

# FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE CEMETERY TRUST

## PROTECTORS REPORT

FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2015

The function of the protectors is to ensure that the trustees act in accordance with the charitable objects and do not act in a manner likely to prejudice the welfare of the Cemetery. The protectors are required to submit an annual report on whether the trustees have so acted, and we are pleased both to confirm that they have, and to add some comments and some thanks.

Whilst it is of course necessary for the trustees to act in accordance with the charitable objects, the welfare of the Cemetery also depends on the trustees making progress in their aims, and successfully managing competing needs and priorities. We believe that much of the Cemetery's success depends on its preservation as a place of historic interest and beauty. It also depends on it achieving a proper balance between the needs of graveowners and visitors, and between the priorities of the hard and soft landscapes.

So that these competing needs and priorities can be clearly addressed, we are pleased that the trustees are progressing with the formalisation of a strategic plan, and look forward to this leading to a conservation plan. We trust that such plans will not be too rigid, and so can be adapted to changed circumstances. As part of the strategic planning process it is helpful that the trustees intend that the remaining burial space be properly identified and evaluated, so that they can in future consider at an early stage the appropriate type, style and location of general graves and major monuments in the Cemetery.

Whilst we welcome the increased income from burials and visitors, we would be concerned if priorities were to be set in relation to their respective financial contributions, particularly given the expected decline in burial income. So we also welcome the trustees' recognition in their report that "It is important to allow the Cemetery to be used as a burial ground for as long as possible, as this helps to maintain its significance as a place of remembrance".

That remembrance is best expressed physically by the Cemetery's memorials and monuments, and we have been delighted by the continuing progress made in their conservation. As the leader of that programme, Ed Daley, will be retiring as a trustee this year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his expertise and commitment.

In addition we would like to thank John Shepperd, also retiring as a trustee this year, and who as chairman effectively steered the trustee board through a management reorganisation and the appointment of our Chief Executive, Ian Dungavell.

Lastly, but by no means least, we would like to thank the Cemetery staff and volunteers, whose contribution continues to be so vital to the success of the Cemetery.

**Margaret Butt**

**Richard Morris**

**Janet Wolf**