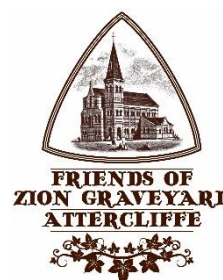


Friends of Zion Graveyard Attercliffe

A Community Interest Organisation: No 1188411

Registered Office: 132 Wincobank Avenue, Sheffield S5 6BB



Annual Report

For the period 1st November 2021 to 31 October 2022

This report has been adapted from the presentation made to the Annual General Meeting held at Upper Wincobank Chapel, Wincobank Avenue 7pm on Monday 12th December 2023

Background Information

The graveyard

Originally established in 1805 as the burial ground of the Zion Congregational Chapel and later a larger church, the graveyard became neglected after the church building was demolished in 1976 and then forgotten following housing clearance. The local area became dominated by scrapyards, vehicle compounds and sex shops which discouraged visitors. The site of the church was purchased by a local firm and the graveyard was fenced in and locked for 20 years. It was advertised for sale in 2017 when it was described as “a closed graveyard, irregular in shape and measuring 584 square yards”.

The organisation

Friends of Zion Graveyard Attercliffe (FoZGA) was originally formed as a constituted group on 1 July 2017 with the main objective of saving the graveyard from redevelopment as a car compound and in particular, the grave of anti-slavery campaigner Mary Anne Rawson and her family.

A Charitable Private Limited Company registered in England & Wales No 11016737 was incorporated on 17th October 2017 and after a fundraising campaign and successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund the graveyard was purchased on 25 January 2018. Charity Registration No 1188411 was granted on 9th March 2020.

Objects of the Trust

For the Public Benefit:

- (A) To upkeep and maintain the cemetery known as Zion Graveyard, Attercliffe Sheffield
- (B) To advance the education of the local community and others in the history of the graveyard and those buried in it, including Mary Anne Rawson

November 2021 – October 2022 Progress Report

The Organisation was converted from Registered Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 22 June 2022 with the same Charity Number of 1188411. The Charitable Private Limited Company 11016737 is now closed and the Land Registry has been informed of the changes.

We were supported in this process by Ms Shahida Siddique of Faithstar LLP Ltd.

The Trustees are Mick Bruin, Peter Hurman, Samantha Hurman (Secretary), Jean Hine (Treasurer), and Penny Rea (Chair). The Trustees have ultimate responsibility but planning and decision-making is made taking into account the views and experience of other key volunteers who contribute through regular committee meetings and practical sessions: Amanda Appleby, Alison Davies, Alanna Hurman, Sylvia Jones.

Other supporters make a contribution in different ways and we are especially grateful to the support of Ann Beedham, Mike Higginbottom, Bridget Ingle and Ian Prior whose efforts will be mentioned below.

There are no paid staff. We rely entirely on the commitment and hard work of volunteers.

Many other people have signed up as supporters and have made a financial donation towards the purchase and upkeep of the graveyard. We refer to these supporters as “members”. Most have opted to remain on our email circulation list receiving monthly emails on events and activities. We try to keep in touch with those who do not use email at least once a year. Frequent updates are also posted on our Facebook page and Twitter feed “Zion Graveyard Attercliffe”.

At the end of the year our supporters and followers numbered as follows:

Members: 337 Email: circulation list 293 Facebook: 580 Twitter: 150

We undertake to open the graveyard on the second Sunday of the month for visitors, at other times for gardening and maintenance sessions, and for occasional family activities during school holidays.

Gardening & Maintenance Volunteers

After the initial effort to clear, map and research the graves, the number of regular volunteers has settled at a core group of 10. The graveyard is usually locked due to its isolated location and previous anti-social behaviour, also to protect the wildlife. After purchase, the site was surveyed by Wildscapes (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust) and a management plan was drawn up. The site is termed a “stopping off place” for birds flying across the industrial Don Valley. Having been undisturbed for so long it is a haven for insects and fungi and there are also some interesting wildflowers coming through as the ivy is cleared back.

Now that we better understand the site’s significance and importance for biodiversity the Trustees have applied to the Charity Commission to add an additional object:

“To support the preservation and conservation of the natural heritage and biodiversity of Zion Graveyard Attercliffe.”

Events & Activities

We were invited to book an information stand at the Sheffield Heritage Fair held at the Millennium Galleries on 29th & 30th January 2022. This gave volunteers an opportunity to network with other organisations and share information with many members of the public.

During the year the U3A Visiting History Group came to Zion Graveyard. Illustrated talks were given about Zion Graveyard for Grenoside History Group and about Mary Anne Rawson to Friends of Wincobank Hill, Manor Lodge and the Victorian Society.

Local historian Mike Higginbottom gave a well-attended talk “A Look Round Attercliffe” at the Library Café and kindly donated proceeds to FoZGA. He made a further donation when his bus tour of the Don Valley visited the graveyard.

Mike is working with Ann Beedham and committee members to produce a booklet about Zion Graveyard using the information collated for the interpretation panels. We hope this will be available for sale in 2023.

The Heritage Open Days theme in 2022 was Industry. We were able to provide a summary of known occupations of persons buried in Zion Graveyard and an information display about The Sheffield Smelting Company, founded by Mary Anne Rawson's grandfather and of which the family were directors until 1966. FoZGA was also represented at the Heritage Open Day at Upper Wincobank Chapel a building which was founded as a school by Mary Anne Rawson.

In May, local author Michelle Rawlins visited the graveyard to talk about her new book *The Buffer Girls* and sign copies. As this drew on the lives of Attercliffe women, it attracted a small crowd who stayed for refreshments and to look around the graveyard.

We continued our education work through family activities funded by Sheffield Children's University providing opportunities for children to engage with the wildlife in Zion, and explore aspects of history through art, craft and drama. We also held a fun "Halloween" session for families to encourage children to feel comfortable and be respectful in the graveyard whilst enjoying traditional games and craft activities.

As the graveyard came back to life after the winter we have tried to identify and log the wildflowers that appear through the year and have invested in a hand-held labelling machine. Thanks to some additional funding from the Soroptimists (Hallamshire Branch), we have been able to move British Native plants into the spaces which have been reclaimed from the ground ivy.

We have continued to monitor wildlife with a remote camera catching a great spotted woodpecker as well as our regular birds. Also, of interest this year is the giant willow aphid evidenced by puddles of honeydew liquid beneath the goat willow trees above Mary Anne's grave.

The Canadian fleabane was another new discovery this year. It was unknown in Britain until 200 years ago when a consignment of goods from North America was unloaded in London. Since then, it has gradually been spreading northwards.

Pathway Improvements are planned to improve access. We are grateful to Ian Prior for his help in drawing up a formal ground plan which can be circulated to obtain quotes. The raffle drawn at the 2021 AGM raised £264 towards this work.

In the never-ending effort to keep removing the vast amounts of litter that accumulate in Ferguson Street we have been assisted by many volunteers especially Bridget Ingle, who not only collects the litter from the wider area but also reports it to the Council and follows up until it is removed. Much of the litter blows in from the uncovered waste skips nearby and we need to keep monitoring the situation.

Trustees are represented on a working group to steer the renovation of the old schoolhouse at Wincobank Chapel with a view to basing our office and resources there. Our Registered Address is now 132 Wincobank Avenue S5 6BB which is the chapel and house address.

We would like to thank all our members and volunteers for their ongoing support.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held at 7pm on Tuesday 28th November 2023 at Attercliffe Old Library, 10 Leeds Road, S9 3TY. Michelle Rawlins will also be talking about her new book about the Sheffield Blitz.

The verified Annual Accounts are below. Thanks go to Steve Randall for the external finance check.

Friends of Zion Graveyard Attercliffe
Finance Report November 2021-October 2022

Bank @ 31 oct 2021	£4,072.63
Expenditure	£1,396.46
Income banked	£1,377.54
Bank @ 31 Oct 2022	£3,917.57
Income not banked	£136.14
Total Funds @ 31 Oct 2022	£4,053.71
Income Summary	
General Donations	£354.04
Mr Mumby donation	£200.00
Raffle Income	£322.00
Mike Higginbottom Talk	£251.50
Children's University Grant	£250.00
TOTAL	£1,377.54
Spend Summary	
Administration	
Bank charges	£53.34
Meeting room	£50.00
Memberships	£40.00
Website host	£86.41
Insurance	£98.25
Events	
Artist fees and expenses	£175.00
Raffle licence	£20.00
Raffle tickets	£37.80
Heritage parking	£8.50
Refreshments	£43.82
Flask	£21.59
Graveyard	
Labeller and labels	£43.87
Graveyard keys	£77.40
Tools and gloves	£261.24
Pebbles and pens	£29.00
Storage box	£45.00
Bench	£124.69
Notice board	£180.55
TOTAL	£1,396.46

I have examined the records and accounts of Friends of Zion Graveyard, Attercliffe for the year ending 31st October 2022 and can confirm that they accurately reflect the activities of that organisation

Stephen Randall 21.5.2023

