**Friends of Darwen Cemetery Annual Report held on Wednesday 26th April 2017**

**At Darwen Heritage Centre, Holker House.**

**It’s now seven years since the group was formed and what a transformation to the Western Cemetery the group has made.**

**Mainly thorough the week and fortnight volunteers who have spent many thousands of hours restoring, maintaining and reclaiming the cemetery which is now fit for purpose.**

**The report heard tonight will reflect the sheer commitment and dedication of the groups working in all weathers.**

**We have had set back and frustrations and we still await a outcome for our Heritage Lottery Bid headed by our President Col. Steve Davies, he can’t be with us tonight as he is dealing with his mother’s affair who died recently.**

**The War graves adoption scheme and the acts of remembrance grow each year and the Grave maintenance scheme plods along. Visitors to the cemetery has increased and more private graves are being restored and looked after.**

**We have campaigned for more responsible dog owners to use the bins provided and litter is nearly eradicated.**

**The bench that the Darwen Townswoman Guild presented to honour the role that woman made in the Great Wat is a fantastic asset and we thank them their efforts.**

**We took part in the Heritage Open Days in September last year and have organised some short walking tours for group.**

**We look forward to the new grass cutting scheme as BwD outsource this to a new consortium – we are working closely with BwD and the Consortium to manage under the reduced budget the conditions of grass cutting in the Western Cemetery.**

**Finally it’s my pleasure to thank everyone connected to the Friends of Darwen Cemetery - Crown Award/DTC Awards, Brent Stevenson and the various companies as we re-submit the HLB and the end of May 2017. I appeal to residents of Darwen to come along and volunteer. May sincere thanks to fellow trustees.**

**John East**