**Minutes**

**Friends of Darwen Cemetery AGM
at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 1 May 2019***held at Darwen Heritage Centre, Holker House, Darwen*

Present: Diane Walsh, Lynda van Dijk, Jill Marr, Peter van Dijk, Tony Foster, Jamie Haddow, Ineke Bateman, Kath Walsh, Mick Walsh, Roy Cox, Anne Lamont, Pauline Dargan, Paul Dargan, John East, Ann Stokes.

Welcome and opening remarks by our Chairman, Tony Foster

**Business of the Annual General Meeting**

1. Apologies: Rosemary Jackson, Brent Stevenson, Diane Davies.
2. Minutes of previous AGM: accepted (proposed by Mick Walsh, seconded by John East) – passed unanimously.
3. Matters arising: None.
4. Presentation of the Chair’s Annual Report for 2018.
Tony echoed a comment made by John East at last year’s AGM – what a marvellous transformation of the Cemetery is being achieved by the volunteers.
John stepped down as Chair on July 1st and is proving a hard act to follow. Thank you very much, John. When John started the Friends group in 2010, one of his targets was to research the war dead buried in the Cemetery. This has now been completed for the WW1 casualties with the publishing of our book “More than just names in stone”. Copies are still available.
The highlight of 2018 was the building of the World War 1 Memorial Wall. We are grateful to the essential support of Brent Stevenson and the skilled work of Malcolm Whitaker without whom we would not have had the impressive monument that now graces the Cemetery. Special thanks are due to Mick Walsh for the concept of the wall and the design of the wicker-work tiles produced with the help of Darwen Terracotta. Thanks also to all of our sponsors, and to Peter van Dijk and Paul Dargan and the rest of the team for their hard work in staging the opening ceremony. We appreciate how Steve Davies handled the guest list, especially for inviting the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Shuttleworth, to perform the unveiling.
We have put in place the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation, and we have successfully stopped a proposal to deposit silt from Whitehall Park in the Cemetery.
Diane Davies continues to look after the adoption of War Graves and to organise the annual Remembrance Services in November. This year we commemorated the Centenary of the Armistice with very well attended ceremonies at the new Memorial.
Paul Dargan has enrolled several new clients into the Grave Maintenance Scheme so their family graves have been refurbished.
Jill Marr has organised the volunteers working on Grounds Maintenance. Her report will be given presently. We have welcomed several new volunteers this year but we are always on the lookout for more.
In conclusion, Tony thanked everyone for their support.

A motion thanking Tony for his report was proposed by Paul Dargan and seconded by Mick Walsh – passed unanimously.
5. Presentation of Accounts (Treasurer)
Diane Walsh presented the accounts. £22,250 from our five main sponsors went a long way to covering the £25,260 spent on the Memorial Wall (£690 of which came from last year’s resources as down payment on the tiles). We spent £1519 on the opening ceremony, but made £1159 from the sale of books and donations.
Other income of £3376 came from Grave Maintenance, Sale of Wreaths, Disco Night and various donations. Other expenditure totalling £1616 went on such things as insurance, tools and maintenance, Remembrance Services and Grave Maintenance.
Total income of £26,785 less total expenditure of £28,395 left a deficit for the year of £1619. Funds at the end of the year stood at £2750.
6. Adoption of Accounts

The accounts were adopted following a proposal by Roy Cox, seconded by John East – passed unanimously.

1. Appointment of Auditors

Louise Brindle was appointed as Auditor for 2019

1. Jill Marr - Working Parties report
69 volunteering sessions, with an average attendance of 11 volunteers per session, contributed over 2000 hours of labour, equivalent to over £14,000 worth of free labour.
The usual assortment of tasks, including grounds maintenance, cutting back bushes and general gardening, featured prominently. The third stage of reducing the large hedge next to Section H was completed when the height was reduced considerably. We must thank local farmer, Diane Mares, for her time and equipment in helping us to move the waste to our burning site on Section 5. She saved us a huge amount of manual effort. The waste was burned during several extended sessions by the Thursday group.
We supported the building of the Memorial Wall and the maintenance of the adjacent areas, including special efforts in the run up to the unveiling.
Four Saturday sessions were taken up with the Grave Maintenance Scheme, looking after 24 graves, which provides us with useful revenue.
Anne’s work on path edges, gullies and grates has kept the drains clear.

Thanks are due to Brent Stevenson and the Good Friends group for mowing accessible areas and re-erecting head stones.
Jill has presented a full work programme for 2019, including a dry stone retaining wall in the Nature Garden and the restoration of stone steps on Section H.
Jill’s report was accepted with thanks – proposed by Kath Walsh and seconded by Diane Walsh – passed unanimously.

1. Election of Trustees

All ten trustees are standing again – they are Tony Foster (chair), Steve Davies (president), John East, Diane Walsh (treasurer), Diane Davies, Mick Walsh, Jill Marr, Paul Dargan, Tony Foster, Roy Cox and Peter van Dijk (secretary). According to our constitution, we are allowed up to twelve trustees. A motion was proposed by Anne Lamont and seconded by Kath Walsh that all ten be reappointed – passed unanimously.
Jamie Haddow agreed to attend the Management Committee meetings.

1. Any other business
	1. Some war graves are available for adoption. Please contact Diane Davies if you wish to take one on.
	2. Appeal for a new secretary. Peter wishes to reduce his commitments, so we are looking for someone to take on the correspondence and membership secretarial duties.
	3. We are planning to hold a “Find a Family Grave” day, in June or July.
	4. We shall be having a stall at the Rotary Charity Day in the newly refurbished Market Square on May 11.

The official meeting was followed by a showing of the video of the Unveiling Ceremony at the Memorial Wall on July 1st, 2018. Thanks to Derek Blackburn and Hanneke van Dijk for their excellent recording.