

# THE FRIENDS OF DARWEN CEMETERY



## Minutes for the Trustees Meeting on 26 February 2025

Issued 19 March.2025

**Present:** Tony Foster (Chair), Jill Marr (minutes), Graham Ardis, Diane Walsh, Melissa Dabrowski, Trish Dabrowski, Jim Taylor, John East, Jenny O'Neill

1. **Apologies:** Mick Walsh, Paul Dargan
2. **Minutes of the previous Meeting:** accepted.
3. **Matters arising.**
  - 3.1. **Memorial Wedges** – James Stephenson. has installed a new section for wedges.
  - 3.2. **Health and Safety briefing for volunteers** – Complete.
  - 3.3. **Unwanted equipment** James Stephenson has taken the old broken mower from the new cabin. There are 3 large rarely used petrol strimmers. 1 to be kept and 2 to be disposed of. Graham will see if the Lawn Mower men on Watery Lane will do a deal.
  - 3.4. **Potholes** – John has contacted Sammy McCusker and is awaiting a response.
  - 3.5. **Memorial for Stillborn/Unmarked graves** – Tony does not know of any in the local area. James Stephenson has a granite bench in stock which we could have. He would have to adapt the tile inserts to take our wording. The website article linked to the QR code for the ashes garden could be updated to include the memorial. We could ask Terry Young to dedicate the bench once in place.
  - 3.6. **QR code for the “lone soldier”** – A new QR code for section D was proposed to explain that the commonwealth War grave headstone is not on its own but surrounded by common graves. We still need Sammy McCusker to approve the proposed retaining wall.
  - 3.7. **WW2 memorial** James Stephenson. has been asked to provide a cost. Tony has the names of all the WW2 military casualties buried in the cemetery, and the civilians killed in the bombings which are recognised as war casualties. We could apply to the Lloyds Trust for funding.
  - 3.8. **Invitations to political figures.** The Trustees had a discussion as to whether political figures should be invited to our events, It was agreed that they should not be invited just for photo opportunities if they do not also assist the FODC in our efforts. It was agreed that the new MP should be invited to see the work we do. We should be more proactive about getting our Councillors and MP to support the cemetery, particularly on health and safety issues.

It was noted that the new Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire lives in Whitehall and may be able to help support and publicise the work of the FODC

**4. Chairman's report – Tony.**

Tony circulated information regarding a petition asking for more funding for cemeteries. A date is to be agreed for the MP to visit the cemetery. The Heritage Centre has been booked for the AGM at 7pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**5. Treasurer's report – Diane W.**

The report for the period to 26 February 2025 was presented.

**6. Health and Safety – Graham**

H and S volunteer briefings have been completed.

The new cabin has been tidied and work continues on the old cabin and storage area.

Geoff Wilkinson at the CVS is back from sick leave has been in contact. He apologised for the lack of support provided by his service. All future applicants will be vetted by the CVS before being invited to attend a working party.

No incidents to report.

**7. Grounds strategy report – Jill.**

There were 4 Thursdays and 2 Saturdays in February 2025. The volunteers accrued 100 hours. Regular work Paths have been swept to help prevent a build up of vegetation. Anne has continued to clear blocked drains.

Adhoc jobs as follows: - The hedge between 5a and D1 has been trimmed back. A survey of the war graves has been carried out.

The running total for 2025 stands at 138 hours.

The old cabin is in dire need of repair or replacement. Jill to speak to Frank Barnes Ltd to see if they can assist with a replacement. As an interim solution the roof could be covered with a tarpaulin to stop water ingress. At a cost of circa £100

**8. War graves report – Graham**

A survey of all the graves was carried out on the 20 February. Letters will be sent to 13 adoptees giving them till the 28<sup>th</sup> February to respond. If nothing is received the graves will be put up for re-adoption.

**9. Education and Interpretation report – Tony.**

A booklet for WW2 casualties is being produced and a walk will take place later in the year. This could be linked to the opening of the new memorial.

**10. Publicity and media report – John.**

The brown (Commonwealth Gravestones) road sign which fell off the lamppost opposite the main entrance has been placed by the FODC cabin. John will chase up the council regarding its re-erection.

**11. Grave maintenance scheme – Paul.**

One new grave has been added and the information passed to Jill for inclusion in the maintenance programme.

**12. Any other business**

There was no AOB

**Date of next meeting – 6pm Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025**