



St Mary Magdalene Church, Cottingham and Middleton

Church Clock Survey Report, August 2025

Methodology

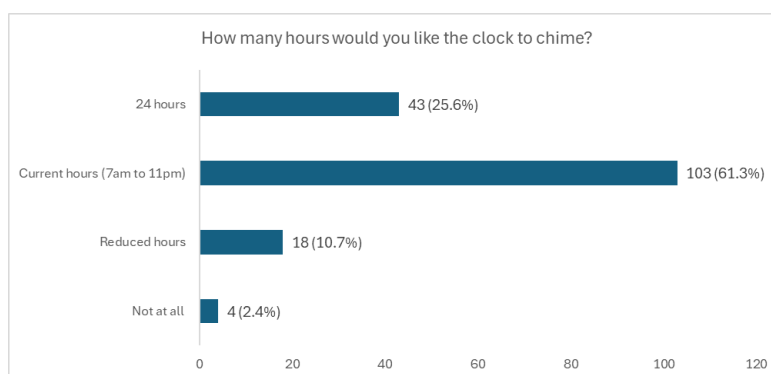
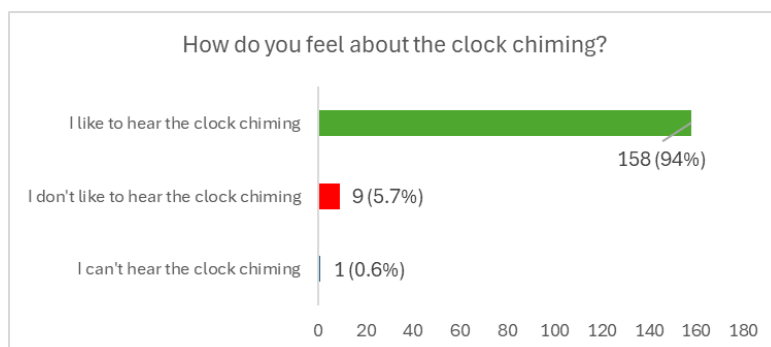
- The clock survey ran from 26 June to 20 July inclusive.
- Responses were gathered online through Smart Survey. There were also paper copies available in the Village Store and a downloadable version on the village website, with a response email address.
- The survey was promoted in the Summer village newsletter published on 27 June, through the village WhatsApp group and Facebook Page on 26 June and 1 July, and in the village email issued on 8 July. Letters were also hand delivered to residents of the streets nearest to the church (Water Lane, Church Street and Corby Road) before the end of June.

Responses

- We received 172 responses to the survey, of which 4 were invalid as they were submitted for vacant properties.
- Of the 168 validated responses, 159 were submitted online, 8 on paper and zero by email.
- Of the validated responses, 81% are from Cottingham and 19% from Middleton.

Results summary

- The vast majority (94%) of respondents like to hear the clock chiming.
- Only 9 people (4 households) have said they do not like the clock chiming, and 1 person could not hear it.
- The majority (61.3%) of respondents are happy with the current chiming hours and a further 25.6% would like the clock to chime all night, making a total of 86.9% who do not wish to see the hours reduced.
- 4 people from 3 households have said they would prefer the clock to not chime at all. However, all these households also contain respondents who have asked only that the hours be reduced. There are a further 12 households (18 people) that have requested reduced hours, making a total of 15 households containing 22 people (13.1% of respondents) wishing to see changes to the church clock chimes.



- Of the 15 households that have asked for the chiming hours to be reduced, or for the clock to not chime at all, 7 households have young children.
- Of the 18 people (15 households) asking for reduced hours:
 - 8 people have requested 8am to 8pm
 - 5 people have requested 8am to 9pm
 - 5 people have requested 8am to 10pm

- The number of households (15) requesting changes to the clock chiming is 2.5% of the approx. 600 households in the village.
- In closest vicinity to the church (Church Street, Water Lane and Corby Road), 13 out of 48 respondents (27%) want the chimes stopped or reduced. These 13 people represent 8 households, which is 21.6% of the 37 households in these streets that have responded to the survey, and 14.8% of the 54 houses in these streets overall.

Feedback summary

Of the comments provided, 111 were supportive of the clock chiming and 14 were unsupportive or neutral. A summary of the feedback is provided below.

Why do you like the clock chiming?

- One of the main reasons given by villagers for enjoying the clock chimes is the atmosphere it creates, adding character to the village, instilling a sense of community and bringing the church and village to life. "It adds to the charming atmosphere of the village I grew up in; It just feels 'right'; It makes the village complete."
- Many respondents mentioned that, along with the ringing of the church bells, they consider the clock chimes to be part of the soundscape of an English country village. "It's unique to village life, as town clocks get lost in the business of the day; It's what you hope to experience in a village; The noise of chickens, peacocks, clocks is part of the daily soundtrack of a village; Hearing the church bells and clock chiming is part of village life, which is why we chose to live in a village."
- Many villagers also value the return of the chimes as a traditional sound that is an integral part of the village's long heritage. "Hearing the clock chime (and the bells ring) is a little link to centuries of village history and is wonderful to hear."
- Nostalgia is also a common theme, with respondents saying the clock chiming reminds them of an era lost, harking back to a better, simpler time and bringing back childhood memories. "It evokes feelings of simpler times and a slower pace of life when we weren't all rushing around, controlled by social media."
- Villagers find the clock chimes calming, comforting, relaxing, reassuring, joyful and uplifting. "It makes me smile and feel content; I get so excited every time it chimes."
- The sound of the clock chimes themselves are described as delightful, beautiful and gentle, with mellow tones and a 'lovely softened chime'.
- The clock chimes are valued by residents old and new. Several longstanding villagers mentioned how much they've missed the clock chiming and that it is 'wonderful to have it back'. "I live right next to the church and I'm so pleased that the clock is back up and running. The chimes sound great and I have really missed it over the past few years as it has always been a part of village life." One resident who moved to Church Street last summer said they 'couldn't wait for the clock to start working'.
- The clock's practical purpose as a timekeeper is also valued, with villagers saying the chimes provide a sense of time moving gently on, a reminder of longer time passing, and that the chimes are 'grounding and helpful'. "I love that it keeps me time aware without my phone; It's nice to keep track of the time when relaxing using the chimes only; I find myself counting the chimes and it anchors me – it's a good thing; My children often count the chime during the day to work out what time it is; I especially like it when I am out doing the garden and don't have a watch or phone, as it helps me keep track of time."
- "If you live in the country, it's part of the melody the country has to offer. As a resident for 58 years on and off, it has never bothered me, always cheered me and it is helpful in knowing the time."
- "It's lovely living in a village with a church and a clock that chimes. We are very fortunate."

Miscellaneous comments

- Many residents wanted to thank the fundraising team that has worked so hard to raise the money to get the clock working again. “Well done to all concerned – the fundraisers and those behind the scenes that work incredibly hard to make things happen. It’s a credit to you all.”
- A number of respondents mentioned that the clock is a sound you get used to, and that it never stopped them sleeping ‘as a child’ or when the clock chimed previously. “We previously lived in a village overlooking a church. The clock chimed every quarter of an hour day and night. We moved in with young children and at first found the clock disturbing, but after a very short time we got used to it and it became part of our village life.”
- “Having worked hard as a village to fund the clock restoration, it is wonderful to have it back again especially as the PCC has thoughtfully silenced it during the night.”
- “I have lived in Church Street on and off since I was born. The Church clock chimed for the majority of that time. It is normal for it to do so. it’s always done it. Apart from whilst it was broken.”
- “I think that the clock should chime midnight on New Years Eve!”

Feedback from residents who do not like the clock chiming, or would like the times changed

- All but a tiny number of residents actually like the clock chiming, but some feel that starting at 7am and ending at 11pm is ‘a bit much’, especially for families with young children.
- Those who do not like the clock chiming say the chimes are too loud and ‘unnecessary’, that it ruins the peace of the village, that it is unacceptable/unfair to have ‘religious sounds marking the day, on the hour every hour’, and that ‘the church’s presence is being imposed audibly on their private lives.’
- A few respondents commented that the village has lived peacefully without bells for a number of years and that reintroducing them now negatively changes the environment, ‘effectively imposing a new noise where there was none’.
- A few respondents say they find the clock chimes disturbing, that the chimes are negatively affecting their mental health and wellbeing, and that the times should be reduced in order to be ‘socially balanced’, and out of ‘consideration and compassion for everyone in the community’.
- A few people living close to the church say the clock chimes wake them/their children and prevent proper rest and lie ins at the weekends. “The bells are not quiet for us; The sound is very direct.” One mentioned they work from home and that the chimes interrupted their online meetings.
- One respondent close to the church said that, although they would ideally like the chiming times reduced: “We do love that the bells chime and we appreciate living next to a church there is always a chance that there will be noise disturbance.”

Conclusions

- An overwhelming majority of respondents (94%) enjoy and value the clock chiming for the sense of community it instils, saying that it forms part of the soundscape of an English country village, evokes memories of simpler times and provides a link to the village’s traditions and heritage. Villagers find the sound of the clock chimes calming, comforting, relaxing, reassuring, joyful, uplifting and grounding.
- The majority of respondents – 86.9% overall and 73% of those living closest to the church – wish to see the clock continue to chime from 7am-11pm, or to be increased to 24 hours. 7am to 11pm is the most popular, so from a purely statistical point of view, the chiming times should stay as they are.
- However, a small number (13.1%) of respondents say they find the clock chimes disturbing, or feel that starting at 7am and ending at 11pm is excessive, especially for families with young children.
- While this is very much a minority view, in the interests of being a good neighbour and out of empathy for those living closest to the church, the Parochial Church Council may wish to discuss and consider an adjustment.