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Restoration work to start on memorials

Work will start next week on a £50,000 scheme to restore listed tombs and memorials at a tiny village parish church.

The state of the 18th and 19th-century memorials at West Littleton has been a concern for more than a decade, but it is only in the last year that parishioners have been able to secure grant funding for the work.

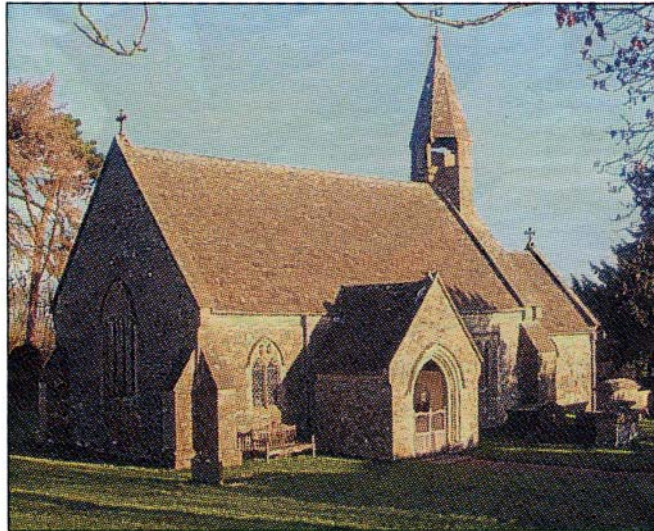
St James's Church has appointed specialist firm Nimbus Conservation to carry out the delicate restoration work, which is expected to take two to three months to complete.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded a grant of £16,500, while the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust – which uses landfill tax money – has come up with another £15,000. A number of other organisation and trusts have given their support, while donations have also come from visitors to the church and fundraising events throughout the year.

Work will start on Monday and, while it is taking place, visitors to the church will have the opportunity to see demonstrations of heritage skills such as masonry, archaeological recording and conservation techniques.

An historical trail around the village and church – parts of which date back to the 13th century – is also planned.

Project co-ordinator David Adams said: "We're really looking forward to seeing the



£50,000 SCHEME: St James's Church, West Littleton

work get under way. The support and interest in the project has been fantastic."

The church has set up a website – www.stjamesmonuments.org – to outline the background to the work and to record the restoration as it progresses.

It also contains details of research carried out on the families commemorated on the tombs and memorials.

Work is concentrated on nine chest tombs and four memorials.

HLF head of region for the South West, Nerys Watts, said: "We are delighted that the important work to restore the

West Littleton tombs and memorials is about to start and that it will allow so many people to learn more about the skills that enable us to preserve our wonderful heritage for future generations."

Angela Haymonds, secretary of the Ibstock trust, said it was the first time it had funded a restoration project: "Now the project is about to start, visitors will be able to watch the work in progress and learn from the specialised heritage skills needed to ensure its success.

"I am very much looking forward to seeing the restored tombs and memorials."