Silkstone’s well-loved community church wins lottery support

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The project will be run by Barnsley based volunteers, namely Heritage Silkstone (HS) with the All Saints Church Silkstone Parochial Church Council (PCC), and will enable works to be carried out to the church’s magnificent interiors. These include the marble monument to Sir Thomas Wentworth and twenty 19th century leaded windows (some of which are stained glass with one containing shields dating from the 14th and 15th centuries).

A popular and much valued parish church with over 1,400 visitors a year, All Saints will also use the HLF grant to create a new education space to be called the Bramah Gallery. Once complete, it will enable the church to offer greatly improved facilities for volunteer involvement, education activities and interpretation of the building’s history for its visitors. The Bramah Gallery will serve as a true heritage hub not only for church members, schoolchildren and local residents but also for the wider community of Yorkshire and beyond.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “Barnsley is one of our priority areas for funding in the region, and this project illustrates just how rich the area’s heritage is. All Saints Church is very well used and we are delighted to be able to fund conservation works for its significant heritage assets, while opening up its history to the local community around it.”

Situated in Silkstone, a former rural mining community in Barnsley, All Saints Church dates back to the 12th century. Extensively rebuilt in 1495 and partially rebuilt in 1857, it reveals much about the village’s social and industrial past through its plaques, monuments and graves. In particular, a white marble sarcophagus monument to Sir Thomas Wentworth (commander of the forces of King Charles I in Ireland) on which lie the effigies of Wentworth (died 1675) and his wife Grace (died 1698) is considered to be a good example of a knight in armour. It is thought that the sculptor was either Jasper Latham (who was employed at one time as a Master Mason under Sir Christopher Wren and also worked on St Paul’s Cathedral) or Claudius Rene.

Other notable interior features include plaques commemorating local engineer Joseph Bramah (1748-1814; a new window commemorating the 170th anniversary of the Husker Pit Disaster, when 26 children drowned in the local Husker mine; and a memorial to notable glassmaker Abigail Scott (1600s).

On hearing of the HLF award, the Revd Simon Moor said the news was “Brilliant”, and he expressed thankfulness that: “1200 years of history in Silkstone from the Saxons onward, its high points and low points, will be recorded and remembered – encouraged and sustained by the Heritage Lottery Fund.”

Colin Bower, Secretary of Heritage Silkstone said: “We’re all thrilled that HLF will enable us to achieve what we could only have imagined in our wildest dreams. The enchanting Wentworth monument and the church windows of All Saints’ Silkstone will be safeguarded, with the Bramah Gallery bringing exciting opportunities to observe the church interior and the surrounding heritage from new perspectives, by providing much needed space for workers and visitors.”

Notes to editors

The HLF grant to the project Silkstone Reflects on the Church Heritage is for £176,400 (78% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, 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 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK, including £351million in Yorkshire & the Humber alone. To date, HLF has made 132 awards in Barnsley amounting to just over £20.2million.

Further information

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