

Lottery funding aids church tombs revamp

A £50,000 project is being planned to safeguard listed tombs and memorials at a village church near Bath.

The Heritage Lottery Fund will be injecting £16,500 into the project at St James's Church at West Littleton while a charitable trust, the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust, has offered a grant of up to £15,000.

The little church has a collection of 18th and 19th century wall memorials and tombs in urgent need of conservation.

The grants will help fund the highly specialised work which will see vital repairs to the four memorials and the nine intricate and stylish chest tombs.

The project will get under way in March next year and is expected to take five months to complete.

During that time visitors to the church will be able to see demonstrations of heritage skills such as masonry, archaeological recording and conservation.

Around 80 pupils from Marshfield Primary School have already made a visit to study the church.

Head Kay Pettifer said: "This is an interesting project for the children and we're looking forward to seeing it develop."

The Marshfield and District Local History Society is also supporting the project, along with the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust.

Donations have come from visitors to the church and supporters of village events such as the popular open gardens day held every June.

Local genealogist Ann Ballard has contributed her time to research the families commemorated on the memorials and tombs.



St James's Church, West Littleton

Project co-ordinator David Adams said: "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund and Ibstock Cory have helped to make this project possible. We believe it is vital to conserve our village heritage and make sure that future generations can enjoy the church and its surroundings for many years to come."

Nerys Watts, the lottery fund's head of region for the south west, said: "We are delighted to support the community of West Littleton with this project. It will not only ensure that important memorials to past generations are preserved for the future, but will also enable local people and visitors alike to learn more about the lives of those living in the village in previous times, and to record their findings for generations to come."

Ibstock Cory Trust secretary Angela Haymonds said: "This is a very interesting project that provides a rare opportunity for visitors to see these specialist skills in action."