

Village: Church bells not a noisy nuisance: Peal practice

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A town hall in southern England has ruled that its 14th-century village church has just as much right to ring its bells as the villagers have to operate their noisy lawnmowers and hedge trimmers on Sundays.

Some residents in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, had griped for months that the racket from peal practice at St. Peter and St. Paul Anglican Church—sometimes lasting nearly three hours—was disturbing their weekend tranquillity, and they wanted it stopped.

But the local South Coastal District Council, noting that the same residents rarely complained about the din raised by their own grass-cutting and garden-trimming activities, said locals shouldn't be complaining about the church's bell ringers.

Therefore, the council said, "our environmental protection team has concluded that there is no reason on noise nuisance grounds to take any action."

The delighted vicar, Nigel Hartley, told journalists that "bells have been rung in our tower since it was first built in the 14th century" and that the bells would continue to chime "to proclaim the Christian gospel aloud to remind all those who hear of their heritage within this country."

They also serve, he said, "to remind those who choose not to come to worship that Christians are gathering" in their village. *-Religion News Service*