

2018 AGM REPORT FOR MEMBERS

Welcome to the 13th AGM of the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery. Every year we tell you that this has been a busy year for the Friends and this last year has been no exception.

The Victorian Chapels in the cemetery have always been our main concern- but as most of you are aware, we have been frustrated by the lack of any action by the City Council. The main reason given for this has been lack of funding, but as the Friends have pointed out many times- funding is available from outside grant providers, but all such providers do require some financial input and a desire to create an innovative, self-sustaining project by Birmingham, as the land and building owners. We have had some movement in this area as following a safety inspection, it has been agreed that a temporary roof will be added to one chapel. This is waiting for agreement with the planning officers as the building is Grade 2 listed. All the finials have been re-fixed and following our request the fencing has been moved a little nearer to the chapels to enable a tidier strip of grass cutting around the buildings. We are also in talks with Bereavement Services to design some interpretation concerning the history of the buildings and our hopes for their future.

Civilian Garden of Remembrance. Since its redesign we have reduced the amount of work we need to undertake but hedges still need to be cut, and beds mulched. Our continued thanks to my volunteer gardeners- but we are always looking for extra hands as none of us are getting any younger.

Hedgehog Project- Following this really successful project, we rounded it off with the installation of a new 'Hedgehog Interpretation Board' facing the Lodge. Our thanks to all the agencies, school pupils and members of the public who made this such an enjoyable project.

We continue to place Poppy Crosses on all our War Graves (over 300 of them) and one of our committee members creates a 'poppy cross cemetery' to show the enormous numbers involved. As you read this we are investigating innovative methods of technology to make the identification of individual graves easier and to hopefully speed this process which now takes several people several days to complete. This year we increased numbers yet again at the **Remembrance Service** to well over 100. Local representatives of The Free Masons, The RAOB, The Royal British Legion, Local Councillors, West Midlands Police and members of the public were in attendance to lay wreaths at both the Cross of Sacrifice and the new WW1 Memorial. Our thanks always go to Kings Heath Branch of the Royal British Legion and their Standard Bearer, as well as our new Bugler.

This year we undertook a small project to highlight those that lost their lives whilst serving with the Labour Corps. **This year on September the 15th we will be taking part in Heritage Open Day at the cemetery, when Labour Corps graves and 'Extraordinary Women' will be highlighted.** Information will be available on our web page.

Tree Walk- The Friends are designing a new Tree Walk leaflet and hope to be able to offer this walk as a 'app' as well, for those of you with a Smart Phone !

We continue to attend regular meetings with the Local Ward Councillors, Police Neighbourhood Tasking Officers, Birmingham Heritage Forum, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum and local Birmingham Partnerships. We also maintain our web site and 'facebook' page as well as notice boards at both entrances to the cemetery.

Members welcome visitors from other Cemetery Friends groups and one of our volunteers frequently leads grave walks for small interested parties. Brum Bats will hopefully include the cemetery, yet again, in their night time Bat Walk and the Park Rangers have taken interested local people on tree walks through the cemetery (The next walk is on May 9th from Cannon Hill Park to Brandwood End- see the BCC Ranger web site)

Committee members and Friends carry out quarterly litter picks and participated in the 'Great British Spring Clean'
We continue to work with Bereavement Service staff to resolve any issues that arise.

We hope that this has given you a flavour of the work we are doing on member's behalf but if you have access to the internet you can follow our work on our web page www.fbec.org.uk or our Facebook page, as well as in our Newsletters.

Thank you for your continued support.