



**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
of Caring for God's Acre  
Online on Tuesday 15th November 2022  
7pm – 9pm**

**After the business of the AGM Cat Irving gave a talk on the  
Ossuaries of Europe**

**Present:**

There were 56 attendees at the AGM, including Patrons, Trustees, staff, charity members and members of the public.

**1. Welcome from the Chair**

Oliver Goode welcomed everyone to the third Caring for God's Acre online AGM. The format of the meeting allowed for questions to be raised at any time via the Chat function.

**2. Apologies for absence:** Simon Cooter, Peta Sams, Sir Laurie Magnus

**3. Chair's report and questions to the Chair**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct, and there were no matters arising.

Oliver thanked the charity's funders, who are listed in the Annual Report:

- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Price of Wales's Charitable Foundation
- Natural Resources Wales
- Historic England
- The Millichope Foundation
- The Environment Agency
- GML Ltd
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Marsh Charitable Trust
- The Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust
- The Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund
- Faith New Deal through the Department of Levelling Up

Oliver also thanked the supporters, volunteers and members who work throughout the year in burial grounds across the country improving and recording biodiversity and memorials.

He mentioned that one of the God's Acre Volunteers, Martin, has completed 500 volunteer sessions and congratulated him.

Highlights of the CfGA work through the year include:

30 webinars attended by nearly 2,000 people

The Beautiful Burial Ground project, which is in its last year, has continued to collect and record biodiversity data which is connected to national biodiversity data, as well as built heritage and social history and to encourage more people to get involved in this. Over 20,000 burial grounds are on the portal and nearly 70,000 records have been entered onto it, many generated by over 700 recording events run by CfGA and its partners. The project won the Best Practice Award for Knowledge Sharing from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Monumental inscriptions have been recorded in 5 Birmingham cemeteries and their social history has been investigated.

The Opening the Ark project has worked in the Marches area to encourage local communities and schools to learn from and manage their burial grounds and then to work to allow burial ground species and habitats to spread out further in the locality. This is a signifier for future projects that we are keen to develop.

We are working with the Centre for Hydrology and Ecology in Bangor to investigate carbon sequestration in burial grounds. Initially techniques have been tested and refined and volunteers are going out and taking samples which will be analysed at Bangor University and eventually the Church of England and the Church in Wales will be able to use the information gained to support their efforts to become carbon neutral.

The last year has been one of reflection following the time of lockdowns and we have used the tools that were developed in that period to expand the ways in which we engage with our members and supporters across the country.

The Annual Report has been scrutinised by the Finance & Risk committee and by the full Trustees. A hard copy can be requested by emailing [info@cfga.org.uk](mailto:info@cfga.org.uk)

#### **4. Treasurer's report and questions to the Treasurer**

In the absence of the Treasurer, Sarah Ellison, Alex Glanville, Trustee and member of the Finance and Risk Committee presented the accounts.

The Treasurer's report is on page 32 of the Annual Report and the accounts start on page 34. In 2022 the charity's income was slightly higher than the previous year, but expenditure also increased. There was an increase in income over expenditure at £17,565 and funds carried forward are slightly higher than the previous year at approximately £168,000. Our reserves policy states that we should keep a minimum of 3 months operating costs in reserve or £60,000.

Within the last edition of the Lychgate there was a summary of the accounts showing that 53% of the charity's income was from the Beautiful Burial Ground project and a further 20% from other projects. Only 23% of our income is from donations, membership fees, small grants, sales and other earned income so approximately 75% of the income received is from the project work that we do and the grants we receive for projects. This is the usual

pattern for charities as there are very few sources of revenue grants. The Trustees and the staff are very aware that this system of funding can be fragile and are constantly looking to develop new and relevant projects, and welcome any new income raising ideas that may be put forward, including additional donations or legacies. Alex thanked the members for their continued support over the years.

Jennifer Linsdell asked if consultancy visits and management briefs had restarted after Covid and Harriet replied that they are offered as a paid service via the website. There were no other questions.

## **5. Any other business**

There was no further formal business and the meeting was declared closed.

**The Chair Oliver Goode welcomed Cat Irving. Cat is the Human Remains Conservator for Surgeon's Hall Museums in Edinburgh and has been caring for anatomical and pathological museum collections for nearly 20 years.**

**Cat took us on a journey across Europe that encompassed painted skulls and bejewelled skeletons, bone chandeliers and the six million people who lie beneath the streets of Paris.**

**A Q&A session followed the presentation and Cat was thanked by Oliver for a fascinating and enlightening talk.**