



THE LANGPORT LEVELLER

New Saints for All Saints by the editor

I am, I have to confess, a fully paid up member of what my brother in law (a fully paid up member of the Church of England) likes to call the Church of England Building Society. Church buildings it seems to me are an inescapably fundamental part of our historical heritage. They contain a wealth of artistic and philosophical comment on our lives and those of the generations before us. Some, such as All Saints in Langport are works of art that deserve wider attention, not least the stunning 15th century East Window. Sadly faced with falling congregations, without the funds to act as museum curators, the Church took the decision to close All Saints 16 years ago and it passed into the care of the Church Conservation Trust (CCT). So I for one am delighted to be able to report that with the support and expertise of the CCT, heritage and youth services, and community consultation, a group of young people will be in charge of a project to re-open the church with new uses to benefit the community.

The project is still in its early days but the group leading the project, called 'New Saints', consists of 7 local young people (aged 16-25) who meet regularly -- we are Jack Mayou, Joe Foster, Joe Walls, Alice Raywood, Grant Wallace, Tadgh Atkinson and Paige Blackwell. It is a real mixture of local business owners, employed people, unemployed people and students and leading the group is 22yr old Mark Small, a Project Assistant for the CCT. The intention is that through the life of the project opportunities will be available for more young people to join in and gain the benefits of working on a unique heritage project. On top of this, the whole community can make their voices heard on this topic and help decide on the future use of the building.

The project aims to make the building part of the infrastructure of Langport once more so that everyone can celebrate the unique and special heritage of the building. At present it is too early to say what the re-opened building will be used for, the answer to that will come from extensive community consultation which will be happening soon! Any project that seeks to reconnect the building with the community it has served over the centuries, must be welcome and the involvement of young people leading the project is particularly welcome.

Mark told us that "putting young people in charge, the project is causing a stir in the heritage world. We are talking to a number of national heritage bodies to discuss and learn how we plan to save a historic building".

This is a great initiative for Langport and an inspirational idea that could really set a blue print for other communities around the UK. If you'd like to find out more and get in touch with Mark you can contact him on msmall@tcct.org.uk



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