

Frodsham Town Council
World War 1 Commemoration Working Group
Record of Meeting
Held On Wednesday 12 July 2017 at 18.15
At Frodsham Library, Princeway, Frodsham



Present: Geoff Abnett Ros Caldwell Ken Crouch Jenny Evans Kath Hewitt Heather Powling
 Pammi Taylor Sara Wakefield (from Item 12.1.ii)

Apologies: Don Rustage Allen Wales

Observer: Dennis Taylor

Extra-Ordinary Meeting held prior to the main meeting to consider references to WW1 Commemoration Working Group and its members in podcasts of FTC's Policy & Process Committee meetings 1 & 2.

Part A

Members expressed their dismay and voiced their concerns about the Councillors' perception of the Group and its members that paints a picture that the members do not recognise. It was agreed to:

- Ask FTC for transcripts of the two podcasts for information of members who do not have access to the Internet. [**NOTE:** In response to an enquiry, the Town Clerk has confirmed that transcripts of podcasts are not produced and that the cost of producing transcripts would be prohibitive.]
- Write to FTC and CWaC Ward Councillors Andrew Dawson & Lynn Riley, detailing the Group's concerns. [**ACTION: PT**]

Meeting 2

ACTION

Part A

8. **Declarations of Interest:** None

9. **Record of Meeting Held on 14 June 2017**

9.1. *Acceptance:* Agreed as true & accurate.

9.2. *Matters Arising:*

Item 4.1.iv – Poppy/wildflower bed in Castle Park: Pammi had written to Tony Blackledge (CWaC Green Space Officer) to inform him of the Group's decision not to proceed with this project in view of the impact of the delay in progress..

10. **Finance**

10.1. *Budget 2017-18:* There were no transactions since the last meeting.

11. **Future of the Group**

11.1. *Frodsham Town Council's (FTC's) Response to Members' Questions:* Response from FTC was awaited (see Annex 1 for list of questions).

11.2. *Timetable for Transfer of Sponsorship to CPAC Trust:* Confirmation from FTC was awaited.

12. **Review of Actions & Progress**

12.1. *Passchendaele Commemoration (21 Jul – 10 Dec 2017)*

i. *Cascade of Poppies at Frodsham Community Centre (13 Sep – 25 Oct '17)*

- The Town Clerk had confirmed (email of 11/7/17) that Paul Morris (FTC's facilities Manager) would be able to transport the Cascade from Frodsham Health Centre to Frodsham Community Centre on Wed 13 Sep.
- Members agreed that there will be no formal opening or reception.
- Draft poster for publicity – starting mid-Aug – was agreed.
- Ken had finished work on lists & pictures for the display board. Pammi would liaise with the Town Clerk for printing & laminating. **PT/Town Clerk**

ii. *Screening "Passchendaele" (4 Oct '17)*

- Start time was agreed as 7.30 pm.
- Agreed to provide free-of-charge light refreshments.
- Draft poster for publicity – starting late-Aug – was agreed.

iii. *Scanning Day (21 Oct '17)*

• *Exhibition*

- Members approved the set of pictures covering past events. Electronic copies would be passed to the Town Clerk for printing & laminating. **PT/Town Clerk**
 - It was noted that Manor House & St Luke's Primary Schools had given their consent for photos taken at 'bookmark presentation' to be exhibited. In view of their pupils in the pictures having left the respective schools, Frodsham CE & Weaver Vale Primary Schools were unable to give permission for use.
 - Members agreed to limit the display to pictures covering past events.
- *Publicity*
- Paul Knight (speaker) had provided pictures for inclusion in the publicity material.
 - Draft poster for publicity – starting mid-Sep – was agreed.

12.2. *Trinity Memorial*

i. *Ceremony to Pay Tribute to Ethel Saxon (3 Sep '17):*

- Ros & Pammi had met with Rev Andrew Emison to discuss the programme for Re-dedication of the Memorial and agreed that
 - The Re-dedication could be included in the Sunday Service starting at 10.45 am. Rev Emison would produce a draft programme.
 - In case of inclement weather, the Foyer could be used
 - Rev Emison would send invitations to prospective guests, including Frodsham Town Mayor, FTC Cllrs & staff and Junior Mayors via the Town Clerk. **Rev AE**
- Members were content with the proposed programme for the Sunday Service inc Re-dedication of the Memorial and agreed:
 - To substitute “laying of a wreath” with “laying of a bouquet of flowers”. The bouquet will be ordered nearer the time from Frodsham Flowers; **GA**
 - To produce 75 copies of the revised (shorter) commemorative programme;
 - Roles for members (Ken or Sara to read Ethel Saxon's story, Pammi to read the 'names', Geoff to read the Exhortation if Royal British Legion is not represented); and
 - Not to invite a bugler

ii. *Contact with Kingsland Parish Council: C/F in Allen's absence.* **AW**

12.3. *St Laurence Church War Memorial Renovation: C/F pending FTC's decision on transfer of sponsorship of the Group.*

12.4. *Remembrance Services – Arrangements for 2017:* It was noted that Royal British Legion wish to be involved (Email of 15/6 from Allen). Final arrangements would be made in due course in consultation with Father Michael, RBL & FTC.

12.5. *Exhibition at CPAC (16 Sep – 1 Nov '18):* Nothing to report.

12.6. *Other Events / Activities*

- i. Geoff has planned a visit to Thiepval Memorial & Lochnagar Crater (France) and Tyne Cot Memorial (Belgium). He will be laying a wreath and will be leaving a card with names of men of Frodsham & Helsby at one of the Memorials.

13. **Any Other Business**

13.1. *Memorial Field – Reference(s) in Parish Magazine:* Heather had completed her research on whether there were any plans for a play area on the site of the Memorial Field (Record of meeting held on 26 Aug '15, Item 28.10.iii refers). A summary of her findings is at Annex 2.

13.2. *DVDs: “Ypres” & “Gallipoli”* will be delivered to Helsby High School shortly. **KC**

13.3. *Group's Archive:* Members were content with the draft layout for the Index of Archival Material.

13.4. *Group's Terms of Reference:* Draft Terms would be prepared following FTC's decision on transfer of sponsorship of the Group. **PT**

13.5. *OHMF War Memorial Gates & Railings – Listing:* It was noted that the process was in the last stages of decision-making by Historic England (Email of 11/7 from the Town Clerk). **[Note:** Cllr Mark Nield has, since, confirmed that the Gates & Railings have been listed as Grade II. Full details are available on Historic England's website:
<http://services.historicengland.org.uk/webfiles/GetFiles.aspx?av=A4F71F37-8C73-4626-934B-2E786E5BC722&cn=2D8009B5-5D4C-41EC-9BDC-EF7CD69E3BA0>]

14. **Items for Future Meetings**

- 14.1. Zeebrugge Campaign - Frodsham's Hero (Isaac Lawless/Leonard Ellams) (2018)
 - 14.2. Beacons of Light – 11 November 2018
 - 14.3. Peace Celebrations (Church Service, Participation in Festival in the Park Re-enactment/Tea Party – Refer to 1919 celebrations programme) (2019)
 - 14.4. Missing Names Plaque for OHMF Memorial
 - 14.5. Notices for Cross References to Other Memorials
 - 14.6. Books – Progress
 - i. Commemorative Book
 - ii. Historical Record of WW1 WG's Work
 15. **Next Meeting** will be held on Wednesday 16 August 2017 at 18.15 at Frodsham Library, Princeway, Frodsham.
- Meeting Closed at 20.00**

- i. *Mechanism for Group's Access to Funds*
- ii. *Allocation of Budget for Financial Year 2018-19*
- iii. *Retention of Proceeds from Sale of "From Battlefield to Blighty" and Bookmarks*
- iv. *Arrangements for Storage of Books and Bookmarks*
- v. *Castle Park Arts Centre (CPAC) Trust's Involvement*
- vi. *Continuing Administrative Support by FTC*
- vii. *Mechanism for Effective Communication with CPAC Trust*
- viii. Arrangements for Publicity
- ix. Additional matters raised by Pammi (Emails of 29/6 & 1/7 to Cllr Judith Critchley):
 - Who will be the publisher of the two books being produced?
 - Will the Group be able to use the ISBNs allotted to FTC for these books?
 - Will any funds remaining after payment of all dues in July 2019 be returnable to FTC?
 - Will FTC accept the Group's archival material or should it be donated to F&D History Society for preservation?

[NOTE: Questions copied to Town Clerk via email on 5 July 2017]

Annex 2

References in the Parish Magazines to Memorials for Soldiers Who Died in WWI

Plans to commemorate the soldiers of Frodsham who died in the First World War are reported in the parish magazines from February 1917.

The discussions reported are those which took place at St Laurence church – so other plans do not appear here. The discussions of 1917 were complicated. The church was looking to acquire more space for the burial of parishioners in the graveyard and two alternatives were proposed.

- a. Enlargement of the graveyard by taking on more land on the north side – which would be consecrated by the Bishop in due course.
- b. The provision of a cemetery by the local authority – part of which would be consecrated by the Bishop for members of the Church of England congregations.

These discussions began at Easter 1917. Miss Hayes offered land on the north side of the existing churchyard which would be used as an extension to it.

At the same time, following the visitation of the Chancellor of the Diocese in April 1917, there was also a proposal that Frodsham should adopt a scheme to erect a War Memorial to those who had given their lives.

The first reaction:

'We earnestly commend to the people of Frodsham the provision and endowment of a Cottage Hospital for the place. This would be of the greatest value . . . '

'But we ought to have a memorial in our Parish Church. It would not be difficult to suggest something dignified and permanent there.'

By the end of 1917 there was a proposal for a memorial in the churchyard 'recording the names of those who have laid down their lives for Country. It is felt that though, in most cases, their bodies are resting far away from here, their memorial should stand amongst those of their own people.' A design was approved by the PCC and a subscription fund opened to which donations were invited.

In January 1918, the flags of allied countries – Serbia, Japan, Italy, Belgium, USA and France were placed in the church. Portugal and Romania had been added by February.

By April 1918, 140 people had subscribed to the fund. However, in May there were protests against the expenditure from, amongst others, Miss Hayes. She considered the plan unjustifiable and Mr JJ Wilkinson said that the time had not yet come for the putting up of such a memorial. Part of the argument was that they *'never for a moment thought that this would be the only Memorial put up in the place. Surely something on a far larger scale will be done and for our part, we want to see an adequately equipped and endowed Cottage Hospital erected here as a memorial of the Great War and, let us hope, the Great Peace.'*

Subscriptions went on, despite the opposition of part of the community, through 1918.

Then, in January 1919, the Vicar, Rev'd Myres wrote:

'I hope that we shall determine to do some work of Public Utility as a memorial of the Great War and the Great Peace. Our memorial ought, I am sure to take the form of something of permanent value to the place and I suggest for your consideration the provision of a Public Recreation Ground. We need it now, we shall need it more as the place grows.'

Soldiers returning from the War were welcomed by the church. A Whist Drive and Dance was arranged at the Drill Hall – the Vicar gave them all a hearty welcome in the name of the 'Old Church'.

It took until 1921 for the War Memorial at St Laurence Church to be built. Miss Hayes gave land for the extension of the churchyard, agreed in March 1919, but on the strict condition that the only memorials to be placed in it must be for those whose bodies were actually buried there. She would have preferred the restoration of the South Porch and a marble tablet commemorating the men who had fallen. The editor of the magazine commented wryly:

'We were not aware that the South Porch was in need of restoration . . . '

In July 1919 the parish magazine reported that *'With great generosity, two gentlemen have offered the piece of ground at the West End of the Church, at present occupied by Church Cottages and their gardens, as a site for the Churchyard War Memorial. This offer has been accepted and the War Memorial will be erected there.'*

Perhaps it was not a coincidence that the occupants of Church Cottages included Mr and Mrs Thomas

Knight, whose three sons had all been killed during the war.

The Town War Memorial was unveiled in October 1921 on land conveyed to the Parish Council of Frodsham Lordship by the Trustees of Edward Abbott Wright and others, the Marquis of Cholmondeley and Mrs Sarah Parker Hoose. The Parish War Memorial, on the site behind Church Cottages, which is now the church car park, was dedicated by the Bishop of Chester in November 1921. The church had the names of 106 soldiers who had died during the War.

The Cottage Hospital was never built and the town had to wait until the formation of the Playing Fields Association, of which Vicar Myres was the local Chairman, before the wish for his free, open public space was realised.

There is one final, sad reference to the situation in Frodsham after the War – not directly related to the way in which the town would commemorate its dead.

In March 1921 the parish magazine contained the report that:

'some sort of work is absolutely necessary here to help our people that are out of work. The Church is putting in hand the making of paths in the new portion of the Churchyard and are employing men who need work.' A public appeal was made for subscriptions.

In April:

'The opportunity has been taken while there were many men out of work to get the paths to the new burial ground cut and cindered. £23.00 from a Parish Social was used to pay for it. When the gates are in place, the ground will be consecrated. . .'

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