

— UPDATE ON REPAIRS TO THE SPIRE, BELLS & CLOCK —

In the 2024 Annual Review, Miranda Frary reported on the project to repair the bells, spire and clock. Here's a brief update on where the work has reached.

Preliminary work has been going on for several years, but considerable steps forward were made in 2023 when two volunteers came forward to fill vital roles, namely, Miranda to project manage the physical work and Martin Thomas to lead the process of applying for grants.

A good deal of Miranda's work involves handing complex interactions with the Diocese of Oxford to ensure the necessary permissions are in place for the work on our beautiful Grade II* listed building, in addition to specifying the work and recommending contractors to the PCC.

For the bells, this pre-work is almost complete. Our contractor is scheduled to remove the bells in October and return them in good working order early in 2025. Although this means the tower bells will not be available over Christmas, we will have the excellent alternative of our hand bells team and we must keep in mind that, without the repairs, the ringing of the tower bells, which is already restricted, would have to cease completely very soon. The bells will return in a condition that should last another 100 years, ringing to mark special occasions for the whole community of Sandhurst as well as regular calls to worship. The detailed planning for the re-shingling of the spire has also progressed well but has been impacted by Natural England's appointed ecologists discovering the presence of some bats in the spire meaning we will need a licence to give enough time for the work without damaging these protected creatures. Further ecological surveys are underway to finalise exactly what precautions are needed and the type of license required. Meanwhile, Miranda has recommended a contractor and all being well work will commence in early 2025.

Details of repair of the clock and the funding are yet to be determined.

The aim is that disruption to the activities in the church will be kept to a minimum; we don't

envisage disturbing normal church services and scaffolding won't be at ground level although areas will be out of bounds on weekdays.

We are truly fortunate in having Miranda and Martin bring their time and considerable skill to the project, and to the many others who have helped over several years.

Martin has used his extensive experience of charity fund raising, to filter the details of the various grant giving bodies and establish where we best fit their criteria. He has made several applications on behalf of the PCC with others to follow.

The grant bodies require that we have raised a good proportion of the costs ourselves and the fundraising team have a busy programme of events.

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John Martin

