

A Ring of Bells for St Gabriel's

Summer 2026 Update

We have continued to make progress towards our vision of a ring of twelve bells installed in our magnificent tower and regularly rung from there, with appropriate and effective soundproofing in place. I am grateful to the other members of our small Bells Committee for their hard work, help and support as we continue to meet regularly and move forwards.

A very detailed faculty (Church of England planning permission) application was submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee in time for its 4 th June meeting and initial feedback from it was favourable. A six week consultation period followed when all interested bodies, organisations and associations had an opportunity to comment. No comments were received. A period of public consultation followed and as I write, we are optimistic that a faculty will be granted soon.

Eleven of our twelve bells have now been fully funded, and we have unconfirmed interest from a potential 12th donor. We were grateful to receive a donation from Ringtons, a very highly regarded business with a long and historic link to St Gabriel's. Ringtons have also generously offered to provide refreshments for our inaugural event although this is currently some way off! In order to raise the remaining 49% of the total budget, to cover all the structural work, scaffolding, soundproofing, bells refurbishment, casting and engraving, then transporting and installing them, we continue to welcome every donation large or small. We shall also be applying to foundations, trusts and organisations for additional funding.

One such organisation is the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Association of Bellringers which is soon celebrating its 150 th birthday. We are confident we shall meet the aims of the Association which are

- promoting the ringing of bells for Christian worship and on other appropriate occasions
- recruiting and training ringers
- encouraging the art of change ringing
- helping ringers to improve the standard of their ringing
- the care and restoration of bells and their fittings

We have launched a Major Donor scheme. Anyone able to donate £5,000 or more towards the undertaking will be named on an honours-type board in the Ringing Room and in an illustrated book we are creating about the whole project. We are most grateful to our first three Major Donors. However, we are also very appreciative of every single pound which edges us towards our goal, so please pick up an Appeals Leaflet from the display at the back of Church, look on the Church website, or talk to me anytime if you feel you might be able to contribute.

Anne Pickering

Lead - The Bells Committee, on behalf of the PCC (Parochial Church Council)