal agreement in place with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the maintenance and/or repair of the clock and the chimes. It appears that further expense will occur in the coming months linked to the repair of the motor.

There is also no responsibility under any legislation for the Parish Council to provide a clock within the Village or it should be noted that members of the public are keen to have the clock repaired when the chimes are broken.

Parish Council is asked to consider:

- 1) Its' current position relating to the funding of repairs and annual servicing of St.Mary's Church clock;
- 2) Take a view on where financial responsibility for repairs and annual servicing of church chimes should lie;

M Ramshaw

12th April 2019

Appendix A

West Rainton Parish Council - 20 July 2017

Item 16

St Mary's Church Clock and Chimes maintenance funding arrangements

Report of: G Keedy, Project Officer

The tabling of this report is prompted by a recent request from Parochial Church Council (PCC) Secretary, St Mary's Church to draw up a formal agreement with the Parish Council to confirm financial responsibilities for servicing and maintaining the church clock and chimes.

For background, the Parish Council has funded servicing and maintenance of St. Mary's Church clock for some years. This work is undertaken by Smith of Derby (clockmaker).

From Parish Council minutes and other documents readily available, Project Officer has been unable to identify when any decision to fund servicing and maintenance (and scope) has been made, nor trace a formal agreement or correspondence with the PCC on this matter.

The earliest reference identified showing the Parish Council has paid for this work is March 2005. But it is possible that the current arrangements have been in place for many years prior to that date.

Advice has been sought from the Society of Local Council Clerks to help inform the Council's position.

Formal advice is:

"A parish council is usually restricted from contributing to the upkeep of church property. But, Section 2 of the Parish Councils Act 1957 makes specific provision enabling a parish council to contribute to the maintenance costs of a public clock.

Many councils rely on this section to pay for the upkeep of a clock on a church tower or in some other equally public location.

However, unless the clock belongs to the parish council or the parish council has given a commitment to contribute to its maintenance there is no obligation on the parish council to finance it now".

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/5-6/42/section/2>

Parish Council should note that there is currently specific budget provision for the annual servicing of the clock.

Parish Council is asked, in light of professional advice received to:

- 1) Consider its' current position relating to the funding of repairs and annual servicing of St. Mary's Church clock;
- 2) Take a view on where financial responsibility for repairs and annual servicing of church chimes should lie;
- 3) Subsequent to its' decisions at 1 and 2, consider the request from the PCC to enter a formal agreement.

