



Friends of
West Norwood
CEMETERY

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at
16:00 on Saturday 18 October 2014 at
Chatsworth Family Centre, Idmiston Road
London SE27

1. Present: 25 members, including committee members: Bob Flanagan, Colin Fenn, Jill Dudman, Anna Long and Rose Fenn.

Apologies: James Slattery-Kavanagh, Ellen Barbet.

2. Minutes of 2013 AGM: These were accepted.

3. Hon. Treasurer's Report: Anna Long reviewed the accounts which were circulated; there was a surplus of just over £4,000 which included a donation from the Greenbottle Trust.

As in previous years, subscriptions and tour income continued to cover running costs with donations also going towards restorations. There were a lot of five-year subscriptions in 2014.

Nicholas Long expressed concern about FOWNC's involvement in the *Curious Art Trails*. Colin Fenn explained that *Curious* was promoted and stewarded by FOWNC, with a curator (Jane Millar) and a number of artists and performers for which significant funding had been bid for and secured from the Mayor's Outer London Fund (OLF). The OLF required the event to be delivered through a recognised and established organisation and the FOWNC Committee had agreed that this route was appropriate for the two years of the trail.

Robert Flanagan suggested the FOWNC logo be put on our leaflets.

Robert Flanagan noted FOWNC's great debt to Anna Long for keeping it on sound financial track.

4. Hon. General Secretary/Membership Secretary's Report. Jill Dudman reported that there were about 500 members: 271 annual members (a figure boosted by catacomb tours where participation requires membership), 156 five-year members, 39 life (unlimited) members, 10 overseas members and 30 complementary members.

Jill Dudman organises the tours on the first Sunday of the month (Feast on the same day generally boosts the numbers), and also catacomb tours (four) plus tours for *Subterranea Britannica* (two) and occasional mid-week tours.

Three tours held on the Sunday afternoon of London Open House weekend (September 2014) attracted some 90 or more visitors between them, each ending at the Greek Chapel where Colin Fenn gave a short introduction to this important feature of the cemetery. Donations at tours amounted to £500 and sales were £710.

FOWNC has a panel of six longstanding guides and two new members have begun training as guides.

5. Chair's Report. Robert Flanagan reviewed monument restoration carried out in recent times, including work on Knight, Stevenson, Greathead, Fairlie and Maddick.

Monuments under consideration for future work include Dunn, Pearson, Baldwin Brown and Clark.

The Management Advisory Group had met regularly; Jill Dudman gathers all the enquiries coming in via the website, although some come direct to Robert Flanagan.

The Newsletter remains very important and articles are always welcome (preferably in finished form). PayPal has been a wonderful success in lightening the administrative load and making payment quick and easy for members.

Robert Flanagan recorded the Friends' thanks to a considerable list of people, including all committee members (especially the Membership Secretary), the webmaster, tour guides, the scrub clearance team, specialist advisers, and other helpers; Robert Flanagan thanked Colin Fenn for his excellent new cemetery leaflets on Great War connections.

6. Vice-Chair's Report. Colin Fenn summarised recent events. He reported that the *Curious Art Trail* ran in 2012 and 2013. There were about 8,000 visitors to *Curious* and other FOWNC-organised events during this period. This is a massive uplift compared to previous years and significant in terms of bringing the cemetery to the attention of many new audiences, through visits

and articles in the press, radio and online It also demonstrates the potential of the cemetery as a "cultural attraction", something that will be important to funders, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

On 13 November 2013, the Mayor of Donetsk and the Ukrainian Ambassador laid a wreath on the grave of John Hughes.

On 7 December 2013 the cemetery was lit with lanterns at dusk to complement events at St Luke's church opposite.

Wrenches, Trenches and Stenches was an art exhibition held in the Maddick mausoleum to commemorate WWI during weekends in September 2014 to support the Lambeth Local History Forum's month-long local history festival; it was very well received with 650 visitors. A new booklet was produced by Colin Fenn describing Norwood's connections to the events of 1914.

Colin Fenn described recent major works carried out to the main entrance, including repaired roadways, restored gates and parking, which now show off the cemetery to great advantage. FOWNC volunteers had contributed many hours towards this, including some of the planting. Scrub clearance continues once a month to keep pathways safe and prevent further vegetation damage to graves. Rose Fenn reported that between January – September this had amounted to the equivalent of roughly 6 weeks' work and was thus a very valuable input at a time of the maintenance cutbacks Lambeth Council is making. This conservation work has also led to the discovery of some interesting stories.

Advice was given to the authorities concerning a prosecution for cemetery vandalism.

Colin Fenn has worked with English Heritage to quantify and understand the likely costs and charges of intended restorations to 'at risk' listed monuments.

7.Scheme of Management. Nicholas Long firstly recorded the thanks of everyone in FOWNC to Bob Flanagan for his hard work and great commitment over the years.

Nicholas Long then described the working of the Scheme of Management Committee (SOMC), which derived from the legal judgement of 1994, explaining that while relations with Lambeth had been stop-and-go, a recent example of the Scheme's improved working was the (very welcome) new roadworks, which had actually received financial approval some four years ago;

Lambeth have established a "technical officers" group which Nicholas Long and Robert Flanagan have been invited to join; speed of progress with Lambeth has varied but is now favourable. A Capital Investment Plan for the phased future funding of the cemetery over the next 10 years has been defined but remains at an early stage.

Two lottery bids are envisaged: the first is under HLF's 'Parks for People' scheme in August 2015; the second will feature the catacombs (in Feb 2017). There is a Management Plan and Lambeth and FOWNC are working on key documents to support the lottery bids and investment plan; once the SOMG and MAG have seen them, the documents will go to consultation and to the Lambeth Council Cabinet for endorsement. Regarding grave reuse, there are two areas in the cemetery where a trial scheme could work, one a public grave area and one a private grave area, however there are important legal and ownership issues to be considered.

Overall, Lambeth are slowly recognising that the cemetery is one of the most vital heritage sites in the borough. Robert Flanagan said that Council officers are becoming more supportive of the stance taken by the SOMC.

8.Webmaster. Robert Flanagan thanked James Slattery-Kavanagh (not present) for his work on the website. He also noted that Roger Myhill had set up a Twitter feed as a trial and that this will be a useful and timely complement to the website

9.Election of Officers 2014-2015. The existing Officers (Chair R Flanagan, Vice-Chair Colin Fenn, Hon. General Secretary/Membership Secretary Jill Dudman, Treasurer Anna Long, Webmaster James Slattery-Kavanagh, and committee members Rose Fenn and Ellen Barbet were proposed and re-elected unanimously. Jill Dudman proposed two new committee members to fill the two remaining committee positions, namely Roger Myhill and Jennifer Palmer-Violet, both of whom were present and willing to stand. Both were elected unanimously and welcomed to the committee.

10.AOB. There was none.

11.Next AGM Saturday 17 October 2015.