Therese Coffey MP heads to Campsea Ashe to hear restored bells ring

13/12/2010

Therese Coffey MP visited the St John the Baptist church on Friday 10 December, to hear the historic bells ring for the first time since their restoration, heralding the festive season in Campsea Ashe.

The restoration project was made possible by an award of £44,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Alongside the restoration and retuning of the existing bells, three new bells have been cast to make a peal of six bells. A new ringing gallery and bell frame have been created, and new displays and training sessions will encourage more people to get involved in bell ringing.

Inga Grimsey, Chair of Heritage Lottery Fund committee for the East of England, said: "For nearly 500 years church bells have been rung at Campsea Ashe, but gradually time has taken its toll on the bells and the ringing gallery. Thanks to our support, the hard work of volunteers and generous donations from the local community this wonderful tradition can continue long into the future."

Therese Coffey MP, said: “It is fantastic the bells have now been restored and are ready to ring again, especially after the awful setback with the theft in September. I am pleased that the Heritage Lottery Fund has seen fit to give a large grant to this worthwhile project. I also congratulate the local residents for coming together and raising the money to restore the bells.”

For most of the 20th century the bells were largely silent, only being rung as a peal on rare occasions. Although the some work was undertaken in advance of millennium celebrations, several problems were recently identified, making a full restoration necessary to preserve the church bells and ringing gallery.

Alongside the award from HLF, other funding for the project was raised from individual donors and grants from a number of Trusts and other organisations. The local community have been most generous and supportive of the project and together villagers raised over £7000 to pay for one of the bells, which has now been dedicated to the people of Campsea Ashe.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

In the East of England we have awarded more than £290million to almost 3,000 projects.

Further information

Roland Smith, HLF Communications on 020 7591 6047 / 07713 48 64 20 / rolands@hlf.org.uk