
Trustees Annual Report for

Friends of Durham Woodland Cemetery

For Year Ended 31st March

This year has been a year of consolidation. We worked with the Council to a point where the Woodland Cemetery was re-opened, which was a major milestone. We continued to liaise closely with them to ensure that the continued management of the site meets with the original ethos and founding philosophy behind the start of the Woodland Cemetery Project.

One of the most important and significant elements of taking care of the Woodland Burial Ground is the maintenance involved. This should be as natural as an operational Cemetery would possibly allow. The Friends Group manage the site more sympathetically than the local Council have either the will or the capacity for. The Friends Group have identified and implemented a maintenance schedule that reduces the intensity of machinery used on site which has a significant benefit to the flora and fauna, and this creates a cost reduction for maintenance to the local council.

In 2019 the Woodland Burial Ground was awarded 'Green Flag Status', which is the national standard benchmark in the United Kingdom for publicly accessible parks and green spaces.

One of our members, Stephen Robson, was justifiably recognised for his voluntary work on site by being awarded the 'Durham County Council Chairman's Medal', which is the highest award Durham County Council present for voluntary work in the community, which was accepted on behalf of the Friends Group.

The new mapping and microchip system has been fully integrated into the daily running of the burial site allowing anyone using it the confidence to cross reference and identify burial plots. This must be one of the most significant achievements of the volunteers to date of which we are immensely proud and grateful for their input.

Given how well the Woodland has been accepted as a burial ground, there are plans for future development to extend capacity, which the Friends Group will work on.

Whilst the management of the site remains on track, other projects have not progressed as we would have hoped. Specifically, this refers to the website. We remain grateful to the agency, and their web developer, who undertook this for us on a pro bono basis, but we are still waiting for the site to go live on our own domain. This will also be the conduit through which we hope to communicate more regularly, and more fully, with our membership. So, this delay has continued to be a frustration.

Another area that has been one step forward and two steps back is the idea of having some form of memorial sited at the Woodland. This has proven popular with members but with the proviso that it would need to be both tasteful and not detract from the natural setting. The major step forward on this has been identifying a local artist, Graeme Hopper, who predominantly produce sculptures made of metal. The committee has visited his workshops, and seen some of his creations, and we are happy that we are working with the right person to deliver this project.

So, now that we are committed to this project, we now need to consider how to raise the funds to pay for a memorial. Based on conversations with Graeme, we anticipate that we will need something of the order of £10,000. We see this as an opportunity to engage with our membership and move towards a shared goal.

The latter part of our year has obviously been severely affected by the lockdown resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic. All projects have, effectively, been put on hold.

FRIENDS OF DURHAM WOODLAND CEMETERY

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

1ST APRIL 2019 TO 31ST MARCH 2020

INCOME

RENT OF LODGE	700.00
DONATIONS	847.16
GIFT AID	211.79
TOTAL INCOME	1758.95

EXPENDITURE

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	139.18
POSTAGE AND STATIONERY	50.63
INSURANCE	333.19
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	523.00

SURPLUS	1,235.95
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