

Our last newsletter distributed in March 2021 covered events and work that took place before lockdown, and between September 2020 and May 2021 it is now time for an update.

Pictures relating to some of the stories in our news



Above November 2021 a display at Willow Grove for Remembrance Sunday.
Below 2nd April 2022 a tribute held at Brunswick Cemetery inside Portwood roundabout



A golden blue nugget welfare unit is installed in Willow Grove in March 2022 by Community Pay Back Services (CPBS)



26th April 2022 Reddish Vale volunteers join forces with FOSC

General maintenance from August 2021 to the present day.

As mentioned in our last newsletter the Community Probation Services carried out weeding and cutting back at Park Road Cemetery in October 2020.

Their tasks were put on hold in **December 2020 until March 2021**.when Stuart Greenwood became the new Community Payback Placement Co-ordinator. The restoration work, incorporating the repainting of the main entrance gates (see below) then continued



Newly painted gates – materials supplied Cemetery Services

In August 2021 covid restrictions relaxed, enabling two FOSC members along with two new volunteers to recommence maintenance work at Brunswick Cemetery each Monday. The same small group has also devoted each Wednesday afternoon since then to maintaining the groundwork at Willow Grove as, due to the lack of welfare facilities, the CPB team were unable to work on the site.

In October 2021 Stockport Borough Council arranged the installation of a portaloos at Willow Grove, thus enabling the CPB team to resume their work there. Unfortunately, this facility was destroyed by fire shortly afterwards, meaning the CPB team's work went back into abeyance.

Although the small contingent of FOSC members and volunteers continued their work each week, it was still an uphill struggle to keep the sheer scale of weeds and overgrown vegetation under control in the areas that the CPB had maintained since 2004.

March 2022 Stuart Greenwood inspired by the worthiness aims of FOSC and the effort already invested by the CPB team, managed to secure funding from the Probation Service for the provision of a welfare unit. This enabled the team to resume their work at Willow Grove to the benefit of both the workforce in terms of job satisfaction and of the local community. The contributions made by all concerned have engendered some well-deserved accolades to date.

April 2022 a large amount of work was carried out in just a two hour task session by Reddish Vale volunteers. This was an immense help to the regular volunteers providing a welcome boost in morale.

THANK YOU from FOSC.

DATA PROTECTION

FOSC hold data from newsletters, mailings, events etc. If you no longer wish to receive information from the group, please send an email to

sheilaarobins@outlook.com

Working with other groups September 2021.

FOSC were approached by Ray Withall a member of the Stockport Normandy Veterans Association.

This group produced a fantastic resource for younger school children entitled LEGACY PROJECT 2021 - 2022 which was sent out to all primary schools in Stockport in September 2021.

Included in the package were photographs and information from the Imperial War Museum, Manchester Library, Stockport Local Heritage Library and FOSC's Military Trail Leaflet. FOSC were also available to help any school children who wished to visit the cemetery whilst working on the project



Ray & Linda at Willow Grove August 2021

Ray is presently writing a book comprising the stories of all the soldiers buried in Willow Grove.

Remembrance Sunday November 2021



For only the second time since 2006, there was no parade from St Mary's Church in South Reddish to mark the occasion. However, services were conducted at the cenotaph and the Cross of Sacrifice at Willow Grove by the Reverend Angie Stanton and Adrian Rhodes from St Elizabeth's and St Mary's respectively.

Both the cenotaph and Cross of Sacrifice, together with the screen wall were decorated by FOSC, using tributes created by local school children. Pupils from St Mary's in Reddish contributed poppy wreaths, while those from Westmorland School in Brinnington painted stones with the names of every soldier buried in Willow Grove.

In attendance were Stockport Deputy Mayor and Mayoress David Wilson and Jeanette Stavinski, local councillors, representatives of the Police Force, Captain L Oldham, Stockport Armoury, T S Hawkins Sea & Marine Cadets, Reddish Army Cadets FOSC, the congregation of St Mary's Church and numerous members of the public

Thank you to everyone who helped on this momentous occasion.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Volunteers March 2022

Volunteers from CWGC visited Willow Grove in March to check and clean the war graves in the cemetery.

They were impressed and amazed with what the group had achieved and thought it was a lovely tranquil place.

The Military Trail leaflets were very popular – one of volunteers is doing something similar in Wigan and was thrilled to see what had been done and what could be done.

Brunswick Cemetery April 2022

FOSC and the Reddish Army Cadets who have been doing general maintenance on the site wanted to place a fitting tribute for the soldiers.

On 2nd April 2022 a service was held at the cemetery, where a plaque was unveiled to commemorate six soldiers who are buried within having lost their lives in the Great War.



The plaque was made by **SETA Training & Advisory Services Ltd** who provided their professional services and the materials free of charge.

There were also contributions from Floreeda Fabrications Ltd and Stockport Powder Company.

The service was led by Greater Manchester Army Cadets padre, Father Gerard and attended by their Commandant Catherine Harrison. Stockport's Mayor and Mayoress also attended, as did local councillors, relatives of the soldiers and members of the public.

BITS and BOBS Stockport Talking Newspaper May 2022

Stockport Talking Newspaper is a registered charity based at Walthew House in Stockport. This charity provides local news for the visually impaired and a monthly Stockport-focussed audio magazine. FOSC were invited to go along to give an insight into Willow Grove Cemetery. The first recording will be aired around August, and the aim is to follow this up with a talk in November, about the military personnel who are buried at this cemetery

May 2022

FOSC conducted their first walk and talk around Willow Grove Cemetery Heritage Trail for members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) from Cheadle.

Reverend Angie Stanton from St Elizabeths Church retired at the end of May, we wish her all the best and will miss her in November.

June 2022

Ian Walmsley, Head of Neighbourhoods – Stockport MBC is retiring. FOSC, would like to say **GOOD LUCK** for the future and thank him for all the help and support he has given to the group

Finally information and updates on forthcoming events will be provided on our web site at

www.friendsofstockportceteries.co.uk

Newsletter by S Robins edited by Mo Fahey