**Friends of Darwen Cemetery – Chairman’s Report for the AGM-**

**Wednesday 4th May 2016 at Central URC Church 7pm.**

**The sixth year of the FODC has been yet again a busy and yet frustrating year. Lots of success stories from the new refurbished gates and wild life garden path thanks to The Lloyd Trust and DTC/Crown Awards.**

**The working parties of Saturday and Thursday contributing many hundreds or man hours of voluntary labour working to our project – report by Mick Walsh later. The Grave maintenance Scheme – holding its own - with a small number of volunteers.**

**The CWGC adopted war grave scheme – every one of the 90 + graves adopted by local groups and individuals and the annual service of remembrance - detailed report later.**

**The frustration of our Heritage Lottery Bid being rejected and then encouraged by the HLB to re submit with some amendments and alterations – we hope to demonstrate both value for money and a total commitment by our local community – from the Lord Lieutenant to local schools – a meaningful structure and the guided tours of the graves and the history of the sacrifice of local men and woman during the WW1 – we think we have an amazing structure planned and tale to tell in perpetuity - to honour over 1300 local casualties from Darwen – although we thought we may have started this September we may have to wait patiently for a result from the HLB.**

**We were sadden at the sudden death of Joan Briggs a loyal member of the working parties – we acknowledge her contribution in our vision to restore the cemetery and the valued contribution she gave with grace, good humour and encouragement to all.**

**Thank you all from local donations to the immense service that our management and trustees have given over the year in whatever role.**

**We plea to Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to work with us in our task to restore, conserve and reclaim our Cemeteries heritage – we thanks especially Brent Stevenson for his generous support and the BwD Your Call team.**

**The team has its vision for the future – one last plea that other volunteers come forward and join us. My final remarks as its Shakespeare’s 400 anniversary of his death are these!**

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“Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth,  
Let's choose executors and talk of wills”   
― [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/947.William_Shakespeare), [**Richard II**](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1946935)

Bleste be the man that spares thes stones. And curst be he who moves my bones

**Words on Shakespeare’s grave in Holy Trinity church, Stratford**