**Friends of Darwen Cemetery**

**Chairmans Annual Report for 2022**

In presenting the report for 2022 I would like to first acknowledge the work of our volunteers. Jill Marr will be detailing the work undertaken during the year, so on behalf of the trustee we offer our sincere thanks. To undertake our work in improving the cemetery the Friends have to raise all its funds. We also need to thank the individuals and other who have supported us in this way during the year. We offer thanks to the Whitehall Scout Group who donated £43.80. It is encouraging to note that a few more people have become volunteers.

It is clear from the feedback we receive that the general public appreciate our work, However, concern is always raised about the state of the grass This is the responsibility of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. We have invited local borough councillors to our working groups, but these have not been taken up.

The Friends’ working parties continue to meet each Thursday and alternative Saturdays. Work has taken place on Section G with improvement to this part of the cemetery by the Memorial Wall. One of our volunteers, Ronnie Haslam has been working though the year on Section A. Towards the end of the year the Friends considered improving Section H.

During the year we began working on a new information leaflet and these are now available. Graham Ardis to the lead in preparing QR codes which are now placed in eight areas of the cemetery. By using the codes, the public will learn more about our cemetery. Graham also attended a First Aid course.

The Friends continue to organise Remembrance Services for local school child and general public. We offer our thanks to all the volunteers who help with these important events. Glenda Brindle did excellent work in contacting all the local schools.

The Find a Grave Days are popular event we held during the year. These could be could a more popular activity now that Blackburn with Darwen is charging £50 to mark a grave. Alan Walton has proved to be the graveyard detective in the way he than find graves. We thank him for his help and also thank Billy Briggs in helping with the find a gave days.

We thank Paul Dargan who continues co-ordinate the grave maintenance scheme and the adopt a war grave scheme.

Section 2 continue to be an excellent example on how the cemetery could look with the grass was regularly cut. The credit to section is in the hand of Ann Lamont.

At the beginning of the year, we received the resignation of Diane Davies. Diane stepped down as a trustee due to increasing workload. We thank Diane for all her hard work with the group, especially how she co-ordinated the Remembrance Services.

During the year Mick Walsh suffered from a serious medical condition that has prevented him for helping with the group. Mick used his drystone walling expertise to build the seat in the nature garden. He also masterminded the design of the WW1 Memorial Wall. We all appreciate Mick’s work with the Friends. We offer our sincere thanks to Mick and Kath for all their hard work.

Finally, I would like to thank the trustees for their support during the year.

Tony Foster

June 2023

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