

Volunteers will explore the history of St Mary's graveyard

Would you dare to go down to a churchyard on All Hallows Eve? You might be surprised that instead of goblins, ghosts and ghouls, you could find endangered wildlife, beautiful architecture and family history.

Thanks to National Lottery players, St Mary’s Church in Hampstead Norreys, Berkshire, has been awarded a grant of £57,800 to allow local volunteers to venture out into the churchyard and explore the fascinating social history of their local community. The project will conserve and restore the historically important tombs, undertake research into the history and genealogy of old village families, and create a wildlife garden to provide a wide range of habitats for small endangered birds and animals.

St Mary’s Church, is a Grade 1 listed building, which is located in the heart of the village and the churchyard dates from around 13th century. It contains a large number of unique 18th and 19th century tombs which map the journey of village life from one generation to another and give valuable insight into the past.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: “Churchyards are a fascinating blend of social history and natural heritage, yet are often overlooked and unloved. We are delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to fund this exciting project which will protect both the monuments and the wildlife in the area, and allow local people to explore the history and heritage on their doorstep.”

Sheila Craig, Project Manager, said: “We are absolutely thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and we are looking forward to the start of this exciting new project. Without their support these unusual and

unique tombs would, undoubtedly, collapse and if that happened a significant part of this beautiful village's long history and heritage would be lost forever."

The project is due to run until September 2016. For more information, contact Sheila Craig, Project Manager, 3R's Churchyard Project. tel: 01635 201 303 or email: sheilacraig@uk2.net.



St Mary's churchyard has a wealth of heritage

St. Mary's 3R's Churchyard Project wins Heritage Lottery Fund support