

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES 1 JUNE 2023 – 31 MAY 2024

1. MEMBERSHIP

FONC membership fell from 730 to 661 this year, with 186 members still to renew at the end of May. If they do not renew (but we are hopeful that most will), we will have recruited 226 new members and lost 305. We have 5 overseas members. 50% of members have paid their subscription by bank standing order and additional standing order applications have been submitted. During the indisposition of Simon Mercer, our Membership Secretary, we have been most fortunate that Vice-Chairman Carol Stevenson, with the support of Treasurer Ann Coley, has been able to update the membership database and to produce our newsletter distribution rounds and enable the electronic distribution of newsletters and to produce subscription reminders to our many members. The Acting Membership Secretary would like to acknowledge the huge amount of work put in over many years by the Honorary Membership Secretary. It is a big job!

2. FONC MEETINGS AND MEMBERS' VISITS

After careful consideration it was agreed to hold all Trustees 'meetings' this year on the fourth Monday of the month on the Zoom 'virtual' platform to enable full participation. Trustees held eleven regular meetings, and the Practical Work Sub-Committee met four times. The 2023 AGM was not well attended despite an update on the East Lodge project. We hope that the 2024 AGM timing and arrangements produce a better result. We held a much more successful members Christmas social in December at the Old Nun's Head pub. There was no business element to the event and it was billed as a 'thank-you' to volunteers who do not usually meet each other. Whilst food was provided, drinks were 'buy-your-own'. A very successful members' visit to Paddington Old Cemetery in September was organised by Cathy Mercer.

3. FONC GOVERNANCE

The Trustees discussed the results of their skills audit and have identified areas where improvement is needed. As a result of our Membership Secretary's long-term indisposition this year, we have recognised our vulnerability and have begun to address the issue of succession planning and to document the processes by which various FONC Trustees and members carry out functions on behalf of FONC. This will be a priority for the coming year. We have carried out further six-monthly reviews of our dynamic five-year FONC Strategy Plan to enable us to set targets and review performance in the delivery of all of our stated objectives. The Plan is available on our website. We also regularly receive governance information from the Charity Commission. The Trustees have formally documented the Financial Policies adopted by FONC in one document, which can be found on the FONC website. This has not resulted in any significant changes in the practices adopted by FONC, but enhances transparency for members and other interested parties.

4. FONC'S COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

We continue to review FONC's communications strategy, to ensure it meets the needs of our members and users today. Whilst we have not yet been able to unify our accounts across Instagram and Facebook, we have been able to post more exciting and relevant content, more regularly. We have also been better able to engage local organisations in the Nunhead area through social media.

5. AFFILIATIONS

We continue to be affiliated to the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE) (£25 p.a.) and the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (£20 p.a.). We participate in Community Southwark opportunities and are affiliated to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (free). We are also members of the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (free).

6. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS (NFCF)

The National Federation of Cemetery Friends held its annual general meeting at London's Brompton cemetery in June 2023 with 23 groups represented. As part of the business of the meeting, FONC reported on the work towards the delivery phase application for National Heritage Lottery Grant aid and shared our consultant's briefs documents with the Federation for the benefit of all 120+ member groups. FONC's Gwyneth Stokes retired as the Secretary of NFCF after over 30 years' service and was immediately appointed as Honorary President of the Federation. We also assisted a Reading Cemetery group with plans for their gate lodge

7. FONC PUBLICATIONS & ENQUIRY DESK

With a small band of regular volunteers, FONC's Publications & Enquiries Desk (PED) has continued to be available at every FONC tour - covering the ever-popular last Sunday of the month and the mid-month themed tours - 34 in total! We also supported the two larger events in the Cemetery - the Annual Open Day and the Open House/Heritage Open Weekend where the PED volunteers spent their time helping cemetery visitors by providing them with information about the cemetery, signing up new members and selling FONC publications and the FONC tote bags. The desk was also available for the Month of the Dead tours in October and for the occasional pre-arranged group tours offered by FONC. Although there is a dedicated band of volunteers helping on the desk, we continue to need new volunteers, especially as we continue to offer an extensive range of tours. It is a great way to meet and chat to the cemetery's many and varied visitors. Our thanks go to the all the volunteers who cover the PED outside, under a gazebo, all year round come rain or shine! In total 18 volunteers provided 537.5 hours of PED cover during the year.

8. FONC WEB SITE, PUBLICITY AND MEDIA COVERAGE

Webmaster Simon Quill continues to manage our website (www.fonc.org.uk) in the hope that we will be able to transfer it in the coming year to a more modern website platform. This will enable us to re-energise the website, and forms part of the digitisation strategy of the East Lodge restoration project. The Trustees are committed to applying appropriate funding to enable this to happen.

We continue to feature in several publications during the year and Southwark Council have now picked up on advertising our events in their electronic bulletins to Southwark residents. A major filming session took place in the cemetery which generated a donation to FONC although we did nothing to facilitate the work!

9. MEMBERS' JOURNAL

Some members call it a newsletter, others call it a magazine, I refer of course to FONC News, our quarterly journal, of which four editions were published last year comprising a total of 108 pages. In addition to up-to-date news about the cemetery provided by our co-ordinator, Jeff Hart, and information about FONC's past and future events and activities, every issue contained articles contributed by members on a variety of interesting subjects. The editor would like to thank everyone involved in the production and distribution of FONC News, including Nicola Dunn and her team of hand deliverers and Linda Martin our postal co-ordinator. Carol Stevenson stepped in to provide the address labels etc, due to the indisposition of Simon Mercer, so many thanks to her, Thanks also to Jeff and Jane Hart for collecting the work from the printers and for collecting the items for posting and taking them to the post-office. Thanks also to Marina and the staff at Catford Print for their excellent service. Last but not least, thanks to all those members who have sent us

their articles. FONC News is your publication so please keep your articles and letters coming. Please write to Ron Woollacott, editor of FONC News, c/o 185 Gordon Road, London, SE15 3RT or email: editorfonc@hotmail.com

10. RELIGIOUS AND REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

Once again, our All-Souls Service featured the singing of the Nunhead Lighthouse Cathedral choir during the service led by Fr. Dele Ogunyemi of St. Antony with St. Silas church. Our annual Remembrance Service was again well attended with several members and non-members laying wreaths at each of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission sites, the civilian memorial and at the Anglican chapel. We donate to the Royal British Legion for the wreaths and multi-faith crosses that we place in the cemetery. We recognise the importance to our members of these events and the comfort they bring.

11. PUBLICATIONS, ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH WORK

Another new Nunhead cemetery publication, 'The Entertainers', by Michele Louise Burford and Ron Woollacott was published this year. The 'Short Guide' to the cemetery was reprinted with new photographs included and we have amalgamated and updated the two Walworth Boy Scouts titles by Rex Batten and added new illustrations. We continue to receive, and welcome, donations from members and others of their family histories and memorabilia which helps to add to the wealth of stories about our increasing number of 'Notables' and other aspects of the cemetery. We also responded positively to several student project requests.

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

A full programme of cemetery tours took place and a new guide, Robert Dunn, has been recruited. We are now able to offer two bat prowls each year and have introduced a Black History Month tour and a Spring Bird Walk. Special interest tours were held for, among others, a Funeral Director's group and the Historic Buildings and Places charity. Two very successful school's visits from Hollydale School and Ivydale Primary School took place, involving nearly 90 children. The Nunhead and Peckham Free Film Festival event returned to Nunhead in September. More than 450 people turned up for the event restricted to 300 attendees! Our increasing number of arts events have been very well received. In August, Luisa Maria MacCormack presented her work inspired by the cemetery in the chapel and Urte Janus curated an exhibition attracting over 300 visitors as part of the Nunhead Arts Trail in September. Teresa Neary also initiated our very first Carol Singing event in the cemetery which, a little to our surprise, proved overwhelmingly popular and will now become a regular event.

13. MONUMENT INSCRIPTION RECORDING AND GRAVESEARCH ENQUIRIES

More volunteers have come forward in the past 12 months for Monument Inscription Recording work. Nineteen volunteers participated in our workdays, carrying out 374 hours 40 minutes of work (264 last year). This is despite the unrelenting rain of the past few months! We continue to schedule two days each month.

Inscription recording work this year has focused almost exclusively on the large area at the top right-hand side of the Main Avenue, and work on recording the inscriptions in squares 109-112 is largely complete. We will be moving into squares 125-127 in the next phase, where once again the Practical Work team have provided valuable assistance in clearing some of this area to allow us better access to the graves.

Use of the inscription recording template is in full swing, and volunteers (including one keen home worker) have completed and sent to me more than 1700 records. The aim is to get these uploaded to the website so that members of the public can access them more readily, but this will require the services of the Digitisation Consultant engaged as part of the funding for the restoration

of the East Lodge. In addition, the previous Monument Inscription Recording Coordinator has recently passed on an estimated three thousand paper records of inscriptions recorded over earlier decades, and the majority of inscriptions of some soon-to-be demolished monuments done by volunteers with North West Kent Family History Society in 1979/80 have been photocopied and are now held safely by the current Coordinator. This will give us a great deal of work in the coming months.

The stream of enquiries from people looking to find the grave of their ancestors buried at Nunhead has continued unabated, and there is now a 4-week backlog of requests. We have continued to receive donations from many of those enquirers. This revenue stream continues to support the work all volunteers carry out at Nunhead Cemetery.

14. PRACTICAL WORKDAYS

Practical work is conducted in the Cemetery on the first Sunday of each month and occasional ad-hoc days. Please see the Practical Work Group Annual Report for information on the number of volunteers, hours, and work completed. We are also now a regular participant in 'The Big Help Out' event offering taster volunteering sessions in the cemetery. We also hosted a visit from the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery to learn how we organize our workdays.

15. ANNUAL CEMETERY OPEN DAY AND OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

We participated in the well attended London Open City and Heritage Open Days on 9/10 September which raised nearly £600 for FONC funds but more importantly introduced new visitors to the cemetery. The May 2024 Open Day was attended by approximately 5350 people, a new record, and raised more than £6,000 for FONC funds! This was Trustee Teresa Neary's first year as Open Day organiser. Our plant stall volunteers and home bakers came up trumps again this year and we also added new stalls and attractions to the event delighting the large numbers of visitors and to the obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment of the day.

16. MANAGEMENT OF THE CEMETERY BY SOUTHWARK BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Nunhead Cemetery Conservation Management Plan was finally adopted in October 2023 although a management group to oversee its implementation has yet to be formed. Path flooding, particularly on the East Path has become increasingly problematic and will need to be addressed as part of the Plan. Enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order seems to have all but ceased and the legally required review of the PSPO due in March 2024 has yet to happen. An individual not associated with FONC has taken it upon themselves to move common grave markers to line an informal path in the Dissenters Glade area. Moving headstones is illegal and Southwark have informed the police. We were also awarded a Southwark Council Cultural Celebrations Fund grant enabling FONC to purchase a new disabled access ramp for the chapel, a PA system and hire portable toilets for the Open Day.

17. CEMETERY IMPROVEMENTS

Although we hoped that repairs to the Limesford Road boundary walls would begin last summer, difficulty in obtaining approvals for road closures and Thames Water re-direction of pipework meant that this could not happen. However, we have just been told that work is scheduled to start on 10 June 2024 with completion in April 2025. However, Council contractors, Fulker Construction, working under contractors, Conway, completed a further tranche of 25 monument repairs, chosen in consultation with FONC during the year, all to an excellent standard. We had hoped to fund some additional monument repairs as an adjunct to this work but Southwark were unwilling to allow this. The good news is that their concerns have now been overcome and we will be contributing £12,000 towards additional monuments to those planned for the next tranche of 30 monuments starting in October 2024. We still await the commissioning of a feasibility study on the possibility of

re-roofing the Anglican chapel and cracking in the path in the area of the Scottish Martyrs memorial still awaits a resolution. The increasing number of storms during the year has led to a significant number of trees coming down in all parts of the cemetery. However, the missing lime trees on the Main Avenue have now all been replaced by fine new specimens. We are also in discussion with the Napoleonic and Revolutionary War Graves Charity and Surrey County Cricket Club with a view to carrying out work to remember Edward Costello and Bobby 'the Guv'nor' Abel respectively. Discussions have also been held with Butterfly Conservation and Froglife with a view to improving habitats in the cemetery.

18. EAST LODGE RESTORATION: 'FROM RUIN TO REVIVAL'

Following last years' successful FONC and Southwark Council joint application for development phase funding, working with nine different consultants, we continued working on in-depth proposals to enable us to submit an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for the main part of funding for the project – the delivery phase. Due to the deteriorating condition of the East Lodge itself, we had set ourselves the ambitious timetable of submitting the delivery phase application in November 2023, just 14 months after receiving the development phase go-ahead.

Southwark Council has committed the required match funding for the project. In addition to support from FONC, we also raised over £250,000 required additional grants from Historic England, The Garfield Weston Foundation and The Pilgrim Trust. After much hard work by FONC, the application was submitted and we then had to wait patiently until March 2024 for the outcome! In February, we made a presentation of our project proposal to the lead NHLF assessor who said that our presentation clearly demonstrated our great enthusiasm and could not have been any better!

We were thus thrilled to hear from the NHLF in late March that our application for a £3.7million grant had been successful! The project will restore the East Lodge as a new hub for community activity in the cemetery with the visitor experience being enhanced by the provision of new café, FONC office and public toilet facilities. A new modular building, replacing the existing dilapidated FONC cabin, will provide a base for volunteer practical activities. A new salaried role, the Outreach and Development Manager, will also be created to lead and grow the existing cemetery events programme designed to engage residents across all communities. These will include as oral history sessions, practical conservation and habitat development, exhibitions and art events. Work will start on site later this year with, hopefully, the new modular building being available by the end of this year and the East Lodge fully open in 2027.

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery
Accounts for the year ended 31 March

	2024	2023	2022
	£	£	£
Receipts			
Publication sales	2,048	1,379	1,697
Subscriptions	1,418	1,520	1,512
Donations	7,237	6,181	7,170
Donations (reserved)	2,000	-	-
Bequests	25,295	-	-
Gift Aid	859	930	636
Event income	8,100	6,255	4,493
Interest	613	135	6
Grants	7,997	4,195	-
Total receipts	55,567	20,595	15,514
Payments - Administration and running			
Postage	1,170	1,105	1,621
Stationery	547	253	73
Printing - newsletter	1,235	1,173	883
Meeting costs	349	294	57
Insurance	157	157	157
Electronic payment fees	113	102	83
Other expenses	204	89	85
	3,775	3,173	2,959
Payments - Events and other			
Purchases	1,065	906	275
Items to sell	2,283	90	718
Tools	-	613	70
Event costs	3,668	2,471	2,984
	7,016	4,080	4,047
Payments - designated funds			
Monument repairs	-	5,760	10,890
Total expenditure	10,791	13,013	17,896
Surplus for the year	44,776	7,582	(2,382)
Balance sheet at 31 March	2024	2023	2022
Opening balance	135,941	128,359	130,740
Surplus for the year (excluding reserved funds)	42,776	7,582	(2,382)
Total unreserved funds	178,717	135,941	128,359
Reserved funds for Monument repairs	2,000	-	-
Total assets	180,717	135,941	128,359
Consisting of:			
Santander Current a/c	16,609	5,896	1,694
Santander Deposit a/c	67,237	65,984	63,712
Co-op Deposit account	96,871	64,061	62,953
	180,717	135,941	128,359

Notes to the accounts

- 1 FONC tools and other physical assets valued at £5,000
- 2 FONC publications stock valued at £5,500 (resale value estimated £9,000)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery reserves policy

Reserved funds - donated specifically for monument repairs £2,000

Unreserved funds:

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 FONC modular building 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
- fit out of the new FONC modular building £10,000
- contribution to the the fabric of the chapel £20,000
- expenditure to support the National Heritage Lottery Fund activity programme £10,000
- Digitisation of FONC records £15,000
- balance to support a long term repair programme of monuments in the cemetery



Ann Coley
Treasurer

Dated 9 June 2024

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 2024.

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:

9 June 2024