

FRIENDS of HYDE PARK CEMETERY (FoHPC)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at St. James' Hall on 29 October 2012 at 7.30pm

<u>Item</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Chairman Richard Bell (RB) chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees, including our guest speakers.</p> <p>Fifteen members and one guest attended.</p>
2	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Amanda Carr DMBC, Bill Brinkley, Mrs. J. Hutchinson, Andria Johns, Pat Johns and Helen Slade.</p>
3	<p>Guest Speakers</p> <p>Beverley Forrest, Associate Principal Lecturer, Leeds Trinity University College, and Dave Weldrake, Archaeologist and Heritage Educator, were our guest speakers this evening.</p> <p>Their talk and presentation "Stories in Stone" told about a case study of Horsforth Cemetery, and about the learning potential of burial grounds. About bringing history into the locality, working with schools and linking with the community to foster a culture of respect among young people.</p> <p>Many ideas for activities were suggested which children could undertake within the cemetery.</p> <p>The presentation, lasting around 45 minutes, was most enlightening and gave us much to think about.</p> <p>RB thanked Bev and Dave for their most interesting talk and said we had been given many ideas to go forward.</p> <p>Looking back over 2011/12</p>
4	<p>Minutes of the AGM held on 6 June 2011</p> <p>The minutes of the above AGM were available on the FoHPC website, and as members had been given the opportunity to read them when they were notified of the meeting, the minutes were not read out.</p> <p>As no-one raised any questions, the minutes were accepted by the meeting.</p>

Looking back over 2011/12 (continued)

5

Chairman's Report for 2011/12

RB presented his report – for a full copy please see attached.

From the officers and committee members elected at the AGM on 6.6.2011. Phillip Ayres had resigned from the Secretary's position, but continued to serve on the committee until March 2012, when other commitments had prevented him from attending any meetings. Both Wendy Sissons and Josie Whitehead, due to other commitments, had withdrawn from active participation and neither lady was seeking re-election to the committee for 2012/2013.

In September 2012 Margaret Herbert (MH), long-time FoHPC member, joined the committee as a co-opted member, in accordance with the constitution.

During the first half of 2012 the proportion of time that RB could devote to the association was reduced because of the promotion and management of a major local heritage project during that period. In accordance with the duties set out in the constitution, RB had hoped the Vice Chair would stand in and take on a greater role in order to maintain the association's momentum. Unfortunately, that proved not to be the case and progress with the Friends' aims suffered as a consequence. With the best interests of the association in mind, with regret RB took the unusual step of requesting Val Moate (VM) to stand down from the Vice Chair position. This would have opened it up for someone else to take over. VM declined to stand down. More recently MH was invited to stand for election as Vice Chair at this AGM, and this she accepted willingly. Therefore, there will be a secret ballot of members during this AGM to elect the Vice Chair to serve the association in 2012/2013.

Practical improvements included more bird boxes and log piles, a winter insect house in the wildlife area, dog waste bins have been provided by Doncaster Council, and monthly working mornings have continued with litter picking and clearing sucker growth and self-set saplings from the tree bases, being the key activities. Since the 2011 AGM 104 shifts have been worked during the monthly sessions.

The memorial meadow had now been cut a month ago and the next cut will be late summer next year.

Our website provides a vital tool in publicising our work, but the reduced number of updates that were able to be made in the first half of 2012 led to a reduction in that period. The trend is once again upwards, with the second highest number of visitors being recorded this month, no doubt helped by the 2-page article about the Friends in the Yorkshire Post Magazine on Saturday, 13 October, 2012.

Looking back over 2011/2012 (continued)

5 **Chairman's Report for 2011/2012** (continued)

The pew on display here tonight, kindly transported by DMBC, is from one of the chapels, last used for services in 1983.

6 **Treasurer's Report for 2011/2012**

General Fund – Opening balance £181.00

Income:

Donations	£380.00
Fairs/Tombola	105.00
Walks	<u>49.00</u>
	£534.00

Expenditure:

Web hosting	58.00
Equipment	87.00
Meeting Expenses	42.00
Signage	71.00
Office Costs	64.00
Memberships	30.00
Insurance	<u>119.00</u>
	£471.00

Income over Expenditure 63.00

£244.00

Restricted Funds

Living Streets

Grants – 2011 £2956.00

Expenditure – Gates (£2,956.00)

Looking forward to 2012/2013

7 **Election of Executive Committee for 2012/2013**

The following Executive Committee nominations were received for 2012/2013 and were duly elected by shows of hands.

Chair	-	Richard Bell
Vice Chair	-	(See election details below)
Joint Secretary	-	Margaret Bark
Joint Secretary	-	Robert Wise
Treasurer	-	Rev. Alan Murray
Committee	-	Phil Ayres
		Andria Johns
		Sheila North

Looking forward to 2012/2013 (continued)

7 **Election of Executive Committee for 2012/2013** (continued)

Election Statements by Vice Chair candidates Margaret Herbert and Val Moate had been given to each attendee prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Both candidates were each given one minute to speak.

The secret ballot then took place.

Councillor Glyn Jones acted as Returning Officer.

The voting slips were collected, counted and the result subsequently announced, Councillor Jones expressing congratulations to Margaret (who is duly elected) and commiserations to Val.

The meeting voted by show of hands for VM to remain on the Executive Committee.

RB gave thanks to Val for her time as Vice-Chair.

8 **Appointment of Auditor for 2012/2013**

The meeting voted for Margaret Shaw to remain as Auditor for next year.

9 **Family Halloween Walk**

RB gave information about the above walk on Wednesday, 31 October 2012, commencing at 6.30pm. Real life characters from Doncaster's past will be taking part. Posters for the walk had been distributed to many locations around Doncaster.

10 **Any Other Business**

John Cowie asked about a project to discover the War Memorials.

RB said there were 108 war graves in HPC.

SN is hoping to obtain information about the war graves from Wendy Sissons with a view to carrying out a walk on Remembrance Day.

No further questions.

RB reminded committee members that the next meeting is on Monday, 12 November 2012.

11 RB thanked everyone for attending.
The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery

Chairman's Report for 2011/12

Since the Friends' 2011 AGM further progress has been made in many areas although, perhaps, less than might have been hoped for, due to reasons set out later in this report.

At the AGM held on 6 June 2011, the following Officers and Committee Members were elected:

• Chair – Richard Bell	• Committee – Margaret Bark
• Vice-Chair – Val Moate	• Committee – Sheila North
• Treasurer – Rev. Alan Murray	• Committee – Wendy Sissons
• Secretary – Phillip Ayres	• Committee – Josie Whitehead
	• Committee – Vacancy
	• Committee – Vacancy

In the intervening period up to today's meeting Phillip Ayres has resigned from the Secretary's position. However, he agreed to continue to serve on the committee. Also, due to other commitments, both Wendy Sissons and Josie Whitehead have withdrawn from active participation. Neither Wendy nor Josie is seeking re-election to the committee for 2012/13.

In September 2012 Margaret Herbert, long-time FoHPC member, joined the committee as a co-opted member, in accordance with the constitution.

The Secretary's position has remained vacant in spite of several appeals for assistance with this role, thus placing additional burden on the remaining Officers and committee members. However, Margaret Bark and Robert Wise have agreed to stand for election jointly, sharing the role of Secretary for 2012/13.

During the first half of 2012 the proportion of my own time that I could devote to the association was reduced because of my promoting and managing a major local heritage project during that period. I had hoped that, in accordance with the duties set out in the constitution, the Vice Chair would stand in for me and take on a greater role, in order to maintain the association's momentum. Unfortunately, that proved not be the case and progress with the Friends' aims suffered as a consequence. As a result of this and my increasing concerns over the very limited practical support generally from the Vice Chair, and with the best interests of the association in mind, with regret I have taken the unusual step of asking Val Moate to consider standing down from the Vice Chair position. Val has declined to stand down. Consequently, I have invited Margaret Herbert to stand for election as Vice Chair at this AGM and this invitation she has willingly accepted. Therefore, there will be a secret ballot of members during this AGM to elect the Vice Chair to serve the association in 2012/13.

Practical improvements made at the cemetery during 2011/12 include the following:

- More bird boxes and log piles provided to encourage wildlife, generally;
- A winter insect house provided in the wildlife area;

- Monthly Working Mornings have continued, with litter picking and clearing sucker growth and self-set saplings from tree bases being key activities. (104 shifts have been worked during these monthly sessions since the 2011 AGM);
- Dog waste bins have been provided by Doncaster Council, one next to each gate;
- Litter bins have been re-located to more convenient places, leading to greater use and less littering;
- The memorial meadow, marking the area of Public Graves in Sections H & I, has been allowed to grow for the first full year and a survey of species has been undertaken by Doncaster Naturalists' Society.

The foregoing is in addition to the ongoing maintenance work carried out by the Doncaster Council Grounds Maintenance team, for whose efforts we are grateful.

The Friends have continued to produce information and generate publicity for Hyde Park Cemetery through a range of activities:

- Three illustrated talks presented to local groups have helped both to publicise our activities and to swell our funds;
- Six guided walks were hosted in 2011, including one for a private group based in Hexthorpe and also our inaugural Halloween Walk;
- A further five guided walks have been hosted so far in 2012, including one in snowy conditions in February, to coincide with the Doncaster Heritage Festival. Three of this year's walks have been new ones, namely '*Mansion House to Music Hall*', '*Doncaster Mayors*' and '*Doncaster's Industrial Heritage*'. The 2012 Halloween Walk is due to take place on 31 October;
- Our website continues to be a vital tool in publicising our work. The site typically receives about 8 to 10 unique visitors per day. Visitor numbers continued to climb throughout 2011, with the second half of the year seeing a 23% increase compared to the first half. However, the reduced number of updates which I was able to make to the website in the first half of 2012 led to a 13% reduction in that period, but I'm pleased to report that the trend is, once again, upwards;
- A large banner advertising the FoHPC website address has been fixed to the cemetery railings alongside Carr House Road;
- Quarterly newsletters were sent out to all members and other interested parties throughout 2011. The production of newsletters was another casualty during the first half of 2012, but an Autumn edition was issued recently;
- FoHPC attended both the 2011 and 2012 Family History Fairs organised by Doncaster & District Family History Society;
- A Twitter account was launched in July 2012, allowing us to provide brief but regular updates. This was our first step into the world of 'social media'.
- Radio interviews have been broadcast on both Sine FM and BBC Radio Sheffield;
- Regular notices about the Friends' activities have appeared in the local press, and;
- The Yorkshire Post Magazine carried a 2-page article about the Friends on Saturday 13 October this year.

Other significant matters which are worth recording are as follows:

- In October 2011 we formally launched a Grave Finder Service, offering to provide information about burials and graves in return for a fee. Enquiries have been arriving at a rate of about one per month, generating useful income for the group;
- One enquiry that proved highly significant was that regarding Harriet Vernon, Music Hall megastar of the late 19th century. She had been unknown to us until that time, her grave being unmarked, but over the past year she has attracted a great deal of attention;
- Ongoing fundraising activities, not only through various funding bodies, but also via the less formal routes of collecting donations and charging fees for giving talks;

- In July 2011 we were given a ‘Fitter for Walking’ award by the charity ‘Living Streets’, for the work we have done in making “...the cemetery a more welcoming and attractive place to walk through and spend time in.”
- In July 2012 Doncaster Council arranged for us to gain access into the former Chapels. This enabled us to check out their general condition and will help us in reaching decisions about how we may wish to use them in future.

Two objectives which remain on the FoHPC agenda from last year are, firstly, a Heritage Lottery Funded project to restore many of the monuments and, secondly, the potential transfer to charitable status. Progress with these, too, was affected by the issues described earlier, but they will be core parts of next year’s activities. We are also seeking to fund and install notice cases near to each gateway.

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;
- The Doncaster & District Heritage Association and the National Federation of Cemetery Friends, through which we access a network of like-minded people;
- Geoff Bennett (for printing our newsletters)
- 65th Balby St John Cub Scouts, with whom we have established links and whose members have carried out work in the cemetery;
- The many volunteers who have contributed to activities throughout the year.

In summary, I’m pleased to report that the past year has seen further progress being made in improving the cemetery and meeting our other objectives. We have not, however, seen the sort of eye-catching projects that marked the previous year. Nevertheless, I am committed to implementing such projects over the next year and beyond if re-elected as Chair of FoHPC.

Finally, thanks go to everyone who has contributed towards our achievements in the past year and we look forward to a successful year ahead for the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery.

Richard Bell

29 October 2012