



**FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK CEMETERY**  
**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2013**

**1915hrs TO 2100hrs**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Richard Bell, FoHPC Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting, including special mentions for guest speaker Pat McLaughlin; DMBC Bereavement Services Manager, Amanda Carr; and Deputy Mayor of Doncaster, Glyn Jones. Richard then summarised the agenda for the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None had been received.

**3. ILLUSTRATED TALK**

*“Green Men, Gargoyles and Other Grotesques”* by Pat McLaughlin, a 45-minute presentation looking into the history and variety of various features that adorn local churches and other buildings, which often go unnoticed.

Richard thanked Pat for the fascinating talk, which was very well-received by everyone.

**4. MINUTES OF AGM HELD 29 OCTOBER 2012**

Hard copies were made available at the start of the meeting and had been available on the FoHPC website for most of the past 12 months. Questions and comments were invited but none were raised.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Richard Bell presented his report on FoHPC activities since the 2012 AGM. A copy is included after these minutes.

**6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Reverend Alan Murray, the outgoing Treasurer, presented his report on FoHPC financial matters since the 2012 AGM. A copy is included at the end of these minutes.



Alan also reported that FoHPC had submitted a request for £1900 grant from the Central Community First Panel, for a project in the cemetery. The request is now being considered by the Government.

#### 7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The following nominations had been received for the 2013 committee.

- Chair – Richard Bell
- Vice Chair – Margaret Herbert
- Secretary – Robert Wise
- Treasurer – Margaret Bark
- Others - Bill Brinkley, Andria Johns, Shelia North, Helen Slade

There are two vacancies for committee members.

ALL WERE ELECTED BY SHOW OF HANDS

Reverend Alan Murray and Val Moate both leave the committee.

#### 8. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR.

Richard asked that the meeting approve the appointment of Margaret Shaw to continue as FoHPC's auditor for the 2013/14 accounts or, if she is unavailable, for the committee to appoint a replacement.

APPROVED BY SHOW OF HANDS

#### 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

##### Duke of Edinburgh Award

Note that Working Mornings can be used by young people to accumulate points for the volunteer section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

##### Active Members

FoHPC has 193 members, but very few are active in attending activities and events. In 2014, a publicity campaign is proposed to increase the number of active members.



## Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery

### Chairman's Report for 2012/13 and up to the current date

Since the Friends' 2012 AGM, I am pleased to report that more progress has been made on several fronts, resulting in a higher profile for the organisation and ongoing improvements at the cemetery.

At the AGM held on 29 October 2012, the following Officers and Committee Members were elected:

• Chair – Richard Bell	• Committee – Phil Ayres
• Vice-Chair – Margaret Herbert	• Committee – Andria Johns
• Treasurer – Rev. Alan Murray	• Committee – Sheila North
• Joint Secretary – Margaret Bark	• Committee – Val Moate
• Joint Secretary – Robert Wise	• Committee – Occupied by Jt Sec'y
	• Committee – Vacancy

In March 2013 Phil Ayres resigned from the committee, leaving two vacancies that continued up to the present date.

Reverend Alan Murray served as Treasurer throughout 2012/13 but, in June of this year, he advised the committee of his intention to stand down at the next AGM (i.e. today), due to leaving the parish of St James, Doncaster, to become Vicar of All Saints at Normanton, in West Yorkshire. I should like to place on record the organisation's gratitude to Alan for all his hard work and success in furthering the aims of the Friends since the group was formed over 10 years ago.

I am pleased to report that Margaret Bark has offered to stand for election as Treasurer to replace Alan, moving from her current position of Joint Secretary. Robert Wise has, consequently, offered to stand for election as Secretary (rather than his current position as the other Joint Secretary).

Practical improvements made at the cemetery since the 2012 AGM include the following:

- Monthly Working Mornings have continued, with litter picking and tree and shrub trimming being key activities. 68 shifts have been worked during these monthly sessions since the 2012 AGM. This is an average of 5.2 people per occasion, slightly down on the 6.1 average of the previous year. Attendance at the Working Mornings is a very tangible way of helping to improve the cemetery, so it is disappointing to note this slight reduction in attendance. I would encourage everyone to try to take part in some of these very rewarding sessions;
- Three notice cases have been installed, one near to each gate, thanks to funding from Wilkinson Stores. These notice cases allow us to advertise our services and activities to the many people who walk through the cemetery. Unfortunately, the case near the main gate was vandalised in late-October, when the Perspex panel was smashed. The committee considered that it was essential that we had the



case repaired, to maintain the public's confidence that the cemetery is being cared for. We are grateful to Adrian Welch Glass & Glazing Ltd for carrying out the work very quickly and at minimum cost;

- Two more benches have been installed, kindly donated by the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church. They bring the number of benches provided by the Friends to five. A total of eight benches are now in place across the cemetery;
- Approximately 10 more bird nesting boxes have been installed. The boxes were made by the 65<sup>th</sup> Balby St John Cub Scouts;
- Six Buddleia shrubs have been planted in the wildlife area, to encourage butterflies;
- The memorial meadow, marking the area of Public Graves in Sections H & I, has now had its second full summer of growth. We plan to erect permanent information signs over the coming months to explain the purpose of the meadow;

The above activities are in addition to the ongoing maintenance work carried out by the Doncaster Council Grounds Maintenance team. We are very grateful for their continuing hard work.

The Friends have continued to produce information and raise the profile of Hyde Park Cemetery through a range of activities:

- Three illustrated talks have been given to local groups, publicising our activities and boosting our funds;
- Eight guided heritage walks have been hosted in 2013, the most of any year so far. They included two new subjects "*Railways & Railwaymen*" and "*War Graves of Airmen*". As well as summer Sundays, four of the walks were arranged to coincide with February's Doncaster Heritage Festival, the St Leger Festival, Heritage Open Days 2013 and Armistice Day, respectively;
- In July 2013 a trial Bat Walk was arranged, with the help of the South Yorkshire Bat Group. The trial succeeded in establishing the presence of a significant bat colony. As a result, we intend to add at least one Bat Walk to our 2014 programme of events;
- Following the success of our 2012 Halloween Walk, using local actors to play notable characters who are buried in the cemetery, we held a similar event this year. About 150 people attended and the feedback was generally very good. This event is establishing itself as a key part of our annual programme;
- The Friend's website achieved its 10,000<sup>th</sup> visitor in September 2013. It remains a vital tool in reaching an audience beyond the Doncaster area. Earlier this year, the committee took the decision to move its website from being hosted as a subsidiary of the St James' Church website to being totally independent. This not only removes any uncertainty over the future of the St James website, but it also means that our site can now be found by typing our domain name ([www.fohpc.org.uk](http://www.fohpc.org.uk)) into the address bar on any web browser;
- Quarterly newsletters continue to be sent out to all members and other interested parties. We are grateful to Weldricks Pharmacy, with whom we agreed a sponsorship deal for the newsletters for 2013/14. This deal enables us to keep sending hard-copy newsletters by Royal Mail to those people without email



facilities. However, we would appeal to anyone who currently receives a hard copy but has email access to, please, let us have your email address. This reduces our running costs and enables us to send you regular updates in between editions of the newsletter;

- The Friends exhibited at the Doncaster & District Heritage Association Local History Fair in February 2013. However, holidays and other commitments meant that no-one was available to mount a display at the Family History Society Fair in September. We would welcome additional volunteers to avoid missing such events in future;
- We continue to use Twitter to provide brief but regular updates on our activities. We now have 57 followers, but our tweets are regularly retweeted to almost 20,000 people;
- Also on the theme of social media, a Facebook page was created in February 2013, as an additional tool to attract more support, especially from young people. We are now receiving interest via Facebook that may not have occurred without it;
- Regular notices about the Friends' activities have appeared in the local press, and on local radio;
- Recently, two of our members have designed an A5-size flyer to promote Hyde Park Cemetery and the Friends. A draft version has been distributed to obtain feedback on the design and, when finalised, a large number of copies will be printed and given wide distribution.

Other significant matters to be noted are as follows:

- The Friends' Grave Finder Service, providing information about burials and graves in return for a fee, is proving to be highly valued by its users. We answered 11 enquiries during 2012/13 and, so far in 2013/14, the number is already 14, bringing extra income for the group. This year's enquiries have come from as far afield as Devon, Essex, Leicestershire, Surrey and Australia;
- One *ad hoc* enquiry concerned the unmarked grave of a Denis Kenny, from County Mayo, Ireland. Eventually, that enquiry resulted in Denis's family having a kerb-set and headstone placed on the grave. Members of the Kenny family (who are close relatives of the Irish Prime Minister) visited the grave in March 2013;
- We have benefited from grants from a number of bodies to enable us to continue our work. We also collect donations wherever feasible, as well as charging fees for the Grave Finder Service and for giving talks. Fundraising is likely to become more challenging and something that we may need to devote much more time to in future;
- We have continued to pursue one of our key objectives, to carry out significant restoration of monuments. We have held a site meeting with representatives of the Probation Service who manage the Community Payback programme and agreed in principle to carry out a trial project using their resources. The next step is to obtain funding for this trial, which we hope will lead on to a much larger scheme;
- A visit to Scarborough took place in July 2013, when several members made a self-funded trip to meet the Friends of Dean Road and Manor Road Cemetery. It



was very interesting and useful to share our knowledge and experience with each other;

- In spite of the overwhelmingly positive news about our activities, occasional setbacks occur. Over the past year there have been four known instances of fly-tipping in the cemetery. We have helped in the clearing up and liaised closely with Doncaster Council's Enforcement Officer to prevent future cases;
- Our efforts to help maintain the existing tree stock at the cemetery have suffered a setback due to the very poor condition of the five Black Poplar trees near the New Street boundary. These trees are planned for removal by Doncaster Council on safety grounds and due to the damage they are causing to the boundary wall. After taking independent expert advice, the Friends decided not to challenge the removal of the trees but, instead to press for replacement trees to be planted somewhere in the cemetery. Negotiations are ongoing on this matter;
- On a more positive note, the Friends worked with members of the 65<sup>th</sup> Balby St John Cub Scouts in May 2013, to carry out a tree survey, as part of a national initiative. The majority of the trees surveyed were found to be in good condition;
- The Friends' proposal to transfer to charitable status has not been implemented. After researching the pros and cons, the committee decided to defer this action for the time being as the expected benefits were unlikely to justify the additional work involved;

Looking ahead, as well as continuing all our regular activities, the major project for 2014 must be the commencement of a memorial restoration programme. If re-elected, I shall look forward to providing information on the progress of this key activity next year.

As ever, establishing and maintaining good working relationships with key organisations and individuals continues to be of vital importance to the Friends and we are grateful for the continuing support and encouragement given by, amongst others:

- Amanda Carr and her team at Doncaster Council Bereavement Services;
- Central Area Safer Neighbourhood Team;
- Adrian Welch Glass & Glazing;
- Councillor Glyn Jones, Deputy Mayor of Doncaster;
- The Doncaster & District Heritage Association;
- The National Federation of Cemetery Friends;
- 65<sup>th</sup> Balby St John Cub Scouts;
- Helen Slade, John Cowie and Robert Wise, for researching our Guided Walks;
- And the many volunteers who have contributed to activities throughout the year.

On a personal level, I should like to thank the committee for their support throughout the past year. If I am re-elected, I shall look forward to leading the Friends for another year and making even more improvements at Hyde Park Cemetery.

*Richard Bell*  
18 November 2013



**FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK CEMETERY**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2013**

	2013		2012	
	£	£	£	£
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>				
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Balance brought forward		244		181
Donations	400		380	
Events	285		105	
Walks	90		49	
Grave Finder	87			
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	862		534	
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>				
Web hosting			58	
Equipment			87	
Meeting Expenses	33		42	
Signage			71	
Office Costs			64	
Memberships	30		30	
Insurance	166		119	
Course Fees	35			
Halloween Event	80			
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	344		471	
<b>Income over Expenditure</b>		518		63
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<b>Total Unrestricted Income</b>		<b>762</b>		<b>244</b>
		=====		=====