

Community Engagement on the Landmark Trust Project – Neha & Naayaa

[Neha] (0:29 - 0:45)

Hi guys, it's me Neha and today here with me I have Naayaa and today we're gonna be talking a bit about Calverley Old Hall and we're gonna talk about the history about it - mainly on the community because it's just very interesting, don't you agree?

[Naayaa] (0:45 - 0:48)

I agree, I'm excited to talk about community today.

[Neha] (0:48 - 1:22)

Yeah and I hope people, society learn a bit from it and what we're going to speak about. Yeah we're gonna talk about the Community Engagement on the Landmark Trust project on this podcast today. So what does community actually bring into our lives?

Many people don't see it, but community is actually a huge part of everyone's lives, especially within today's society. With us not realising it, community and surrounding ourselves around positive people actually help us mentally and physically. I'd say that's very, very good and it's a very interesting fact.

[Naayaa] (1:22 - 1:50)

So how would you say it helps us physically then? Well personally I would say it makes society think more positively and brings out leadership within one another. This definitely brings us all together as a whole and it encourages collaborations among team members getting them to kind of create new ideas with each other. And from what I know people have found themselves, like, developing more of those skills as they meet new people so I feel like it's significantly important because of this reason.

[Neha] (1:51 - 1:55)

Yeah, I agree because it just helps like mentally as well.

[Naayaa] (1:55 - 1:58)

It has like lots of aspects that it can help with, so.

[Neha] (1:58 - 2:19)

Yeah that's good. So how would you say it helps us physically? On the physical side of things, joining the community and doing different activities with people really helps society gain different skills such as painting, learning how to play the violin and other different instruments overall.

This relates to events that take place at the Landmark Trust.

[Naayaa] (2:20 - 2:36)

Right so the Landmark Trust is actually amazing.

[Neha] I agree.

[Naayaa]

It has many opportunities for people to engage with like other people in events and experiences.

Really good examples of that are Crafting Cultures which are one of the many events that are available for the public.

[Neha] (2:36 - 2:38)

And like all of this is online as well.

[Naayaa] (2:38 - 2:50)

Exactly it's all online, you can all see it. Like using traditional craft skills including building crafts, textiles and food to connect communities, cultures and heritage. Stuff like that.

[Neha] (2:50 - 2:50)

Yeah.

[Naayaa] (2:50 - 3:07)

There is also a Winter Scent and Abstract Art with Helen Brook, which sounds amazing. And many more incredible exciting events that also take part. But all of this wouldn't be possible if Calverley Old Hall didn't get saved by being destroyed.

Yeah.

[Neha] (3:08 - 3:15)

Yeah. I agree. Wait so you're saying there was a time the Landmark Trust was on the verge of being destroyed?

[Naayaa] (3:15 - 3:33)

Yes. I know it's like crazy to think about but Calverley Old Hall was on the verge of being taken down but then it was rescued by the community. This was because in 2022 the National Lottery Heritage Fund and many other generous supporters donated £1,750,000.

[Neha] (3:34 - 3:36)

That's a lot of money. That is a lot of money. I know.

[Naayaa] (3:36 - 3:53)

Exactly. In 2024 it was also announced that Calverley Old Hall had been removed from Historic England Heritage at Risk register. And this was all because of the help of the community.

On the Landmark Trust website we found a video called 'Reviving Calverley Old Hall'.

[Neha] (3:53 - 3:55)

So you look they even have a website?

[Naayaa] (3:55 - 4:03)

Yes exactly and you can find all of these things on there.

[Neha]

That's really good.

[Naayaa]

And you know in this video people talk about like the roles they had to revive the place.

[Neha] (4:04 - 4:04)

Yeah.

[Naayaa] (4:04 - 4:19)

And a lovely lady called Ellie Jay Dobson she had the role of a bricklayer in so basically she described in the video that she feels like doing buildings this old they kind of have a story.

[Neha] (4:19 - 4:20)

Yeah they do. Yeah exactly.

[Neha]

Like a history behind it.

[Naayaa] (4:20 - 4:35)

Yeah exactly. And she says, like, it's almost like they're alive and you've got to work around the building.

You've got to listen and understand the building and to do that you have to take the time.

[Neha] (4:35 - 4:37)

Yeah it must take a lot of time.

[Naayaa] (4:38 - 4:51)

Exactly. And she also stated that she worked on flagging floors, taking them, so this basically means like taking them up, remapping them, numbering them, labelling them and relaying them.

[Neha] (4:51 - 4:51)

Yeah.

[Naayaa] (4:52 - 5:00)

And because of all of that that she had to do she says it definitely taught her patience and that you have to do the job correctly to do it right.

[Neha] (5:00 - 5:03)

That's very good. Like you learn a lot of skills from just that.

[Naayaa] (5:03 - 5:04)

You do, you do.

[Neha] (5:04 - 5:23)

You really do. Speaking of generous this actually relates to one of the Landmark Trust's latest volunteers Martin. Martin's latest blog was written by him because he is a volunteer and in this blog he discusses his memories of Calverley Old Hall and his involvement with the project to revive this incredible building.

[Naayaa] (5:24 - 5:44)

So yeah I know that's really cool but I also feel like it's like very interesting to hear the point of view of like someone that's actually experienced these things and who knows like a lot about the topic and the place. So we were actually fortunate enough to receive some answers to some questions that we asked him. So we asked him.

[Neha] (5:45 - 6:12)

So first question we asked Martin was 'Where were you raised?' and he answered with, "I grew up on Woodhall Road in Calverley just up from the Old Hall so I was familiar with the place from an early age as a chorister at nearby St Wilfrid's Church in the 1960s. I would often walk past it on my way to and from services and choir practice and wonder about this place which looks so different to those around it." That's pretty beautiful Martin.

[Naayaa] (6:13 - 6:46)

And we also asked him, 'What makes Calverley Old Hall special and what made you drawn to the place?' and he answered with, "It's somewhere I always thought would end up being bulldozed as it was in terrible state in the 1970s. Like many villagers I felt this was such a shame and deserved to be rescued but by who? Thornhill Estates who owned the hall were selling it. The likelihood was it would be divided up or destroyed completely."

[Neha] (6:46 - 6:48)

You know what, I'm happy that it got saved.

[Naayaa] (6:48 - 6:51)

I know, like, all of this work just to save it was insane.

[Neha] (6:51 - 7:16)

Incredible actually, if you really think about it. Lots of people came together especially Martin and they saved a lot of history. Because, like, now, like, people who don't know anything about Calverley Old Hall they can just learn about it and it's just it's pretty amazing because people are willing to help, like, save history and that's pretty awesome if you ask me.

[Naayaa]

I know.

[Neha]

Don't you agree?

[Naayaa] (7:16 - 7:33)

This is this is why he like even answered these questions. Also in, you know, the answer that he said, he said, "Then came along Sir John Smith the head of Landmark Trust who decided this place was too precious to be allowed to be destroyed."

[Neha] (7:33 - 7:33)

I agree.

[Naayaa] (7:34 - 7:49)

"He bought and then gave it to the Trust so they could work their magic. As a result it's one of the few buildings managed by Landmark Trust which they also own outright. Without his foresight the hall would have almost certainly disappeared."

[Neha] (7:49 - 8:34)

I agree. I 100% agree.

[Naayaa]

It would have been gone.

[Neha]

You know what, it's good that it got saved because look where we are today.

[Naayaa]

I know.

[Neha]

We also asked Martin, 'What made you want to become a volunteer?' And he replied with, "I retired from West Yorkshire Police as a staff public enquiries officer on their help desk aged 65 in 2021."

He also said he was always the first point of contact for the public who walked into and out of the stations as a professional communicator. He said he wanted to use his abilities to continue to help the public understand how sometimes complicated places and situations actually work and he also ended it with, "I find a smile helps!" Which I 100% agree Martin.

[Naayaa] (8:34 - 8:36)

It really does. So spread more positivity guys.

[Neha] (8:37 - 8:50)

So, like as you can tell from these wonderful answers that Martin has given us, he is very passionate about this place and the positive mark it has left on him and you know what it's just a beautiful thing. It really is a beautiful thing.

[Naayaa] (8:50 - 9:01)

I feel like this Calverley Old Hall, it just has so many memories and, like, so many, so much positive yeah, like like, things that come with it.

[Neha] (9:01 - 9:33)

You know it's beautiful that Martin was around and we're very grateful that Martin's answered our questions because it just really like puts it into perspective and just how it was. It creates an idea and an image which is just such a beautiful thing and someone like Martin who was there at a young age and he was able to see it all and involve himself in it is just a beautiful thing because people today they can just learn about the history and they can listen to this podcast and learn stuff and it's just a very amazing thing, don't you think Naayaa?

[Naayaa] (9:33 - 10:28)

I think it's amazing, and one of the most beautiful elements also to mention about people being passionate about something is what it can do when everyone comes together as a community to spark those ideas and this actually relates to the Community garden. Right, so if those of you that didn't know the Community Garden is at Calverley Old Hall and is designed as a space for enjoyment for neighbours and local community. It's welcome for

people to explore, spend their time, relax and socialise in the garden - using it and caring for it as their own.

In my opinion the Community Garden has many wonderful features, but what I think stands out the most is the creativity. I mean they could have like just decided to do it like make a simple garden but no instead they created it special and very fitting to the place.

[Neha] (10:28 - 10:50)

You know what I couldn't agree more Naayaa. For example, like how in the garden you'll find herbs and plants which have been grown in gardens in Britain for centuries all are inspired by traditional gardens of the medieval era. Labels are also around the flowerbeds so they will tell you more about the plants and their traditional uses as well.

That's just a beautiful thing.

[Naayaa] (10:51 - 11:02)

Exactly. So if you're even, like, interested and you find something and it, like, sparks your attention or your interest then you can look at the uses and stuff like that and you can gain more knowledge on that.

[Neha] (11:02 - 11:07)

You know we can also talk about the two oak benches that they have and you can sit down and relax.

[Naayaa] (11:08 - 11:44)

You know Neha, you actually just mentioned a workshop and it just made me want to discuss what a big part they play in the Landmark Trust. The overarching theme at Calverley Old Hall is Crafting Cultures. Okay, so this means traditional craft skills including building crafts, textiles and food to connect communities and cultures and heritage. And for our listeners you can actually follow all of their engagement projects across Landmark Trust including Calverley Old Hall on social media like Facebook and Instagram, so stay tuned.

[Neha] (11:44 - 11:46)

Yeah you should check it out.

[Naayaa] (11:47 - 11:57)

And they've also got some exciting events coming up that are brilliant opportunities to develop new skills. Events such as Winter Scent and Abstract Art with Helen Brooke.

[Neha] (11:57 - 11:58)

Helen Brooke folks.

[Naayaa] (11:59 - 12:08)

Folk Music Group sessions with Tom Hawkins. Wax Ring Carving with Lydia Poole and many, many more.

[Neha] (12:08 - 12:10)

Wax ring carving? I've never heard of that.

[Naayaa] (12:10 - 12:31)

It's so, like, it's s,o I feel like they have such a big range of, like, stuff that you can do, like, if you're interested. It's not for one particular type of, like, interest you know? I mean, like, if someone's interested in music then they can go to, like, different music events or someone's more into arts and, like, arts and crafts and they can go to that, like, it's open.

[Neha] (12:31 - 13:01)

There's like a lot of varieties which is really good for people who like doing specific things yeah.

Anyways guys I think that's all for today that you're going to hear from me and Naayaa. If you want more information you can check the website because there's a lot more history and a lot more information about Calverley Old Hall and, you know what, it's just a beautiful thing overall, like, we've given, like, a little perspective hopefully created an image in your lot's head and yeah.

[Naayaa] (13:02 - 13:38)

Yeah I also think you should stay tuned to what's coming because they have so many opportunities in 2026 so guys book your things and, like, make sure you go to those.

[Neha]

I think they're gonna be pretty fun.

[Naayaa]

And just like enjoy the place because I feel like, you know, especially community, like, it brings so much to people. And, like, as Martin said, like, even, like, a smile helps, you know. I mean, like, it's just making someone's day and, like, really showing up for these events, can, you never know what it can bring, so definitely be tuned for those.

[Neha] (13:38 - 13:45)

You're learning, like, lots of new knowledge as well, like, why wouldn't you not want to know, like, learn any new knowledge, like.

[Naayaa] (13:45 - 13:51)

So we thank you for listening to this podcast.

[Neha]

Thank you.

[Naayaa]

And we'll see you later.

[Both]

Goodbye!