

FOTC AGM July 24th 2026 OPERATIONAL REPORT

Since our last FOTC AGM in October 2025 our volunteers have continued working in the old cemetery during our regular Tuesday and Saturday morning work sessions-weather conditions endured range from weather too wet for mowing and strimming to our 2nd heatwave of the year so far!

We have kept ourselves busy with regular grass mowing and strimming, care of our 49 Commonwealth War Graves, clearing numerous overgrown and long neglected graves, tending the flower beds and planted graves, keeping the driveway and other areas clear of leaves and fallen twigs & branches, pruning back overgrown shrubs and trees plus digging out weeds, bramble regrowth etc

Our 49 CWG plus access paths first strim of the year is almost complete- our 6 gravelled CWG also require regular weeding. Section PP where grass is extremely long and there are 6 CWG and several access paths has yet to be strimmed. Our 2 FOTC volunteers who have come to scrub the CWG headstones over the last 2 years have not been so far this year due to ill health.

Section JJ graves were all cleared and grass seed sown before end of 2025 - this section was the final large section, in upper areas of the cemetery ie above the laurel hedge cleared by our volunteers since our project began

Orchard Manor School students with a member of staff still come to help us on Tuesday mornings - at the end of last year they were helping to clear old graves in the lower corner of the cemetery near Higher Buckeridge Rd, they are now working clearing more older graves just below the driveway close to Exeter Rd

Neil along with help from other volunteers pruned back lots of overgrown shrubs close to the large conifer below the driveway opposite the lodge buildings. Neil has also cleared several very overgrown graves alongside the path not far from the conifer plus another old grave along lower boundary of the cemetery - and cleared and added new gravel to a section SS grave

I've been busy strimming on and around planted graves below driveway plus strimming graves below derelict chapel walls, tending the 49 CWG, clearing lots of ivy from below the driveway ,picking up and filling several dumpy bags of laurel hedge prunings, picking up lots of fallen twigs and branches from under tree around the cemetery, locating and digging out masses of ragwort regrowth throughout the cemetery - leaving any ragwort to grow on which there are cinnabar moth caterpillars feeding on.

Kay our treasurer promptly reimburses volunteers for expenditures ie mower repairs, mower fuel etc plus continues to keep our FOTC financial records in good order

Wendy and Ian are continuing with their regular grass mowing work -they keep all the main grass pathways and grassy areas cut plus Wendy also mows narrow access paths between rows of graves in sections in upper parts of the cemetery. Wendy has also done a great job weeding and pruning alongside the pavements on our Exeter Rd and Higher Buckeridge Rd boundaries. Wendy and Ian are also continuing with taking grave/plot photos for our records and the Find a Grave website

Mal has been hard at work locating and digging out unwanted perennial weed and bramble regrowth over the last 9 months - a never-ending important task.

Jacqui along with others completed clearing section JJ graves since then she has cleared some older graves alongside a path above the driveway, she then sows grass seed on cleared graves including those cleared in other areas by our volunteers. Jacqui has also continued to tend ie weed and plant up the colourful flower beds and 2 large planters by the buildings

Geoff has been busy clearing several very overgrown and long neglected graves in two areas of the cemetery .

John D has again come to our rescue several times - working to repair our grass mowers ie researching, purchasing and then fitting lots of spare parts for our machines

We are pleased to report we have some new FOTC volunteers!

John B joined us in Oct 2025 - so far he's kept our driveway clear with regularly raking/sweeping and bagging up lots of lime tree leaves. John has also cleared 2 very overgrown graves both long hidden ie by a huge ivy and a diseased box shrub

Our 2 more recent volunteers Mima and Adam are a welcome and appreciated addition to our team.

We also had Kate assist us for one session (so far) she was helping us as her employers release staff for a day's volunteering each year. We really need to research local companies to see if they can release their staff to help us in the cemetery.

Some generous friends made 100 + beautiful knitted red poppies for us - around Remembrance Day we had a lovely poppy display on and under our CWG noticeboard by the cemetery buildings plus a knitted poppy was placed on all our 49 CWG

Teignmouth Walk this Way walking group were given a guided tour of all our CWG close to Remembrance Day

Neil has recently led another guided tour the cemetery for a group connected to the Alice Cross Centre

Wendy and I with assistance from the Orchard Manor school team build a super new leaf mould shelter in the lower corner of the cemetery- at least 40 full dumpy bags of leaves have been emptied into the netted area so far.

Justin has again removed countless full dumpy bags of our green waste for recycling off site - since Feb due to ill health he's been unable to help but hopes to return to assist us again soon - we've been fortunate that other than some large woody shrub prunings lately we've managed to fit most of our green waste into our 4 green TDC wheelie bins

The lodge archway remains fenced off however TDC have recently begun minor repairs to woodwork on cemetery buildings.

Paul C has yet to commence the first meadow cut strimming - at present the cemetery is covered with long dry grass which is not easy for our volunteers to mow access paths or trim. Mark P has indicated that the first meadow cut will be done in July - NB in 2025 the first meadow cut strimming started July 10th and the 2nd on November 29th

***Our cemetery greenspace environment continues to thrive throughout the seasons. In springtime the wild primroses, daffodils, snowdrops, crocus, fritillaries & blue bells were a glorious sight and much admired by our volunteers and cemetery visitors. This summer the planted flowers plus the increasing number of wildflowers have resulted in even more butterflies, moths, bees, beetles, crickets etc throughout our cemetery

FOTC have again taken part in 2 local events ie TAAG Community Exhibition & St Michael's Flower Festival