

# **Annual Report of the Trustees of Friends of the ODA Memorial Gardens**

## **2024 – 2025**

### **Introduction**

This is the first Trustees report following the group becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in March 2024 and is issued to comply with the reporting requirements of the Charity Commission. As such, it has been drafted and structured in accordance with their published guidance.

The Friends of ODA Memorial Gardens was formed in 2020 with the aim of improving the layout of the gardens and making them more accessible for everyone in the community. The outward appearance with overgrown trees and bushes was not inviting and it was evident that not many people made use of what could be a valuable asset to the community. The management of the gardens is the responsibility of the Parish Council, so we signed a partnership agreement with them which allows us to pursue the improvements that we would like to see.

Since the early days, a lot has been achieved by a relatively small group of dedicated volunteers. Two significant grants from the Mercia Park Community Fund allowed us to carry out a feasibility study, engaging with the Parish community with the help of a landscape architect. The second grant funded the start of the groundwork, moving some of the earth bunds to positions on the new layout.

The most noticeable change has been the refurbishment and repositioning of the colliery wheel. It is now in a much more suitable location and does not detract from the elegance of the Memorial Gates. A lot of this work was carried out by the volunteers and the professional tasks were funded by grants from various organisations including the Parish Council.

The next phase of the project is to improve and extend the paths to provide safe and accessible routes around the various features that will eventually be created. A large grant from Severn Trent had been applied for with the support of Voluntary Action Leicestershire but unfortunately, we were not successful. As a result, we have had to change our approach to carry out smaller pieces of work funded by smaller grants. Despite the setbacks, steady progress is being made thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and we expect to have more visible evidence of our work during the remainder of 2025.

In summary, we are making steady and visible progress with the project thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, support from the Parish Council and funding from many local organisations.

### **Name**

The registered name of the group is 'Friends of the ODA Memorial Gardens

### **Structure and Trustees**

The structure of the group has purposely been kept simple. The board of trustees currently consists of five elected members. Supporting the board are a chair, secretary and treasurer, who at this point are all trustees, although this is not a requirement of our articles.

Membership of the group is open to anyone and no membership fee is charged. All member's meetings are open but the trustees meet separately to discuss plans and strategic issues which are then put to the membership for voting.

## **Objects**

As stated in the constitution, the objects of the group are as follows:

In compliance with the regulations of Historic England, to preserve the Grade II listed War Memorial Gates and the Colliery Wheel gifted by the National Coal Miners Welfare, both integral parts of the Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Parish Memorial Gardens situated in the centre of the Parish at Church Street, Donisthorpe, Leicestershire, DE12 7PX and to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the Memorial Gardens' flora, fauna and natural environment by promoting biodiversity

To advance the education of the public by providing information about the Donisthorpe War Memorial Gateway, the industrial mining heritage of the Parish and through outreach projects and events for all members of the public.

To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Donisthorpe, Leicestershire and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity of disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

## **Activities**

A large part of the activities are 'behind the scenes' such as fund raising, organising events to raise funds or promote the group and applying for grants to fund the planned work in the gardens.

Whenever possible, working days in the gardens are planned to keep the group active and bring members together. Seeing members working in the gardens is also a good way of recruiting new members as we often have conversations with passers by about what we are doing. Although the Parish Council are responsible for the basic maintenance of the gardens, there are many other tasks that we carry out to tidy and improve the environment, such as crown raising the trees and pruning back the bushes.

We also hold several events a year in the gardens to publicise what we are doing, encourage more people into the gardens and hopefully raise funds as well. These events have been successful and well received over the past year.

## **Achievements**

The main achievement during this reporting period has been the remodelling of the earth bunds on the side of the gardens adjacent to the football pitches. The plans have been developed on the basis that soil will not be removed or brought onto the site, ie we will use what we have. Although some of the features, such as the bandstand, will not be created until much later we need to ensure that the groundwork is in place from the start to avoid unnecessary disturbance later on. The new features have been seeded and the grass will hopefully mature over the spring and summer.

We have also held several successful events including a community market, picnic in the park, participating in the village open gardens, quiz and bingo nights and a Proms in the Park event with Newhall Brass Band.

Fund raising is a continual part of our activities and we have been engaging with local organisations right up to national companies in order seek funding. This is very time consuming but our steadily increasing reserves show that the effort of our volunteers is paying off.

### **Financial Review**

The underlying financial objective is to raise suitable grant funding for each stage of the project in turn, the size of the grant ultimately determining the amount of work being carried out. Alongside applying for grants, we also run several events during the year to raise funds to help run the group. These funds are used to cover costs such as insurance and the purchase of tools and equipment. They are also used to demonstrate to grant providers that we are actively raising our own funds which can be used for match-funding if required. For these purposes it is beneficial to maintain a reasonable reserve, so we try not to spend all income.

The steady increase in our funds over the years, despite spending the grants we have received, has shown this policy to be working for us. Having reserves available for match funding has allowed us to secure a number of small grants each year from local organisations to supplement the larger grants for groundworks etc.

Any significant financial decisions are addressed by the Trustees initially and then a proposal is put to the membership for voting.

Our accounts for this year show us to be in a healthy position with reasonable reserves. We have had success in securing several grants as well as generating income from our events.

### **Treasurers Report**

We have had a successful year raising funds and our balance remains steady. Our main sources of funding continue to be through events, grant allocation, donations and earmarked funds from ODA Parish Council.

Whilst, we were not successful in our application to Severn Trent we now need to manage the overall project in smaller size tasks subject to funding being available.

We'd like to thank the parish council, district council and the community for their continued support including a generous donation of 330.00 from the family of John Hair, a well know resident and former councillor who gave much of his time to improving the community.

This year was dominated by expenditure on moving the bunds, the Spring Bulb Scheme, a new flower bed including topsoil and we added grass seed to cover the soil under the wheel.

UKSPF funds of £3900 have now been spent with a small residue of 47.75 set against the total cost of spring bulbs.

Our total income	5131.16
Our total expenditure	2842.31
Net profit for 24/25	2288.85
Balance at 31st March	7297.73

The balance includes 30.00 deposits for the community market on May 10th and 100.00 from the parish council to fund the choir for VE event.

2025/26

Given increases in costs for essential services rising in April, access to funding and value of quotes will no doubt be more challenging for us.

Some unexpected expenditure is to be spent on repairing the damaged boundary wall and commencement of the railings in a section of the wall linked by a metal archway. This will require a significant contribution from our current balance along with funding from the parish council. Figures to be confirmed.

The Coop grant we received is to finance the commencement of the sensory garden purchasing topsoil for the circular and oak sleepers to encircle the bed.

Other grants in the pipeline:

Bird boxes. NFC have ended the previous grant that funded the boxes and an application to NWLDC small grant scheme is in progress.

NWLDC have a new scheme looking to fund larger projects and our project may be one that meets the criteria. Not open until this financial year.

Sue McKendrick  
Treasurer

Friends of Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Memorial Gardens														
Accounting 2024 - 2025														
			Month											
		B/fwd	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25
REVENUE														
	Quiz takings			£ 188.00					£ 413.87					
	Donations		£ -	£ 40.00	£ 40.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 330.00
	Community Market			£ 485.12	£ 127.90									
	Petty cash repaid			£ 100.00		£ 19.48								
	Proms				£ 618.58									
	Open Gardens				£ 632.55									
	Village Heart Opening event							£ 146.65						
	Client Deposit NWLDC							£ 9.60	£ 42.80	£ 23.60	£ 24.00	£ 28.00	£ 22.40	£ 22.40
	NFC Grant					£ 200.00								
	Apple Day								109.5					
	ODApC funds								£1,000.00					£100.00
	Trader deposits											£10.00	£20.00	
	Prize Bingo										£298.00			
	Sum Up										£48.19			
	Booking fee deposit Bingo											£50.00		
	TOTAL REVENUE		£0.00	£813.12	£1,419.03	£219.48	£0.00	£156.25	£1,566.17	£23.60	£370.19	£88.00	£42.40	£452.40
EXPENDITURE														
	Community Market			£ 332.30										
	PO Counters			£ 9.60					£ 35.00					
	Proms			£ 270.00	£ 536.98									
	TR Steele Contracts				£ 180.00							£ 300.00		
	Open Gardens				£ 30.00									
	Postage Lloyds Bank				£ 7.95									
	MP Ebay													
	Village Heart							£ 22.50	£ 95.00					
	Expenses JW					£ 33.95								
	Quiz raffle tickets								£ 23.04					
	Apple Day													
	Prize Bingo													
	Grass Seed										£29.99			
	Bacon for work session										£9.70			
	Insurance											£246.12		
	Borleys Top Soil								£118.20		£475.20			

[illegible]

	B/fwd	Month Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24
<b>REVENUE</b>					
UKSPF					
Coop					
NWLDC Small Grants					
Parish Council				£ 500.00	
NFC CWG SG13					£ 200.00
TOTAL REVENUE		<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£500.00</u>	<u>£200.00</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Design with Nature		£ 344.88			
TR Steele Contracts		£ 1,008.00	£ 180.00		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>£1,352.88</u>	<u>£180.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>
NET PROFIT		<u><u>-£1,352.88</u></u>	<u><u>-£180.00</u></u>	<u><u>£500.00</u></u>	<u><u>£200.00</u></u>

Aug-24      Sep-24      Oct-24      Nov-24      Dec-24      Jan-25      Feb-25      Mar-25

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£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00



	Month			
	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24
Donation K.Hallam	£	10.00		
Donation C&S Keeley	£	20.00		
Donation Alicia Jones	£	10.00		
Donation A.Corbett			£	5.00
Donation KE			£	10.00
Donation SMcK			£25.00	
	£0.00	£40.00	£40.00	£0.00

**Aug-24**

**Sep-24**

**Oct-24**

Nov-24

Dec-24

Jan-25

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Mar-25

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	Month			
	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Proms & petty cash			£ 574.80	
Proms SumUp receipts			£ 43.78	
TOTAL REVENUE	£0.00	£0.00	£618.58	£0.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Excloosive Ltd		£ 270.00		
Petty cash Proms			£ 120.00	
Newhall Band			£ 380.00	
J.Wilde expenses			£ 36.98	
JW Expenses				£ 33.95
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£0.00	£270.00	£536.98	£33.95

Aug-24      Sep-24      Oct-24      Nov-24      Dec-24      Jan-25      Feb-25      Mar-25

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	Month			
	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Open Gardens petty cash			£ 253.12	
Open Gardens SumUp receipts			£ 0.98	
Opens Gardens S.Mck			£ 25.00	
Open Gardens other receipts			£ 353.45	
TOTAL REVENUE	£0.00	£0.00	£632.55	£0.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Petty cash Open Gardens			£ 30.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£0.00	£0.00	£30.00	£0.00
NET PROFIT	£0.00	£0.00	£602.55	£0.00

**Aug-24**

**Sep-24**

Oct-24

Nov-24

Dec-24

Jan-25

Feb-25

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	Month			
	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Community Mkt takings		£ 385.12		
Petty cash repaid		£ 100.00		
Stallholder deposit transfer			£ 5.00	
SumUp receipts Cty Mkt			£ 122.90	
TOTAL REVENUE	£0.00	£485.12	£127.90	£0.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Heartwood		£ 200.00		
Temple Bees		£ 69.30		
JH Fresh Foods		£ 63.00		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£0.00	£332.30	£0.00	£0.00
NET PROFIT	£0.00	£152.82	£127.90	£0.00

**Aug-24**

**Sep-24**

Oct-24

Nov-24

Dec-24

Jan-25

Feb-25

Mar-25

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	Month			
	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24
REVENUE				
Quiz				

TOTAL REVENUE	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
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EXPENDITURE

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
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NET PROFIT	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
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**Aug-24**

**Sep-24**

Oct-24

Nov-24

Dec-24

Jan-25

Feb-25

Mar-25

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