

THE FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE CEMETERY TRUST
(the “Charity”)

Minutes of the twenty third Annual General Meeting (‘AGM’) of the Charity held by Zoom Video-Conference Facility on Wednesday 29 July 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Present:	Martin Adeney	(Chairman)
	Doreen Aislabie	(Trustee)
	Katy Baldwin	(Trustee)
	April Cameron	(Trustee)
	Nicola Jones	(Trustee)
	Steve Kennard	(Trustee)
	Lucy Lelliott	(Trustee)
	Stuart Orr	(Trustee)
	Teresa Sladen	(Trustee)
	Nigel Thorne	(Trustee)
	Evelyn Wilder	(Trustee)
	Dr Tye Blackshaw	(Protector)
	Richard Morris	(Protector)
	Philip Williams	(Protector)

Total 68 members of the Charity including Trustees and Protectors (see attendance list)

Apologies:	The Lord Palumbo of Walbrook	(President)
	Charles Essex	(Trustee)

In attendance:	Ian Dungavell	(CEO)
	Lucy Thompson	(Operations Manager)
	Martha Bruce	(Bruce Wallace Associates)

Introduction, Notice and Voting:

The Chairman welcomed the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust to the first ever virtual AGM of the Charity and a short explanation was provided about how the AGM would be conducted via Zoom, notably how shareholders could ask questions, make comments and cast their votes.

The Chairman declared a quorum was present and opened the meeting, noting that apologies had been received from Lord Palumbo of Walbrook, President, and Charles Essex, Trustee, who were unable to attend.

The notice of meeting was taken as read. The Chairman explained that voting would be conducted by electronic poll on each resolution and the votes cast electronically, as well as the proxy votes received, would be counted by the proxy officer, checked and announced on the Charity’s website after the meeting.

Resolution 1: Minutes of the 2019 AGM

The Chairman proposed and Nigel Thorne seconded Resolution 1 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to approve the minutes of the 2019 AGM.

The Chairman reported that Bruce Wallace Associates Limited had been engaged to record the minutes of the 2019 AGM professionally, and welcomed them back again this year.

Questions were invited and, as none were raised, Resolution 1 to approve the minutes of the 2019 AGM was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Resolution 2:

The Chairman proposed and Doreen Aislabie seconded Resolution 2 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to approve the minutes of the 2020 EGM, held to discuss the Private Bill now before Parliament.

The Chairman reported the minutes had also been recorded by Bruce Wallace Associates Limited and invited questions.

As no questions were raised when invited, Resolution 2 to approve the minutes of the 2020 EGM was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Resolution 3: Financial Statements

The Chairman proposed and Nicola Jones seconded Resolution 3 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to receive the Financial Statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 August 2019 ('Financial Statements').

The Chairman reported that summary financial statements had been sent to the members with the April newsletter and the full Financial Statements had also been published on the Charity's website.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman paid tribute to the contribution of three individuals: Richard Quirk, Managing Director of Highgate Cemetery Ltd from 1985 to 2012, who sadly died this month; John Murray, a longstanding Vice President who had played a significant role in difficult times leading up to establishment of the present structure and who now wished to retire; and Justin Bickersteth, Registrar, who had been an ambassador for Highgate Cemetery, carefully combining attention to detail with patient sympathy for those seeking burial space, and who had tendered his resignation as he was moving to Yorkshire.

The Chairman gave an update of events since the end of the 31 August 2019 financial year, emphasising that it had been a year of two halves. Last autumn visitor numbers were hitting new highs; approval was obtained to submit the Private Bill ('Bill') to Parliament to allow reclamation of old and abandoned graves to compensate for the shrinking supply of new burial space; and the Trustee Board was setting about implementation of the Conservation Plan by conducting a series of workshops and preparing to recruit Landscape architects.

One outcome from the workshops was determination of a coherent set of values to guide the direction of the cemetery as key decisions were made. An overarching principle of 'sanctuary' had been agreed for those buried and their friends and relations, visitors, wildlife that populates the cemetery and the many different species that have made it their home. Four values had also been selected to characterise the cemetery: 'enchancing', 'respectful', 'visionary' and 'nurturing', the latter meaning the positive treatment of people as well as a positive impact on the outside world. This principle and the values were referred to in planning the future course of the cemetery.

It was noted that the iconic cedar, around which the Circle of Lebanon was designed, had been lost last autumn and successfully replaced with a healthy young tree and wildflower planting.

The detailed Bill had been submitted to Parliament in December. It received a formal first and second reading and was expected to reach committee stage when in the middle of March everything stopped with lockdown and progress ground to a halt. The time since had been used to respond to comments from the Ministry of Justice and three petitions against the Bill, largely about the rights, or not, of indirect descendants. The House of Lords only recently published guidance outlining how some committees might work with a possible start date in September, when it was hoped the Bill would progress.

The Chairman reported that visitor income for the current 31 August 2020 financial year was substantially down, whilst income from grave sales had remained steady. The final outcome for the current year would depend on the success of attracting visitors over the next few weeks.

The Chairman also outlined progress made with the Conservation Plan and reported that throughout lockdown consultants had been working on a brief for a Landscape Architect and bids would be invited this autumn. The consultants had also been advising on options for new facilities including better provision for gardening staff and welcoming visitors, as well as better maintenance of existing fabric. This included providing advice on the potential costs and advisability of restoring the pinnacles on the chapel. It was noted that the consultants had expertise in submitting Heritage Lottery Bids and this was being considered as a means of supplementing resources. The Chairman reported that it had been difficult and there was a lot of unfinished business but, in spite of lockdown, work had continued steadily on laying the foundation for the careful and respectful renovation of the cemetery in accordance with clear values and principles and in line with the Conservation Plan.

The Chairman paid tribute to the Trustees for their expertise, detailed knowledge of the cemetery and work put in, often over and above regular meetings, to determine the direction and necessary practical steps to implement the Conservation Plan. Tribute and thanks were also extended to the staff, led by Ian Dungavell and supported strongly by Lucy Thompson. It had been a difficult time with most staff furloughed, though now happily returned, uncertainty for everyone and now the need to adapt to new working patterns and procedures as cemetery operations begin to revive. Their response had been magnificent and thanks were extended to them all.

Chief Executive's Report: Ian Dungavell reported that things were looking good until March and preparations were underway for the busiest part of the busiest year ever, but Coronavirus and lockdown meant suddenly there were no West Cemetery tours, the last being on 18 March. Also as social distancing was not possible in the East entrance hut, for a few days local residents were admitted to the East Cemetery for free. This meant no visitor income and, in accordance with government rules, even grave owners were not allowed to visit.

All staff, bar one, had worked from home with frequent catch-ups on Zoom. Burial activity had continued and those staff involved had been kept as separate as possible. It was noted that, more recently, staff had been working overtime to ease into the new mode of operation. Some had been busy throughout, working out what could or should be done from week to week and how to manage it, whilst trying to keep as many people as possible still working from home.

Ian Dungavell also reported that having no visitors provided opportunity for the main entrance gates and railings, East and West, to be repainted a historically more appropriate 'invisible

green'. Nick Powell had also repainted the East hut inside and out, re-configured it to make it Covid-unfriendly and, in the process, more comfortable for volunteer staff.

It was noted that the biggest change for visitor operations had been how to manage tours as social-distancing requirements restricting tours to five people meant not enough could be offered to make them a viable proposition. With this restriction a sell-out tour day would bring in only a quarter of the income than it would have done previously and, in any event, demand had been slow as there were few tourists around although it was increasing now.

Mention made at last year's AGM of allowing free-range access to the West Cemetery on a trial basis, without guided tours but still under supervision, and only on certain days and at specific times in accordance with an objective in the Conservation Plan was noted. At that stage it had been an aspiration. However, forced by necessity, this possibility had been reconsidered given monuments had been repaired; the most dangerous trees had been removed, with deadwood stripped from others; and paths had been improved. Consequently, the Charity's insurers and health and safety advisors had agreed that, with a few rules, people would be unlikely to hurt themselves and for the first time in decades, visitors had been able to wander in the West Cemetery without a guide. So far 1,493 had done so, including 37 children under 8 years old who were never able to visit before and 10 disabled people who may not have been able to manage the demands of a group tour. Ian Dungavell reported that the feeling of tranquillity had been maintained despite the number of visitors and there had been no change in the atmosphere, no injuries and no incidents of bad behaviour. The response from visitors had been hugely favourable, many of whom had written about their positive experiences. Particular praise for the volunteers who are the front face of the cemetery had been received and Ian Dungavell reported that the support, warm welcome and special knowledge provided by the volunteers had added so much value and enjoyment, helping to make this change a success.

Ian Dungavell confirmed that guided tours would continue as they were still the best way to experience the West Cemetery for the first time. In addition, staffing the East Cemetery would be looked at with a view to having volunteer explainers there to help visitors. It was also noted that the long-awaited little guidebook to the East Cemetery would be available, started by Elle Hazlewood and featuring contributions from a number of volunteers.

Ian Dungavell reported that at the moment it was hard to look ahead much further than September as there were still so many unknowns but, thanks to the imagination of the Trustees, the hard work of staff and the dedication of volunteers, the Cemetery was in a good place to adapt to the fast-changing landscape of visitor operations. Furthermore the Private Bill would help guarantee future sustainability.

The Chairman invited questions and comments on the Financial Statements and a number of Friends congratulated the Trustees, Ian Dungavell, staff and the volunteers on their excellent work and for making the most of a difficult situation, for not being overwhelmed, adapting operations to survive and providing a very special way to experience the West Cemetery in challenging circumstances.

In response to questions asking when the West Cemetery was open for visitors to wander round and the length of the trial period, Ian Dungavell reported that it was being allowed all day on Saturdays and Sundays, for an initial 5-week trial period ending in September. Visitors were being charged £10 to visit both the East and West cemeteries, as opposed to charging £14 for a tour, they had to register on-line and carry out brief health and safety training on-line before their visit. Currently 300 people per day were visiting the West Cemetery, numbers for the East Cemetery had not changed and consideration was being given to extending the weekend

closing time from 5.00 to 6.00 p.m. in response to demand. Volunteer greeters and explainers were appreciated by visitors and very positively received.

It was also clarified that there was still demand for the tours as visitors valued the specialist knowledge and stories told by guides. Tours were currently being run on Wednesday and Friday afternoons, and this would increase in response to demand. Ian Dungavell reported that long-term there were issues that would need to be addressed before tours and unaccompanied visits could take place at the same time, such as tours blocking the paths.

The team were congratulated on exploring opportunities and looking for new ways to replace lost visitor income in order to improve finances.

The Chairman's appreciation for Justin Bickersteth's work as Registrar and sensitive handling of issues was reinforced by the Friends and the Chairman advised that a shortlist of suitable candidates to replace him had just been determined and interviews would be conducted early next month.

Questions were also asked about how long it might take for the Bill to pass through all the required Parliamentary stages. The Chairman explained that, whilst initially it had been thought the process would take a year, delays caused by Coronavirus had pushed this out to two years and completion before the end of 2021 was unlikely. Advisors were pressing for the Bill to proceed to committee stage and, in the meantime, work was being carried out on the concerns raised and determining whether in the future collateral descendants, where there were no direct descendants, had transferable burial rights and would be able to register their interest in a burial plot. It was further noted that no major issues had been identified yet, a successful outcome was expected and there was still sufficient room for further burials for a few more years.

Once questions had concluded, Resolution 3 to receive the Financial Statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 August 2019 was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Resolution 4: Auditors

The Chairman proposed and Tye Blackshaw seconded Resolution 4 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to appoint Knox Cropper Chartered Accountants as auditors for the Charity until the next general meeting of the Charity at which accounts are laid before the members and to authorise the Board to fix their remuneration.

The Chairman invited questions and, as none were raised, Resolution 4 was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Resolution 5: Election of Trustees of the Charity

The Chairman proposed and Stuart Orr seconded Resolution 5 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to elect as Trustees of the Charity a. Doreen Aislabie and b. Eve Wilder.

The Chairman explained that this year there were two vacancies created by the retirement by rotation of Doreen Aislabie and Eve Wilder. Both had indicated they wished to stand again and they were offering themselves for re-election, which was supported by the Board

The Chairman explained that statements from the candidates were included in the AGM booklet and invited questions. As no questions were raised when invited, Resolution 5 to elect a.

Doreen Aislabie and b. Eve Wilder as Trustees of the Charity was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Resolution 6: Appointment of Trustee

It was noted that Resolution 6 concerned the Chairman's own appointment as a Trustee and, accordingly, Nicola Jones was appointed Chair for this part of the meeting.

Nicola Jones proposed and John Caird seconded Resolution 6 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution, to approve the appointment of Martin Adeney as a Trustee.

Nicola Jones explained that Martin Adeney was a Trustee appointed by the Board and, whilst he had reached the end of his first term, he had indicated his willingness to be re-appointed. It was noted that Martin Adeney had been very active and energetic as Chair and had served on a number of sub-committees. The Board considered the Charity was fortunate to have such a distinguished and competent Trustee and sought approval for his appointment.

Questions were invited but, as there were none, Resolution 6 to approve the appointment of Martin Adeney as a Trustee was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Nicola Jones was thanked and the Chair was passed back to Martin Adeney to continue the meeting.

Resolution 7: Protectors' Report

The Chairman proposed and Penny Linnett seconded Resolution 7 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to receive the Protectors' report. The Chairman explained the role of the Protectors was to ensure that Trustees act in accordance with the objects of the Charity and not in a manner likely to prejudice the welfare of the Cemetery. Each year they are required to produce to a report to confirm this, which was sent to Friends in the AGM booklet.

As no questions were raised when invited, Resolution 7 to receive the Protectors' report was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Resolution 8: Appointment of Protectors

The Chairman proposed and Lucy Lelliott seconded Resolution 8 in the notice of meeting, being an ordinary resolution to approve the appointment of a. Dr Tye Blackshaw, b. Richard Morris, and c. Philip Williams as Protectors.

The Chairman reported that they had all reached the end of their three-year terms and the Board was pleased they were each willing to stand for a further term.

Questions were invited but, as none were raised, Resolution 8 that (a) Dr Tye Blackshaw, (b) Richard Morris, and (c) Philip Williams be appointed as Protectors of the Charity was put to the vote by electronic poll.

Any Other Business:

A number of Friends extended further thanks to the Trustees, staff and volunteers for what had been achieved at such a difficult time. Notably feedback was provided that work carried out to

preserve and restore the condition and feel of the Cemetery to how it was some sixty years earlier was considered a success; and that concerns about allowing visitors free-range access to the West Cemetery had not materialised as the visitors seemed to vanish and the sense of sanctuary the Friends were keen to preserve had not been affected.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.57 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

2020 Annual General Meeting: electronic poll voting results (including proxies)

All resolutions were approved, with votes received as set out below.

Resolution	Description	Votes For	Votes Against
1	Approve 2019 AGM minutes	58	0
2	Approve 2020 EGM minutes	58	0
3	Receive 2019 Financial Statements	58	0
4	Reappoint auditors and determine remuneration	61	0
5a	Elect Doreen Aislabie as Trustee	55	1
5b	Elect Eve Wilder as Trustee	54	2
6	Approve the appointment of Martin Adeney as a Trustee	55	3
7	Receive the Protectors' report	49	3
8a	Appoint Tye Blackshaw as a Protector	53	3
8b	Appoint Richard Morris as a Protector	51	5
8c	Appoint Philip Williams as a Protector	52	4