

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

1. MEMBERSHIP

FONC membership fell from 785 to 770 this year continuing a small downward trend over the last few years. We recruited 94 new members but lost 109. We have 7 overseas members. Members paying by bank standing order continued at 48% of the membership. With FONC News no. 143 we mentioned that, after becoming a new charitable incorporated organisation, FONC's bank was looking to operate a new bank account. It appears that this is not now necessary. Existing standing order payments from members continue to be received. New standing order payments can be arranged using the reminder form with FONC News no. 147. The form includes a reference number to be quoted by your bank to link your payment with your FONC membership.

Gift Aid declarations have been signed by 16% of members. With the change in FONC's status, and after clarification of FONC's bank account, we have applied for recognition as a charity for tax purposes. This allows FONC to claim Gift Aid repayments from H M Revenue & Customs. As this is a new registration, we must ask supporters to make new Gift Aid declarations. The reminder form with FONC News no. 147 invited UK taxpayers to sign a new Gift Aid declaration.

2. THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

As with the rest of British society, Covid-19 impacted hugely on FONC and the cemetery from the middle of March. All FONC activities on site were cancelled and Trustees meetings became 'virtual'. Our annual Open Day had to be cancelled, the first time it had not been held since 1982. It became almost impossible to plan for the future although we still hope to link a small FONC stalls only event to the Open House weekend in September. The month long closure of the cemetery was much regretted but equally re-opening in April threw up new challenges with the huge increase in lockdown exercising visitors and the extended opening hours. We have worked with Southwark Council to mitigate the effects as much as possible. Work on various projects on site was also interrupted (see below).

3. FONC MEETINGS AND MEMBERS' VISITS

The Trustees held seven regular meetings and two 'virtual' meetings during the year, and the Voluntary Work Sub-Committee met three times. The 2019 AGM enjoyed Jeff Hart's PowerPoint on Nunhead cemetery and in December Sam Bentley-Toon of London Wildlife Trust spoke about the Great North Wood past and present. The planned member's visit to Brompton cemetery was a victim of the Covid-19 cancellations.

4. AFFILIATIONS

We continue to be affiliated to the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ACSE) (€25) and the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (£20 p.a.). Gwyneth Stokes attended the ACSE AGM and conference held in Ghent, Belgium, last October. There were thoughtful presentations and interesting discussions at the conference on 'the shared use and re-use of cemeteries'. FONC is going to look into the display of ASCE insignia at Nunhead cemetery and also how their website can be of more benefit. We participate in Community Southwark opportunities and have affiliated to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (free). We maintain contacts with many other local and national groups. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, FONC is required to submit information to the Charity Commission on an annual basis which is available on

line for public review. We also participate in the Southwark Green Forum and attend the new Council Ward Assemblies which awarded FONC both a Cleaner, Greener Safer grant for new tools and a Neighbourhood Fund grant towards the Open Day.

5. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS (NFCF)

FONC was well represented at the 2019 AGM of the NFCF by Trustee officers, Jeremy Partington, Carol Stevenson, Jeff Hart and Jane Hart. They joined delegates from 14 other groups at this event hosted by the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery, Halifax; and no one was daunted by the continuing rain when touring this impressive cemetery as the history was brought to life by impressive actors. At the business meeting, Robert Stephenson was re-elected chairman, FONC's Gwyneth Stokes as secretary and Melvyn Hawkins of the Friends of Shropshire Cemeteries elected as the new treasurer. Among topics raised, Jeff Hart asked if there were ways in which members seeking Heritage Lottery funding could learn from successful applicants and, after a positive discussion, the chairman said the committee would pursue. FONC again planned to take part in the NFCF's National Cemeteries Week by linking and publicising the Open Day.

6. FONC VOLUNTEERING AND PUBLICATIONS & ENQUIRY DESK

Until it was halted as a result of the Covid-19 emergency in March, the FONC publications & enquiries desk (PED) had a presence at all monthly and specialist tours during the year as well as during the Open House weekend where it was supplemented by cake and tea sales. The PED continues to be an important initial point of contact for visitors to learn about FONC, volunteer to help with our activities, buy FONC publications, and sign up as members. The desk still continues to need new volunteers and it really does offer a great way to meet and chat with the cemetery's many and varied visitors. The Covid-19 lockdown has seen an increase in visitors to the cemetery keen to get regular exercise in such a beautiful location and we anticipate an increase in interest as lockdown eases. The only commitment is to help on the occasional Sunday afternoon for a couple of hours.

We continue to receive offers of help during lockdown, coordinated by FONC Trustee Ish Lennox and corporate volunteering days, including one with L'Oreal, also supplement our own practical work on site.

7. ANNUAL CEMETERY OPEN DAY AND OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

The annual Open Day planned for 16th May was cancelled to the huge disappointment of all concerned but we intend to be back in 2021 even bigger and better! The day was, however, marked by the online screening by the Peckham & Nunhead Free Film Festival of the 2016 chapel film screening.

London Open City weekend was held on 21/22 September 2019 and was well attended by visitors who were also able to enjoy hot drinks and home-made cakes on site as well as the tours and crypt visits. The event also raised over £300 for FONC funds banked by Treasurer Ann Coley who also now leads crypt visits.

8. FONC WEB SITE, PUBLICITY AND MEDIA COVERAGE

Simon Quill, our webmaster, continues to work on updating and improving our website (www.fonc.org.uk) and receives and distributes many queries and comments from viewers. We are able to monitor web-site usage through monthly data received. Our presence on social media such as Instagram and Facebook is an effective means of connecting us to a wider, and younger, audience and produces positive feedback. Sporadic media coverage continues and we have attended events such as the Brockley & Ladywell cemetery Open Day and Peckham Rye Fete to advertise the cemetery, recruit members and sell our publications.

9. MEMBERS' JOURNAL

Four editions of *FONC News*, the members' quarterly journal, were published last year comprising a total of 88 pages. In addition to up-to-date news about the cemetery provided by Jeff Hart, our co-ordinator, and information about FONC's past and future events and activities, every issue contained articles contributed by members of FONC on a variety of interesting subjects. Connie Beighton wrote about visiting Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin, and Cathy Mercer wrote about Lambeth Palace Gardens and Willesden's Jewish Cemetery. Bob Carlisle and Owain Rawrees told us why they are Friends of Nunhead Cemetery and Michele Burford recounted the sad story of the Victorian gravedigger who committed suicide. Keith Turpin contributed an informative article about the Great North Wood that once covered a large area of South London, and Ann Baker wrote about her ancestors' connection as employees of the cemetery company. There were also contributions from Jean Alker and Jeff Young. The editor would like to thank everyone involved in the production and distribution of the journal including Gwyneth Stokes for her meticulous proofreading, Nicola Dunn and her team of hand deliverers and Linda Martin our postal co-ordinator. Thanks also to Jeff and Jane Hart for collecting the journals from the printers and for mailing the last issue, and Mark Plummer and the staff of Catford Print for their excellent service. Thanks also to those members who have contributed articles. *FONC News* is your publication so please keep your articles and letters coming. Write to the editor of *FONC News*, c/o 185 Gordon Road, London, SE15 3RT or email: editorfonc@hotmail.com

10. PUBLICATIONS, ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH WORK

The free promotional leaflet about the cemetery and the work of FONC that we distribute to visitors and at off-site events has been updated and revised. We also continue to receive donations of various photographs, letters, and memorial cards etc. for our archives. Members and others have shared their family histories and memorabilia with us which helps to add to the wealth of stories about our Notables and not so notable. We are also seeking permission from Southwark Local Studies Library to use recently discovered pictorial resources. We are also seeking to improve our natural history database.

11. CEMETERY PRESENTATIONS, TOURS AND OTHER EVENTS IN THE CEMETERY

Our ever popular tour programme ran successfully until interrupted in March and has still not been able to recommence. Sadly the planned new VE Day walk was cancelled. The Christmas tour was particularly popular and a second International Women's Day walk was led by new tour leader Jane Hart. We also provided talks and general tours for special interest groups such as Nunhead W.I. The well attended Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival event, facilitated by FONC, was held in the cemetery in September showing the film 'Henry & Maud'. The June London Wildlife Trust led bat walk was also very popular.

12. MONUMENT INSCRIPTION RECORDING AND GRAVESEARCH

Garry Wiles took on the role of Monument Inscription Recording Coordinator shortly after the AGM in 2018, when we had just two volunteers carrying out this work, and no work had been carried out for many months. We now have 10 volunteers (regular and occasional), who meet twice monthly on the last Sunday and the 2nd or 3rd Tuesday of every month except December. This compares very favourable with the previous schedule of one monthly visit between the months of September-May. As a result, we are making good progress with recording inscriptions on the circa 44000 monuments at Nunhead. The work is complete in 83 squares, partially complete in 45 squares, and yet to start in the remaining 40 squares.

Garry is currently developing a spreadsheet for recording centrally the inscriptions, so that there will be a central record to enable easier searching. We take photographs of the monuments we have recorded, and these will be linked with the inscriptions as a visual aid to assist those

looking to locate the grave. We often get requests from those seeking to locate the final resting place of their family and ancestors, and we always try to help where sufficient information on location is available. To date, we have not managed to find specific graves, but we will continue to provide this service on request.

Many of the areas that are easily accessible have been completed, and the work will no doubt become increasingly challenging as we venture ever deeper into the more overgrown areas of the cemetery. We have recently been receiving the invaluable assistance of the monthly work schedule volunteer team to open out some areas so that we can safely enter to carry out our work. We are also passing on information to a central point about any war graves uncovered during our work. Some of these may well have been hidden for many years, and we are proud that we are able to contribute in this way.

Trustee Malcolm Collins has also assisted with a number of enquiries regarding finding graves on site and carrying out searches of the cemetery records throughout the year. It is always pointed out to visitors that some areas of the cemetery are completely impenetrable and we explain that safe access is not always possible.

13. ART PROJECTS

Although Jolanta Jagiello has now stepped down as our arts coordinator we have continued to work with Studio Voltaire, a prestigious London gallery, to stage an exhibit in the chapel by internationally known Royal Academician, sculptor Phyllida Barlow. Planned for the summer, we are hoping that this may now take place from September.

14. RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Fr. Ole Ogunyemi of St. Antony with St. Silas again led our All Souls Service in the Anglican Chapel in November which was also appreciated by many who could not attend and who missed out on the tea and cakes which followed! The annual Remembrance Service was again very well attended and the Nunhead Women's Institute again laid a handmade wreath at the chapel. This was again followed by a Great War tour in the afternoon. We donated £200 to the Royal British Legion for wreaths placed at seven sites within the cemetery.

15. MANAGEMENT OF THE CEMETERY BY SOUTHWARK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Useful monthly site meetings with Southwark Bereavement Services to discuss various on site issues continue. The proposed Land Use Consultants conservation management plan for the cemetery has still not even been seen in draft yet. The Public Space Protection Order to encourage responsible dog ownership was belatedly reviewed in January. Although FONC identified that most other Boroughs restricted dogs to four per person and we proposed that half the number should be on a lead at all times, the existing regime was confirmed and will be further reviewed in a years' time.

Supervision and opening hours have changed on an ad-hoc basis during the coronavirus pandemic and visitor numbers have greatly increased but enforcement of the re-opening criteria has been poor and non-observance of the PSPO has increased. There have also been reports of several anti-social incidents which FONC has drawn to the Council's attention.

We also submitted comments on Southwark's draft Biodiversity Plan and Tree Management Policy. Unfortunately 30 visitors were locked in the cemetery on Christmas Day afternoon and we have liaised with Southwark to avoid a repetition.

16. CEMETERY IMPROVEMENTS

Cracks in the new Scottish Martyrs surface have worsened and we have pursued rectification plans with LBS but with little progress on site. Progress on restoring the Limesford Road boundary walls has been limited to vegetation clearance which is, of course, now re-growing. However, we

have not pursued this rigorously as it is of lesser urgency at present. However, tree damaged wall pillars on Linden Grove were eventually restored following strong FONC representation. Friable material fell from the internal walls of the Anglican chapel which led to its closure in June. Safety works have been carried out but we still await a further condition survey. Clearance of a number of diseased or unsafe trees has continued in consultation with FONC but unfortunately re-planting of replacement trees could not take place before the end of the planting season in March. This is now planned for November.

The Mayor of Southwark assisted with Installation of ten new waste bins for the cemetery. We also successfully opposed the installation of a 20m high mobile phone mast in front of the East Lodge. A second tranche of monument repairs, agreed with FONC, was completed in February and again included additional unsafe memorials once work had started. It is unclear whether funds remain for a third tranche.

17. EAST LODGE RESTORATION

Progress towards restoring the East Lodge has been painfully slow with Southwark insisting on additional consultant's reports and assessments and rejection of tender bids on quality grounds and revision of accepted tenders as the building deteriorates further. FONC has participated fully in the East Lodge Project Board and presented various proposals to take the project forward in the most cost effective manner. Project costs have almost doubled and yet we still have no agreement on the final design or usage of the restored building with Southwark stating that they cannot be seen to give preference to FONC! Design architects have been appointed but the pandemic has delayed further work. In the meantime the whole frontage of the Lodge is close to collapse and needs to be taken down and stored as part of the enabling works which, as at least a ray of light, began on 15 June 2020.

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

	New 2019/20	New and old 2018/19	Old 2017/18
	£	£	£
Receipts			
Publications	1,276	1,074	1,066
Subscriptions	1,574	1,584	1,586
Donations	5,961	5,610	6,885
Gift Aid	-	2,300	1,306
Event income	5,367	4,544	3,519
Interest	338	371	198
Grants	5,000	1,300	1,500
Total receipts	19,516	16,783	16,060
Payments - Administration and running			
Postage	1,382	1,298	2,017
Stationery	73	132	313
Printing - newsletter	956	919	978
Printing - publications	558	1,807	-
Meeting costs	359	370	387
Insurance	351	351	345
Other expenses	81	345	139
	3,760	5,222	4,179
Payments - Events and other			
Purchases	671	450	1,348
Bins and banners	5,026	-	-
Event costs	1,772	2,209	2,423
Art Events - costs	-	1,341	1,606
	7,469	4,000	5,377
Payments - designated funds			
Monument repairs	6,600	9,240	-
Total expenditure	17,829	18,462	9,556
Surplus/ Deficit for the year	1,687	(1,679)	6,504
Balance sheet at 31 March	2020	2019	2018
Opening balance	125,503	127,182	120,678
Surplus for the year	1,687	(1,679)	6,504
Total assets	127,190	125,503	127,182
Consisting of:			
Santander Current a/c	9,986	12,001	7,567
Santander Deposit a/c	58,163	54,851	66,101
Co-op Deposit account	59,041	58,651	53,514
	127,190	125,503	127,182

Notes to the accounts

- 1 FONC tools valued at £2,000
- 2 FONC publications stock valued at £5,000 (resale value £8,000)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery reserves policy

To ensure that FONC can continue to operate at its current level, and to mitigate the risk of a reduction in income streams, FONC holds general reserves of £15,000 to represent one and a half years of operating costs and an additional sum to meet unexpected expenditure on the portacabin and/ or storage facilities.

The remaining funds are held as unreserved, Designated, funds for the following purposes:

- contribution to the East Lodge Project £35,000
- fit out of the FONC facilities in the East Lodge £25,000
- Monument repair fund to fund a long term repair programme of monuments in the cemetery

Ann Coley

Ann Coley
Treasurer

3 October 2020

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Friends of Nunhead Cemetery for the period ended 31 March 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

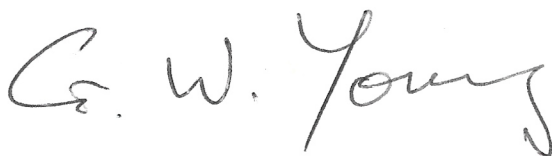
Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name:

GEORGE WILLIAM YOUNG

Date:

3 OCTOBER 2020