Led by volunteers from the local community, the project focuses on the art of bell ringing, and the heritage of this delightful small church. Work will start in May and is expected to take approximately nine months to complete.

The project involves removing the three existing bells and taking them to Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London for conservation and tuning. The foundry will be casting two new bells. The sixth bell has been salvaged from an East London scrapyard. The bell tower windows will be restored, and an inscription hand-painted on them, acknowledging the amazing work of the volunteer bell team who have done similar bell restoration projects throughout Yorkshire over many years. Now nearing retirement, this project may be their last.

Bell ringing is suitable for all ages, and anyone who is reasonably fit can do it. And it's free! In this rural community, which no longer has a shop, pub or any amenities, this project will enable young people and adults to engage in a sociable activity that involves gentle physical and mental exercise, teamwork and fun! Bell ringing is a skill recognised by the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Local experienced ringers are attending *'How to be an Instructor'* workshops, while other villagers are receiving training on bell and tower maintenance.

All Saints Church was built by Lady Frankland on the family estate at Thirkleby in 1851, in memory of her husband, and designed by the 'rogue' Victorian architect Edward Buckton Lamb. The present bells were cast by Taylors Bell Foundry, Loughborough and cost Lady Frankland £121.18s.0d. She was a talented embroiderer and artist, also designing and hand-painting a stained glass window in the chapel.

All Saints Church will be giving presentations to the local community, schools, Girl Guides, and Beavers throughout the project, focusing on the heritage of bells and the Frankland family, while also providing hands-on opportunities on a Wombel simulator to try bell ringing as a new hobby. Parents are already commenting that they are delighted their youngsters are learning a traditional pastime and leaving their electronic games for a while! There will also be a display on stained glass windows by Sir Robert and Lady Frankland; a trip arranged to York Minster Glazing Studio, and a visit to the bell foundry to witness the casting of the new bells.

Commenting on the award, Jill Gillanders said: “We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident the project will make a significant difference to this rural community by providing an interesting and challenging social activity open to everyone.

Notes to editors

All Saints church is part of the Church of England. Thirkleby parish is in the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, Diocese of York.

Further information

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