

1. Present: 26 members, including committee members: Bob Flanagan, Colin Fenn, Jill Dudman, Anna Long, Rose Fenn and Roger Myhill.
Apologies: James Slattery-Kavanagh, Jennifer Palmer-Violet, Jeff Sechiari
2. Minutes of 2014 AGM: These were accepted.
3. Hon. Treasurer's Report: Anna Long reviewed the Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 30 June 2015. The current net surplus for the year stood at £2,604. Total funds stand at £28,247 (compared to £25,639 for 2014). Subs were up, partly due to the demand for catacombs tours. No extra donations received for repair to monuments. Rose Fenn asked if some money could be used to additional repairs to the Maddick mausoleum. Bob Flanagan thanked Anna for looking after the accounts. 2016 Subscription rates are to remain as at present (£5, £25, £100).
4. Hon. General Secretary/Membership Secretary's Report. Jill Dudman reported that the membership currently stands in excess of 600. Catacombs tours (available to members only) have pushed up membership and although some of these lapse off they are replaced by a similar number during the year. Jill organises the free tours on the first Sunday of each month throughout the year and the additional catacombs tours to meet the demand of the members. Jill also organises additional mid-week tours for such groups as the Friends of the Royal Academy and the Courtauld Institute. There were 80 visitors during Open House weekend in September. Jill thanked Roger Myhill for his help during the year.
5. Chair's Report. Bob Flanagan thanked James Slattery-Kavanagh for his work on the website, and also thanked Colin Fenn for his work on the first two publications commemorating the years of the First World War, as well as Brent Elliott (MAG), Roger Myhill (publicity and Twitter) and other committee members/helpers. Colin is also writing a booklet about people originally buried in other places whose remains are now at West Norwood. Rose Fenn has written a booklet celebrating the 25th anniversary of the FOWNC which, with some additional material, should be published in the next few months. Bob has provided regular reports on progress with the HLF bid and other matters in the FOWNC Newsletter. The latest issue ran to 20 pages.
6. Vice-Chair's Report. Colin Fenn outlined the work towards the Lambeth HLF bid for the cemetery. The application was supported by FOWNC with advice from conservation bodies. Stage one will see the two-year development of plans and designs which will, if acceptable to the HLF, be delivered during a second stage. A key part of the works will be repairs to listed monuments and buildings that are on Historic England's 'At Risk' register. An integral part of the plan will be a suggestion for a Visitor Centre at the front of the cemetery on the footprint of the original Lodge that was demolished in the 1930s. A decision on the bid is expected in December. If the bid is successful delivery of Stage one will be dependent on recruitment of project consultants, a Project Officer and a Public Engagement Officer funded by Lambeth in partnership with the HLF.

The bid envisages some targeted planting as well as scrub removal, addressing some of the acres of brambles and ivy that are of limited ecological value and can lead to monument damage. Opening up vistas will aim to enhance the landscape and reinstate sightlines, whilst giving training opportunities in landscaping. The Greek necropolis will need special attention in collaboration with the Greek Trustees. Some damaged road surfaces will need to be repaired, footpaths remade and drainage improved.

A key part of the works envisaged will be repairs to listed monuments and buildings that are on Historic England's 'At Risk' register. Two listed monument have collapsing vaults and need repairs urgently. Plans are being prepared so that work can start immediately. There are also a large number of other damaged or missing monuments which are not listed but nonetheless are significant. The more notable ones will be surveyed, works estimated and repaired or restored. The proposed works will perform basic repairs to stabilise these monuments and reduce risk to visitors.
7. Publicity Officer's Report. Roger Myhill gave a brief introduction to the ways in which Twitter can be used to reach new audiences and to publicise news and events to existing members via the website. Using twitter, links have been strengthened with other organisations such as the Norwood Society and the Friends of Kensal Green with opportunities to promote to each group's followers. The most popular tweets during the year have been about the Bat Walks in late summer, promotional tweets about the Taste of Victorian History

foodie tour and meal organised as part of West Norwood Food Week in June, in conjunction with The Grub Club website and the Tulse Hill Hotel. Tweets which proved popular about individuals included those about Isabella Beeton and August Manns. Twitter has also been used to promote FOWNC publications, monthly tours and the fact that advantages of membership of FOWNC include the opportunity to visit the catacombs. Monuments uncovered during scrub clearance have also been highlighted. There are currently 680 followers of the Twitter account which was launched in August 2014. This compares favourably with the Friends of Kensal Green (605 followers, launched October 2010), Brompton Cemetery (177 followers, launched January 2015) and Highgate Cemetery (816 followers, launched December 2012).

8. Scheme of Management. Nicholas Long thanked Bob Flanagan for his commitment. The work of the Technical Officer's Group was outlined. The HLF bid of £9.5m would be matched by Lambeth and they have allocated £300k for ongoing works. A decision is expected in December 2015. If not successful we may have to re-submit. The TOG is also looking at future Governance of the cemetery and delivery of the Land Management Strategy. Bob Flanagan and Nicholas Long have re-drafted the Land Management Report. Repairs to the catacombs are outside the scope of the current HLF bid as they are not affordable at present. Additional funding may be requested in 2-4 years.

Re-use of graves and sustainable future relies on re-burials. Although the cemetery is full there are spaces in existing graves. Lambeth failed to keep a plan of graves during the headstone clearance period so it is not necessarily clear where individual graves are. Lambeth appointed Paul Harrison and are examining the possibility of 'lift and deepen' re-use of graves with an additional layer of soil. Where there is an existing memorial on a grave that would remain but a new memorial would be placed next to it. One pilot project is a formal public area, capping stone in some private areas. Justification for the investment is that Lambeth is running out of burial space and it is felt that there should be space at West Norwood for new burials.

Nettlefold Hall is to be converted into a cinema with adjoining library, although there are continuing concerns about its design. There will be a café and information about the cemetery at the cinema.

9. Election of Officers 2015/16. The existing Officers - Chair Robert Flanagan, Vice-Chair Colin Fenn, Hon. General Secretary/Membership Secretary/Tour Organiser Jill Dudman, Publicity Officer Roger Myhill, Treasurer Anna Long, Webmaster James Slattery-Kavanagh, and committee members Rose Fenn and Jennifer Palmer-Violet were proposed and elected unanimously.
10. AOB. FOWNC founder Rosemary Comber has sadly died and her funeral is on 22nd October at West Norwood. Brian Bloice, a key figure of the Streatham Society and long-time member of FOWNC has also sadly died and was cremated at Norwood.
11. 2016 AGM – Saturday 16th October – the speaker will be Tina Baxter who will talk about Mrs Beeton.