

Agreed Minutes - FOWNC AGM – 14:30 Saturday 16 October 2021 in The Old Library, West Norwood.

Attendees: Bob Flanagan (RJF), Chair; John Clarke (JMC), Deputy Chair; Jill Dudman (JD), Hon Secretary & Tours Organiser; Anna Long (AL), Hon Treasurer, Sir Colin Berry (CB), Trustee.

Ordinary members: Andrew Christos, Rosemary Honey, John Stefanowski, Sandra Haney (?), Bryan Hodgson, George Young, Gavin Hawgood, Yvonne Berry, Jill Smith, Caroline Graham-Brown

Visitors: Yannis Polymenidis, Daphne Becket, Roger Bowdler (lecturer).

1. Apologies

Nicholas Long, Roger Myhill, Robert Stephenson, Tim Stephens, James Slattery-Kavanagh, Victoria Solominides-Hunter.

2. Declarations of Interest

Jill Dudman is a cremation plot owner.

3. Minutes of 2020/21 AGM – Matters arising not covered below.

None

4. Election of Trustees

Caroline Graham-Brown offered herself for election as a Trustee. Sir Colin Berry, John Clarke, and Robert Stephenson, being the longest serving Trustees, resigned but offered themselves for re-election. All offers were accepted by the meeting. RJF moved, seconded Bryan Hodgson.

5. Chairman's Report – Bob Flanagan

Thanks to the Officers and other Trustees, and to Madeline Brockbanks and Sue Williams for organising the gardening sessions. The local Cemetery Management has been very helpful particularly in relation to the Talfourd restoration and restoration of memorials in the Greek enclosure. My Newsletter reports detailed progress during the year.

6. Hon Treasurer Report – Anna Long

There was a small deficit on the year 2020-2021 of £425. Expenditure is stable and most of the income is from membership. There are more than adequate reserves. Covid had not had any significant impact on income or expenditure. Unrestricted funds are £30,151 restricted funds £9,562. There is a healthy balance sheet. The liabilities are 5-year memberships, where the income is spread over 5 years and lifetime memberships, where it is spread over 20 years. The accounts had been signed off at the last Trustee meeting on 25 September 2021 and sent off to the Charity Commission.

The financial accounts were formally adopted, Sir Colin Berry proposed, Gavin Hawgood seconded. The Chairman thanked the Hon Treasurer for her work on this vital legal role.

7. Hon General Secretary/Membership Secretary Report - Jill Dudman

Paypal is now back in operation, allowing new members to sign up online. There are 448 members – 142 one-year members, 261 five-year members and 45 lifetime members. In addition, around 40 complimentary newsletters are sent out. International members benefit from the Newsletter being published on the website. Tours had restarted following closure due to Covid 19. The first in July 2021, the most recent on 10 October. Booking through Eventbrite has proved successful, ensuring no more than 25 people per tour and with very few no-shows – usually people advise of cancellations, enabling new people to take their place.

Currently only the General Secretary and Chairman are conducting tours. However, two new people have started training with JD and RJF will contact a third person who had shown interest. Apart from the regular introductory tours, JD ran one for the Wandsworth U3A, and one for teenagers from the London Theatre Centre. RJF ran a tour for the Streatham Society. On 16 October a tour was being organised as part of London Month of the Dead.

Family history enquiries increased during lockdown, so this was a key focus. Deceased Online is a key external resource.

The next members meeting will be on 13 November 2021, with a talk by John Clarke. The Trustees are in discussion about the number of meetings each year.

Vote of thanks to the Secretary, proposed Caroline Graham-Brown, seconded Sir Colin Berry.

8. Twitter – Roger Myhill sent this report

The account currently has 1,761 followers. The most popular tweet during the year was the one announcing the 100th newsletter. Others that generated a lot of views included one promoting available FOWNC publications (such as 'Dickens Connections' and 'Musicians'), and subjects such as the anniversary of the deaths of Mrs Beeton, Eliza James, Sir Henry Doulton, Nathaniel Bagshaw

Ward and Alexander Parkes. It was useful to interact with followers and give updates about tours and other news about the cemetery during the lockdowns.'

RJF added that the Newlands family had expressed interest in renovating the gravestone of John AR Newlands, who had worked out the concept of the Periodic Table 10 years prior to Mendeleev, but the Chemical Society had refused to publish this work!!

9. Website – James Slattery-Kavanagh

The chair reported that the website has been key to the success of FOWNC, as it permits international interest and membership. Publishing the Newsletters on the website had resulted in a great deal of interest and new information. The Paypal link allows new members to sign up online. Thanks were offered to James for all his hard work and help.

10. LLHF – Nicholas Long sent this report

'I have attended three virtual meetings in the past year. The Forum remains a useful means for maintaining contact with kindred organisations, hearing of developments at Minet Library, the organisation of the Lambeth Local History Fair and an annual programme of organised walks. It is also a very good way for assessing the health and activity of the local amenity societies in Lambeth and I am impressed by how much energy and innovation is reflected in the reports made to the meetings. There have also been reports from Jon Newman, senior archivist, on progress with the design and arrangements for the relocation of the Lambeth Archive to 18 Brixton Hill. This progresses and architects (Haworth Tompkins) have been appointed. I would remind the meeting, while I am happy to continue, that I agreed to undertake the role on a temporary basis following John White's untimely death and if another member would wish to take on the task (not particularly onerous) I would willingly stand aside'

The Chair thanked Nicholas for his work. Sir Coln Berry offered to take on the role going forward: the offer was accepted with thanks.

11. ASCE – Bob Flanagan

RJF has registered for their virtual event/AGM 11-12 November 2021.

ASCE published for their members a very fine English edition of 'The Monumentale Cemetery of Milano' by Carla De Bernardi and Lalla Fumagalli There is a review in Newsletter 102.

ASCE has facilities for internet guided tours, and the Trustees are interested in finding out more about this. They have a working system and it would be good to see how we at Norwood could do something similar. RJF to follow through. RJF will continue to seek a member to keep in touch with ASCE.

12. Publications Officer Report – Bob Flanagan

A new full-colour guidebook is in preparation.

13. WW1 Project – John Clarke and Peter Hodgkinson

JMC reported that after a considerable pause caused by the Covid lockdown, he and Peter have been exploring the cemetery grounds to identify as many of the memorials identified in the earlier stages of this project as possible. We started this survey at the beginning of August and Peter concluded it on 15 October 2021. Between us we have covered virtually all of the accessible parts of the cemetery, and identified some new names. The overgrown areas will be explored over the winter. Further details of the project and some of our discoveries will be shared at next month's meeting (13 November). Details of the Monumental Inscription cards, used to identify commemorations on family graves, are described in Newsletter 96. Some 600 graves or memorials have been identified to date. RJF proposed that this major project might best be published in full on the website and in summary as a printed booklet.

14. MAG/SoMC/NLHF Project Report – Bob Flanagan

Lambeth continue to play games. The financial update provided to us after years of nagging shows Delivery Phase Capital Cost £5,010,151 - the NHLF agreed to contribute 68% of £6,771,765. Lambeth now tell us that the difference is 'revenue costs', but will not elaborate. A big capital spend is the £326,926 on professional fees etc. so far - they have passed everything to consultants (and done virtually nil themselves until very recently). They say they have kept NHLF advised of 'revenue costs'. Perhaps they are citing items as 'match funding', but if so why not tell us?

There have been some tree works and scrub clearance in the cemetery in the last 30 months (not part of the NHLF project), but they have done nothing else apart from two/three procurement exercises and rounds of meetings and the appointment a few weeks back of a gardener apprentice. Most of the meetings have been held after pressure from Nicholas Long and I.

The appointment of ideverde for the roadway and drainage works has been the one substantial achievement so far. Work on Doulton and St Mary-at-Hill paths is approaching completion, and work on Steep Hill is about to commence. They have also undertaken exploratory works at Robson Road by the Industrial Estate and have confirmed that the Boundary all has virtually no foundations (600 mm brickwork below ground level). They have also completed preparatory work for bringing services into St Stephen's chapel.

Their lead engineer is of the opinion that much of the damage that is evident to the roadways renovated under previous capital programs is the result of Lambeth using standard refuse lorries in the cemetery. We have complained about this many times before because of the risk to the Tite Arch. Lambeth admit that the roads in the cemetery are not 'highways standard', i.e. they should not use heavy vehicles in the cemetery, but are unable to do anything about it...

The final item to report is that work has at last commenced on the Auffray and Baldwin-Brown monuments. It has been found that Auffray was held together by gravity alone, i.e. the components of the monument were simply piled one atop the other!

15. AOB

Nil

16. Date/time of next AGM

Saturday 15 October 2022, 14:30

16. 2022 AGM – *Saturday 15 October*