

## NEWS RELEASE – 09 JULY 2021

### STARTS

#### **Drystone walls in Gloucestershire village restored with help from The Hills Group and Landfill Communities Fund**

Residents and visitors to the Cotswold village of Down Ampney, are celebrating extensive repairs to damaged drystone walls near the historical All Saints Church following a Landfill Communities Fund grant from The Hills Group.

Existing drystone walls along the main walking route between the All Saints Church, the Memorial Garden, the former runway and Memorial Stone had over the years been vandalised, with large sections of old stone having been stolen resulting in significant sections of the wall falling down.

Repair was in sight when the funding, administered for Hills by Community First, was granted to cover the costs of the drystone wall restoration back to its original condition so that it can complement the Conservation Area it is located in. Work started in March and one wall along the south boundary of the churchyard has been completed so far.

Down Ampney, located near the Gloucestershire / Wiltshire border, has significant historical places of interest which attracts visitors from all over the world. These places include: The birthplace of the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, All Saints' Church, the location of an RAF airbase during the Second World War and an RAF Memorial Garden and Memorial Stone. Most of the visitors choose to walk the various routes around the area in order to appreciate the Cotswold village, its surrounds and places of historical interest. Many visitors come to pay their respects and remember those who served at the RAF Down Ampney airbase, to lay wreaths and flowers at the Memorial Garden and walk to the Memorial Stone.



Image 1 - Drystone wall in the foreground is now restored.

Reverend Canon John Swanton of All Saints Church, Down Ampney, has said: *“It felt like the walls of Jericho had fallen down around us! The ancient drystone walls surrounding the churchyard and along the public footpath were in a dreadful condition. It has been wonderful to have had the walls restored to their former glory by Chris Evans and Tony Fletcher, who have done a wonderful job with great craftsmanship and*



artistry. The Grade I church of All Saints sits in a quintessentially Cotswold setting and it is now set off beautifully by the drystone walls so characteristic of this area and which are a haven for local wildlife.”

John continued: “Down Ampney Primary School has put together a ‘Time Capsule’ containing various items about life during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was built into the wall, in the hope that the capsule will be found in many years to come.”

As well as being an important landscape feature, Britain’s flora and fauna owe much to traditional drystone walls as they provide varied and valuable habitats for a whole range of wild plants and creatures.

Peter Andrew, Group Director Hills Quarry Products, said: “We are proud to be supporting the local community to undertake this major restoration project, with the help of a Landfill Communities Fund grant from The Hills Group.”



Image 2 - before restoration



Image 3 - after restoration



Image 4 – Tony Fletcher (left) and Chris Evans (right) are restoring the drystone walls at All Saints Church, Down Ampney.

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

Established in 1900 The Hills Group Limited is a privately owned family company with a broad and successful portfolio of business activities which include recycling and waste management; quarrying of aggregates and production of ready-mixed concrete; and building new homes. It is a dynamic regional business which, while centred on Wiltshire, has stretched its boundaries into neighbouring areas. The Group has a turnover of £119 million\* and employs 641 people. (\*as at 30.04.20)

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