

Invitation for a quotation for the repair of the bell frame
and the rehanging of the bells

STOCKLAND BRISTOL
St Mary Magdalene



Job No: 0281

Churchcare Code: 501532

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Revision: /

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Bell Frame repairs and rehangings

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The project comprises the repair of the bell-frame and the rehangings of the bells for full circle ringing at St Mary Magdalene Church in Somerset. The Post Code is: TA5 2PZ.
- 1.2. The PCC is in receipt of a National Lottery Heritage Fund Development grant for the repair of the church building and the introduction of community facilities into the church. This works include repairs to the tower and the rehangings of the bells. Bell ringing has not taken place for approximately 30 years on account of concerns about the condition of the bell-frame and tower structure.
- 1.3. The purpose of this report is to provide an Outline Brief to three bell-hangers. Given the scope of the works and the sums involved, competitive quotations are required to meet procurement rules set out by NLHF.

2 Brief description of the church

- 2.1. Stockland Bristol is located on the Steart peninsula and is approximately 5 miles northeast of Bridgwater. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book under the name Stocheland and the Bristol name was added as a result of its ownership by the Bristol Corporation from 1541-1839.
- 2.2. Thomas Daniel (1792 – 1854), a shipping magnate and sugar merchant and sometimes referred to as the 'Father of Bristol' is known to have speculated on the reparations at the abolition of the slave trade and much of his wealth is believed to have come about this way. In 1838, Daniel's son, Thomas Daniel of Stoodleigh, purchased the 707-acre estate of Bristol Stockland from the Bristol Corporation and he then rebuilt the church and Stockland Manor (1860) for his son, Henry Daniel the vicar between 1857 and 1883. The medieval church was demolished/rebuilt in 1865. The design was originally attributed to Oswald Arthur of Plymouth but an article in the Somerset Free Press assigns the design to T S Hack of Bristol and, following his sudden death, to Godwin & Crisp.
- 2.3. The church comprises chancel, nave, north aisle, north vestry, south porch, south chapel and west tower. The church is built of blue lias stone, some brick with Bath Stone dressings under plain clay tiled roofs. The roof tiles were Staffordshire Brown and the floor tiles by Godwin of Hereford.
- 2.4. The church is Grade II listed although it is not within a Conservation Area. The church is on Historic England's 'at risk' register.
- 2.5. The 16th century font is early perpendicular and comprises an octagonal bowl with pointed quatrefoils and underside foliage and shields. The screen is part late 15th century and comprises four-light tracery, undercut foliage along the rail and crocketed ogee base panels. The outer panels and cornice are by Bligh Bond and date to the 1920s. The pulpit dates from 1867.
- 2.6. The low side oak bell frame was installed in 1866 when John Warner & Sons re-installed three bells from the previous tower, recast the second and a fifth bell was added. In 1903, two of the bells from the original tower were recast by Warners. In 1960, the bells were augmented to six by the addition of a new treble bell by Mears & Stainbank of Whitechapel. The fourth and tenor were also rehung in 1960. None of the bells is listed by the Church Buildings Council.
- 2.7. The clock is by Smiths of Derby and dated 1905. The three-train flat bed clock continues to be hand-wound and it chimes on the second and fifth bells and strikes the hour on the tenor.
- 2.8. The listed description for the Grade II church is as follows:

Parish church. 1865 from documents; on the site of an earlier parish church; for Daniel family of Stockland Manor (qv); by Arthur of Plymouth. Coursed and squared blue lias rubble, Bath Stone dressings, tile roofs with bracketted eaves, copings with cruciform finials. Decorated style with much buttressing; nave with a north aisle and South porch, West tower, chancel with a heated north vestry and a South chapel. Three stage tower, diagonal buttresses to first and second stages, parapet pierced with quatrefoils, stair turret, 2-light bell chamber openings with louvres; 3-light West window, West door, carved heads stops. Three bay nave, 2-light windows; single bay chancel, 2-light window and a lancet, 3-light West window; 3-light South window to short South chapel. Plain interior, plastered walls, tile floors wagon roofs to nave and chancel, that to nave unceiled; scissor braced roof to north aisle. Arcade on octagonal piers. Both the octagonal font and the chancel screen are C15, reused from the earlier church; the latter restored and installed by F Bligh Bond c1920 as a memorial to the fallen of the Great War. Remainder of fittings of 1865; notable the stone pulpit with 10 detached Purbeck shafts, similarly the reredos. Much

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C19 stained glass, that to chancel by Clayton and Bell. Two resited C17 tablets to South chapel, 2 C19 tablets. Bells of 1865. Well balanced and precise copy of a Decorated building. Thomas Daniel was the rector. (Pevsner, Buildings of England South and West Somerset, 1958).

2.9. Bibliography:

Historic England's Listing Description – www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/
Somerset Free Press, 15 June 1867.

Massey, G: Church Bells of Somerset, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (2011).

Orbach, J & Pevsner, N: Buildings of England: Somerset: South and West Bristol, Yale (2015).

2.10.



Above: The south elevation of the tower.

3 THE BRIEF

- 3.1. The PCC is seeking quotations to carry out the repair of the bell-frame and the re-hanging of the bells for full circle ringing. The quotation should include a breakdown of costs.

An outline Schedule of anticipated Works has been identified below:

- Supply additional information including drawings (if appropriate) in support of a Faculty application for the rehangng of the bells and the repair of the bell-frame. (The application is to be made in Feb 2024 for assessment at the DAC's March meeting.
- Open up the various hatches within the tower, disconnect the clock and lower all six bells down to ground level and take back to the workshop for repairs and assessment. Include for installing any temporary lifting beams etc.
- Include for carefully taking down the ringing chamber ceiling and refitting after any works to the frame/foundation beams have been undertaken.
- With the bells removed, thoroughly clean the bell chamber and carry out a re-assessment of the condition of the bell frame. Review the proposals with the client's appointed Structural Engineer and the Architect and if necessary, the DAC Bells Advisor. Please be advised that as part of the repairs to the tower, cintec stitching of the north wall crack is proposed together with full external repointing. Please advise if you feel additional stitching is required in conjunction with the bell frame strengthening.
- Undertake bell frame repairs including any strengthening or stiffening works. Include localised treatment of timber with Lignum Pro 156 (Bat approved).
- Allow to install a new acoustic slab Rockwool insulation above the ceiling and provisionally allow to remove sawdust if present.
- Drill out the cast-in staples to 3no bells.
- Allow to replace all 5no headstocks with new painted galvanised steel headstocks and supply and fit new clappers. Decorate the 6th headstock.
- Allow to repair or replace 5no wheels which are in poor condition and undertake repairs/replacement to all assembly items.
- Provisionally allow to retune the bells if deemed necessary/appropriate.
- Re-hang the bells introducing new ropes and reconnect the clock chimes.
- Prepare a report at the end of the project detailing the works undertaken and materials used. The report form part of the Health & Safety file and is to be lodged with the Employer at the end of the project.

NB: New bird protection will be installed by the Main Contractor together with new fixed lighting throughout the tower.

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- 3.2. In addition to the quotation, please can you also confirm your dayrate for works in the workshop and if different, on site.
- 3.3. If appointed, your quotation will be submitted as part of the Faculty application for the project and if necessary, you will be required to provide appropriate additional information in support of the Faculty application. The Faculty submission is planned to take place early in 2025.
- 3.4. In due course, the work will be instructed through the Main Contractor (not yet appointed) as a named sub-contractor of the Main Contractor probably using a JCT Intermediate Form of Contract.
- 3.5. At the current time, it is envisaged that the likely start date on site will be January 2026. Details of the anticipated duration of your work should be provided.
- 3.6. The intention is to involve the new group of ringers in taking down and re-hanging of the bells (if safely possible) together with any other opportunities to involve the community to ensure the long-term success of the project.
- 3.7. At the completion of the project a couple of hours will need to be set aside for post project evaluation (via Zoom) as required by the Lottery.
- 3.8. The tender will be assessed on both a cost and quality assessment basis.
- 3.9. The appointed Bell-hanger will be responsible for complying with Health and Safety legislation including the Construction Design and Management Regulations. Method Statements and Risk Assessments must be submitted to the client and Main Contractor in advance of the works commencing.
- 3.10. Details of Public and Employers Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance will need to be provided.
- 3.11. Should you wish to visit, you are of course most welcome but please can you advise John McVerry, the Project Manager of your plans to visit, so that the tower key can be made available to you. The email contact details are: john@heritageandcommunity.com. Tel: 01278 65104 (Home) or 07810 433916 (Mobile).
- 3.12. Please return your quotation to Chantrey Conservation Architects Ltd by Friday 11 January 2025. The quotation can be received electronically (marcus@ccarch.co.uk).
- 3.13. The client reserves the right to not necessarily appoint the Contractor providing the lowest prices.

4 PHOTOS



Above: The Bell Chamber ceiling.

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Above: The Bell Chamber.

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Above: The Ringing Chamber ceiling and clock.