

# Swedish town that banned church bells has approved a mosque's call to prayer



File photo of a church bell not related to the story. Photo: Petr David Josek/AP

A Swedish church which made headlines when it claimed requests for a permit to ring bells were denied never actually made a formal application to do so, it has emerged.

The church in Växjö grabbed headlines with the claim because it came against the backdrop of debate over a mosque in the same area, which was granted a permit to hold Friday calls to prayer provided they do not exceed 110 decibels outdoors.

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Local newspaper Smålandsposten wrote that Catholic Sankt Mikael's church had twice been denied the right to ring church bells on the grounds that it would be disturbing to residents, citing parish priest Ingvar Fogelqvist.

But a number of other outlets subsequently reported that a written request for permission to ring the bells was never actually made. On Tuesday, Fogelqvist confirmed to The Local that was the case, and that the view in the church that permission had been denied stemmed from a discussion a previous priest had in 1993.

"There was verbal discouragement from one of the municipality's representatives in 1993. So the story hasn't changed in that regard: we got negative communication from the municipality to not continue with the application. So we let the whole thing go, and as a result there has been the view in the parish that the municipality gave a negative to bell-ringing," Fogelqvist said.

"It never went as far as a written rejection. We never applied, because we had received this message beforehand. It was a long time ago, but the priest who was here at the time clarified it."

The original story about a permit request being rejected in the same area where

one was granted for a mosque gained international headlines, with populist sites in particular outraged about perceived hypocrisy from municipal decision makers.

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Asked if he regrets how the saga has played out, Fogelqvist pointed out that he had not made a link between his original understanding of the situation and the granting of a permit to the mosque, but rather that media outlets were responsible for making that leap.

"We didn't go out with the story. Smålandsposten called after they had heard about it in some way. And we said to them that the municipality had given us a negative, from the knowledge we had. We weren't interested in making a big thing about it."

"We've even been in contact with Muslim groups here and explained we weren't interested in making this something negative about Muslims, we just answered a question from the information we had," he concluded.

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Source: <https://www.thelocal.se/20180522/swedish-town-that-approved-a-mosque-s-calls-to-prayer-did-not-reject-church-bells-permit>

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