



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Chairperson Report

Our seventh year of volunteering in Heene Cemetery has been very busy with many new visitors and a few new volunteers.

We did achieve the Community Green Flag award for 2022/2023, and the dedicated hard work of our volunteers, to achieve this, is greatly appreciated.

Our Stories from the Stones and Meadowland was well attended and all visitors enjoyed a lovely autumn afternoon.

The Remembrance Gathering in November was also under blue skies, albeit it a great deal cooler. Deep and grateful thanks go to the Worthing Branch Royal British Legion Standard Bearers, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Sarah Nathaniel for leading the service and Brian White for playing the bugle. We were also honoured with the attendance of the Mayor of Worthing and her Consort, who spoke the Exhortation, and laid a cross on two of our eight commonwealth war graves.

The winter months were reasonably good for the volunteers to carry out light conservation work over Tuesday's and Saturday's and it was lovely to meet new visitors who dropped by as they took their stroll around the area.

Sadly, on the 1st February we found our noticeboard was vandalised overnight, but the Worthing Council cemeteries department quickly donated a much-appreciated replacement, which was installed on 3rd March 2023.

On the 10th February we received some deeply upsetting news, from the cemeteries department, that we were not allowed to continue our voluntary work inside the walls of Heene Cemetery due to a survey identifying a large number of unsafe headstones.

Whilst we were not allowed to physically work in the cemetery, our species recorder and family research volunteers continued to do their work and upload a great deal of information onto our website. www.heenecemetery.org.uk

Thank you to all our volunteers and supporters who enable us to continue this valuable and vital work in the centre of an urban area.

Sue Standing – Chairperson FoHC

Treasurer's Report

2022/2023 Friends of Heene Cemetery Bank Balance at 6/4/2023

Date	Bank Balance	Petty Cash (float)	Total Income	Total Expenditure	Income - Expenditure
06/04/2023	£3,530.59	£32.20	£1,219.53	£1,697.51	-£477.98
Detail					
Income		Expenditure			
Supporters	£40.00	Heritage	£241.25		
Members	£120.00	Insurance	£177.02		
Supporter donations	£80.00	Website Maintenance	£675.99		
General donations from Open Days	£685.85	Website Improvements	£141.67		
Donations: from relatives & for research	£293.68	Cemetery Maintenance	£394.09		
		Admin + misc	£67.49		
Total	£1,219.53		£1,697.51		

Membership Report

Membership for April 2022 to April 2023 totals 34, which includes 10 support members.

Heritage Report

April 2022 to April 2023 was a successful year for the heritage group. All the burials are available to view on our dedicated website: www.heenecemetery.org.uk and most (1850+) of them have biographies compiled by our members. All the burials are also publicly available on www.ancestry.co.uk in the heenecemetery.org.uk family tree. This allows anyone with an www.ancestry.co.uk account to contact us via their messaging service. We regularly have requests about the lives of the buried from both our dedicated website and from the ancestry website.

We plan to review all our stories once each burial has a biography entry and where possible add information and photographs provided by helpful relatives. The stories are being categorised and studied by the group and used for blogs and open day events including our innovation: 'stories in the streets'. Several of our 'residents' lived in nearby streets and researchers are organising fascinating walks detailing the stories of the street dwellers, street by street.

As our uncovering of the 'residents', approaches the final stories, we plan to diversify and research the noteworthy relatives of the buried. We have at least two relatives of former prime ministers, several heroic army and naval family members, an explosives expert, innumerable notable clergy and medical men, royal connections, authors and philanthropists, bankers and bankrupts.

We have made progress on identifying the many war casualty relatives of our Heene burials. In our small Heene community, many lives were changed forever on learning of the deaths of fathers, sons, and brothers. Every year we hold a remembrance service for the war casualties buried or commemorated in the cemetery and we are now able to honour the sacrifice of more relatives of the buried.

The majority of the Heene burials are family burials. Only about one fifth of the burials have no identifiable, family member buried in Heene. The other 80% of burials have at least one relative buried at Heene. We now plan to link their website entries to the entries of their relatives. This is a big undertaking because many of our Heene families will have family links that we do not yet know about.

We have written blogs about the statistics of the Heene burials, researching and grouping some of their causes of death and other parameters such as marital status, gender and age at death. There is still a wealth of material to write about. Possible future blog topics include highlighting occupations, the occupants of a house through time, wealth and wills, health and ill-health, servants and masters, spinsters and bachelors, employers and manufacturers, and siblings and companions.

Our heritage research is mainly funded by its members. Each researcher subscribes to one or more genealogy website and or newspaper archives. New project works may depend on the purchase of wills and certificates and require additional funding from grants and donations and reserves.

Environment/Species Report

Friends of Heene Cemetery

AGM environment/species report

3rd September 2023

Once more, this is a species/habitat report, as my role does not include hands-on conservation.

Species totals

	Species recorded on the website				
	12 / 2020	12 / 2021	5 / 2022	10 / 2022	9 / 2023
Amphibians	1	1	1	1	1
Arachnids	6	10	15	16	19
Birds	22	36	37	37	37
Butterflies and moths	20	29	31	46	54
Flowering plants	174	184	192	200	212
Fungi	29	31	32	32	33
Insects (other)	32	56	68	103	155
Invertebrates (other)	13	25	25	25	25
Mammals	5	6	6	6	6
Non-flowering-plants	24	24	24	24	24
Reptiles	2	2	2	2	2
Totals	328	404	433	492	569

Species surveying

The numbers above show a recent increase in species being identified, more of insects than of any other category of species, which is exactly what we should expect. Although lichens still remain unsurveyed, all other categories (except insects) will probably not be registering an upward count. Insects, therefore, will be responsible for any substantial future species count increase. The more insects, in a general sense, the healthier the cemetery's biological diversity. We have a race on to spot them before they go.

We continue to benefit from the participation of a number of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers, and by Stuart Ball, an amateur entomologist with excellent photography skills. The species surveying project remains a collective endeavour. Thanks to all who participate.

Data sharing and interpretation

We continue to share our species records with Caring for God's Acre and the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. The validation of these records takes time and they will eventually show up on the National Biodiversity Network Atlas. Some species, particularly hoverflies, are advanced directly to the iRecord website where they are usually processed in a matter of hours by Roger Morris, one of the country's leading hoverfly experts. Getting accurate records distributed to all these platforms is a key long-term goal. Not many cemeteries practice this degree of recording, so this helps mark us out.

The website now highlights - at the species level - where individual species are notable, rare or threatened at a local and/or national level. Where this happens, the relevant legislation is cited. At the time of writing, there are 32 such species with varying degrees of designation. These species designations have been brought together on [a single page of the site](#).

Environment/Species Report (continued)

Website blogs	<p>The species listing on the website – as with the burial records – becomes harder to use as numbers increase. To counter that, we now have an increasing number of blog posts about different species groups. These articles aim to gather together on a single page some of the extraordinary diversity that can be found in the cemetery, helping to showcase them photographically, and to a certain extent make sense of this. To date, these cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mosses• Crickets and grasshoppers• Lichen (by John Brownbill)• Trees• Hoverflies• Bees• Roses (in production, with Philippa Matthews)• Wasps (in production)
Planting	<p>Plans for planting drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly plants were put on hold following the cemetery's closure this spring, and after its re-opening were scotched by the enforcement of a no-dig policy.</p>
The future	<p>As you know, the cemetery was closed in 1977. The Disused Burial (Amendment) Act of 1981 stipulates that a building may be erected on consecrated ground if there are no objections from the personal representatives or relatives of anybody interred within the last 50 years. This protection may therefore lapse for Heene Cemetery in 2027.</p> <p>The legal complexities may be abundant but, at the least, the more that can be done to identify and highlight other reasons why the cemetery should be preserved for the future the better.</p> <p>Its status as a Local Wildlife Site does not in itself provide legal protection, but the Sussex Wildlife Site Initiative maintains that by following a carefully thought-out <i>management plan</i> and <i>documenting the biodiversity</i> that a site has, an LWS can “be given due consideration in the planning and developing process”. The ongoing species work is an attempt to do just that.</p>

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Summary of Committee and Organisational/Advocacy Roles

1. THE COMMITTEE

A. Chair role

To liaise with volunteers and supporters, St Botolph's Church, Bereavement Services, Parks and Gardens, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, to co-ordinate open days.

B. Treasurer role

To oversee the business bank account for FoHC: banking donations, paying creditors, keeping the account within budget and preparing an annual balance sheet.

C. Membership Secretary role

To maintain an up-to-date list of members and their contact details, keeping a tally of membership fees paid/unpaid.

D. Secretary role

To co-ordinate meeting agendas and write minutes, to arrange AGMs and check quorum present at meetings.

2. ORGANISATIONAL/ADVOCACY ROLES

A. Heritage Advocate role

To report on the progress of the heritage group and to provide a plan for future work.

B. Fundraising Co-ordinator role

To supplement the income of FoHC by suggesting and helping to implement ways of raising funds in addition to fees.

C. Volunteer Co-ordinator role

To manage new volunteer induction, run risk-management top-up sessions, co-ordinate cemetery working sessions, have an overview of volunteer welfare, plan and co-ordinate hands-on tasks.

D. Environmental Advocate role

To co-ordinate species work and its publication on the website, liaise with county recorders, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and Sussex Wildlife Trust, co-ordinate environment posts on the blog and advise committee and members.