THE FRIENDS OF

BROADWATER AND WORTHING CEMETERY

NEWSLETTER **Issue 50, Autumn 2025**

The Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery, http://www.fbwc.co.uk/

Message from the Chair

Debra Hillman



Leaf-footed bug on blackberries
(Photo courtesy of Paul Robards)

Looking back over the last few months we can, once again, be proud of the success of our themed tours of the cemetery and the work carried out by our volunteers, whether that is carrying out research, helping on tour days or working hard to tackle the ivy and bramble in the cemetery. Visitor numbers at tours are consistently high and we continue to attract new visitors every month.

Equally satisfying is the number of people who have been helped to find the final resting place of their relatives. Every year we deal with a number of these requests and this year has been no different. It is a pleasure to be able to find the plot and, where possible, to meet the family members and show them the grave, even if it is unmarked. Those who live further afield are always pleased to receive photographs of, and information about, their relative.

You may remember that in the last newsletter I spoke of the sustainability of the Friends and the need for more volunteers – and particularly those prepared to take on committee posts. I am pleased to report that we have had some success in this regard. At the AGM in November we will be voting in a new committee.

Nominations so far:

Chairperson:
Sally Roberts

Treasurer:
Lesley Hember

Secretary:
Anna Hember

Clearance/Wildlife Co-ordinator:
Paul Robards

Newsletter Editor/Publicity Officer:
Anita Hobbs

Membership Secretary:
Vacancy

We still have a vacancy for someone (or two people) to take over producing and printing the booklets.

▶

◄ (If any of you would like to stand for a committee post please submit your nomination to our current secretary, Lesley Hember, by the second week of November.)

A great deal of work has been done in the cemetery during the summer to tidy graves ready for the tours and on clearing headstones of ivy and bramble. The news is not all good, however, and we certainly cannot get complacent about the group moving forward. We have a small core of regular volunteers who turn up every month but more will be needed to tackle the ever-growing ivy, overgrown bushes and problem bramble. The bramble has thrived in the summer weather this year and large areas of the cemetery are completely overgrown with it. It will certainly need to be the subject of discussion with the council (along with the usual grass cutting negotiations) to see what can be done to combat it. Hopefully, we may also be able to secure some resource from the council during the winter to work on specific tasks as we did two years ago.

Alongside volunteers to work in the cemetery we will also need people to help with research. Work will begin on planning for next year's tours at the beginning of December and the more people involved, the easier it will be to deliver the research in plenty of time for booklets to be produced and tour guides to prepare their notes.

This will be my last newsletter message as your chairperson, so I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and support during my time in the role. When I attended that first meeting in 2008 and took on the role of Civilian Research Co-ordinator, I never thought I would end up being the chairperson for 13 years!

Debra

THANK YOU, DEBRA!

On behalf of all the Friends, we'd like to say an enormous thank you to Debra for all her hard work and dedication to the group.

Debra has served as chairperson of FBWC for the past 13 years and we wanted to say thank you to her for her sterling work in front of members of the public at our last tour in October.



(Photo courtesy of Sally Roberts)

Debra will continue as part of the group but will retire from holding an office.

We would like to thank her for all she has done, and continues to do, for the group. Thanks, Debra!

(May we also take this opportunity to wish her successor well.)

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Tour themes for 2026

We are currently identifying themes and researching individuals for inclusion in our 2026 tours. Please check our website and Facebook page for details nearer the time.

Tours are conducted on the first Saturday of each month (April through to October) unless stated otherwise.

Ideas welcome for future tours

We'd love to hear any ideas you may have for a future tour. Please get in touch with us via our Facebook page. All ideas welcome!



Common Blue butterfly on ragwort (Photo courtesy of Paul Robards)

Some of our 2025 tours in photos

August: 200th Anniversary of the Railway

(Tour guide Pauline Reed.)



September: 100 Years On

(Tour guides Lesley Hember and Anna Hember.)







October: A Pub Crawl

(Tour guide Sally Roberts.)







(Photos courtesy of Debra Hillman)

We need your views!

Broadwater & Worthing cemetery tours run monthly from April to October and attract very large numbers. We have new members joining, regular volunteers at clearance days, and over 950 members on Facebook. So we know there's an interest in the cemetery.

What we'd like to know is, what is it about the cemetery that interests you?

Is it:

Our research and tours?
The cemetery's wildlife, or nature?
Our conservation work?
Or something else?

Why we are asking

We are asking because we are concerned about the future of the cemetery.

Currently, the 'Friends' manage the cemetery – and have done for the last 17 years.

We are passionate about the conservation and restoration work we've carried out, our research, and what we've done to protect and care for it.

But what will happen to the cemetery if it is no longer managed by us in the future?

Why we need your views

We need your views because we need to know how to maintain the interest in the cemetery. To do that, we need to ask you what is it about the cemetery that you like?

Your views count and are truly valued. This is hugely important to us because if the interest isn't there, the cemetery may not have any individuals or a group to manage or protect it in the future.

We would really appreciate any thoughts you may have on this. Please take the time to respond via email or Facebook.

Thank you!

Paul Robards
Wildlife & Clearance Co-ordinator



Red Darter dragonfly on gravestone
(Photo courtesy of Paul Robards)

Weald to Waves Wildlife Corridor

We have recently pledged to become a wildlife corridor champion by joining the Weald to Waves Gardens and Greenspaces network, which helps support nature recovery in the local area.

You can visit various nature recovery sites by walking the Weald to Waves Wildlife Corridor, a 100-mile route through Sussex. For more information, please visit https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/Connecting nature across Sussex.

Join us!
Become a volunteer

We welcome anyone who would like to volunteer with us. There are plenty of ways you can help, plus we also have some specialised volunteering roles that we're eager to fill:

'Adopt a grave' volunteers

We're after volunteers who would like to 'adopt a grave' from our list of graves that need some tender loving care. This role involves general grave maintenance.

Volunteer for wildlife areas

We're looking for help managing our wildlife areas. This involves preparing and strimming certain areas, plus sowing plants ready for next spring.

Volunteer photographer

We're looking for a photographer to take photos of our tour days and then upload the photos onto our Facebook page.

Volunteer researchers

We're seeking researchers to come and join our team who are interested in exploring family and local history, and who have access to online sources.

Volunteer tour-booklet producer(s)

We're looking for help with the production – both compiling and printing – of our tour booklets.

If you're interested in any of these roles please get in touch via our Facebook page. Thank you!

THANK YOU, BARRY!

On behalf of all the Friends, we'd like to say a big thank you to Barry Chidlow for sharing some beautiful images of the cemetery with us in his photography-based articles featured in this newsletter. Barry's images have provided a wonderful glimpse of the cemetery through his eyes. We have very much appreciated your articles and photography, Barry. Thank you!

Volunteer news...

We now have two new lovely ladies who will be serving us tea/ coffee and possibly delicious cakes for our tours next year.



(Photo courtesy of Sally Roberts)

They are new members Lorraine McNab and Maria Budd and we thank them both for offering to help with refreshments for our tours.

Work that we've done over the last few months...

- Talk given to Findon Valley Residents' Association local history group
- Talk given to Sussex Wildlife Trust's Wilder Champions
- Cemetery part of the Adur & Worthing Wildflower Trail
- Refresher training of risk assessments
- Tour planning
- Research meetings held
- Light clearance work
- Supervising Northbrook College students and Duke of Edinburgh volunteer
- Investigating the Green Flag Award
- Working on a new website
- Liaising with local council





William Hudson's grave, before and after a tidy
(Photos courtesy of Paul Robards)

What work still needs to be done by us...

- Bramble – significant work needed
- Self-seeded saplings need cutting down – significant work needed
- Information maps/boards need to be repaired or replaced, and possibly re-sited
- Website
- Research for 2026 tours
- Discuss replacing of bench by the Cross of Sacrifice
- Research needed for group sustainability (see page 5)

And what work needs to be done by the council...

- Holly hedge on South Farm Road boundary needs to be cut back
- Chipping of branches by the chapels
- Clear out compost bay area

CAN YOU HELP?

We need various items to carry out our work at the cemetery. If you can donate any of the following, please get in touch via our Facebook page. Thank you!

- Garden shears
- Wooden bird boxes
- Wildflower seeds

Join us!

Become a Friend

As a Friend

You will receive a twice-yearly newsletter, plus you can have a say in how we manage the cemetery by attending and voting at our AGM in November.

Membership

Membership costs just £5 per year (and runs from January to December).

Membership fees can be paid via a bank transfer or a Standing Order (Lloyds, Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery, sort code 30-99-50, account number 65378260).

Please reference your surname with your payment if you are paying by bank transfer or Standing Order.

Cheques to the value of £5 – made payable to 'Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery' – are also welcome.

Membership forms

Membership forms are available from our tables on tour days.

Some photos taken in the cemetery...



Orb spider on web



Cyclamen in Paul's Corner



Red Darter dragonfly on gravestone
(Photos courtesy of Paul Robards)

Paul's corner



By Paul Robards
Wildlife & Clearance Co-ordinator

It has been quite a challenge, one way or another, at the cemetery this year.

'I can see a gradual decline in the nature within the cemetery'



Fox in sunshine

I am so passionate about the nature in the cemetery, but I cannot always satisfy my desires, which is then frustrating. Being outside with nature can be and should be very rewarding for your wellbeing and health. However, if you see things going on which you have no control over, then it can be detrimental to your health. Let me explain.

I can see a gradual decline in the nature within the cemetery.

In previous years, at least back to 2015, I was successfully liaising with the council and we were working well together with good communication. I received updates and reports when they intended to go in and grass cut, with good notice. This gave me time to visit and peg out areas to be protected, where various flowers needed protection from being strimmed. The timing was good and worked *with* nature, for example when the plants were not in flower, or before they went to seed.



Everlasting sweet pea flowers

The council also left areas of mosaic squares, only cutting in rotation. This was all discussed and agreed. Now, I don't know what's happening or when.

It was 'No Mow May' this year, yet the council's grass cutters turned up to strim the grass without any notice. This was not only the wrong time of the year – as no consideration was given for nature's diary – it also didn't give me time to do any prep work beforehand.

It would be more beneficial to have the grass cut fully in March/April, ▶

◄ not May onwards when the plants are flowering with early nectar – as the first butterflies bees and hoverflies need this resource.



Common Blue butterfly

Cutting the grass fully in March/April would also ensure that the area is clear before the tours start in April. Another full cut would then be required in September/October before the winter. (Footpaths, however, need to be cut frequently throughout the year for designated access.)

I won't go into detail in this article, but there has been potentially a lot 'lost' this year due to the incorrect timing of the grass cutting. The nature has deteriorated this year as a result.

In other news, Debra and I attended an online (evening) meeting with Green Spaces recently. Interested parties joined in a discussion with various voluntary Green groups, and it also included council representatives. The lack of communication and budgets were generally discussed. It was advised that a contact procedure should be in place to get things attended to. I have requested a meeting at the cemetery to discuss next year's proposed maintenance.

I have arranged with a couple of other volunteers to clear an area at the north side of the cemetery, alongside the school boundary. We will cut and rake it back and sow some wildflower seeds ready for next year.



Robin's pincushion, or Bedeguar Gall, on a wild rose plant. (*Diplolepis* rosae.)

I have been contacted by a Kieran Patel on Facebook, who has seen what we do and has offered to do a film about cemetery volunteers. We will arrange a meeting soon. I will report more on this later in the year.

Otherwise, clearance days have been continuing well, with six to eight volunteers helping monthly to keep ivy off the gravestones. We could always do with more volunteers, though.

Thank you for all your support, much appreciated.

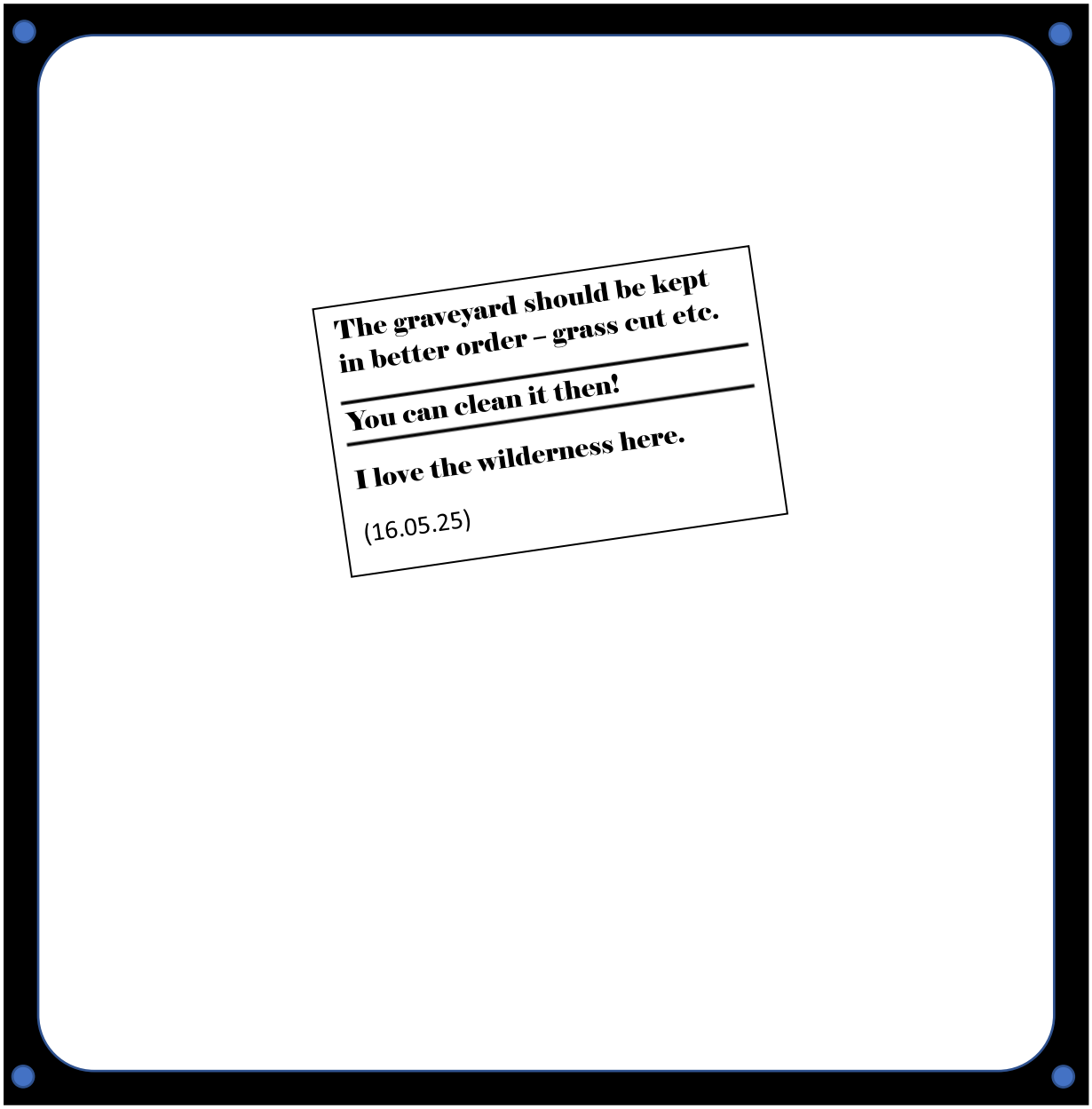
Paul

Blackboard observations

Our blackboard is located through the main entrance gates, and on the inside of the archway on the left.

We welcome anyone spending time in the cemetery to note down their observations and comments. We share a few of them here.

(Observations recorded by Paul Robards.)



Please do keep making observations and comments about what you're seeing in the cemetery.

We really value your support, so please feel free to keep in touch with us via our Facebook page.

Thank you!