

## CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES of the Meeting of the CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held on 24 FEBRUARY 2010 at 2:00PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor J F Warder                      Chairman (Chiltern District Council)

                    Councillor K McPartland                      Aylesbury Vale District Council  
                    "     D Thompson                      Aylesbury Vale District Council  
                    M Smith                      Chiltern District Council  
                    T Green                      Wycombe District Council

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Charlotte Peacock and Dr Chris Leach of Parsons Brinckerhof – for item 28

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** were received from Councillor Miss Katrina Wood

#### 16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 24 June 2009 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors M Smith and T Green expressed a personal and prejudicial interest in item 25- both being members of Committees which set fees and charges for other crematoria – and withdrew from the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

#### 18 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The next Annual Conference of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management was due to be held in October 2010 and following an expression of interest by the Vice-Chairman to attend it was

##### **RESOLVED -**

**That the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee and the Superintendent be nominated to attend the 2010 Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Annual Conference**

#### 19 LIAISON MEETING WITH PERSONS TAKING SERVICES AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS

In accordance with the practice of holding annual liaison meetings with persons taking services and funeral directors it was

##### **RESOLVED -**

**That the next Liaison Meeting be held at the Crematorium at 6.45 pm on 20 May 2010 to be preceded by refreshments at 6.00 pm**

## **20 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 2009**

The Joint Committee received a report giving details of the complaints and compliments that had been received about the Crematorium in 2009 and the action that had been taken in response to the comments received.

### **RESOLVED -**

**That the report be noted.**

## **21 USE OF CHAPELS FOR BURIAL SERVICES**

During 2009 the Crematorium had been approached about the possibility of allowing a funeral service to be held in the chapel followed by a burial service in a local cemetery and the Joint Committee considered a report setting out this possibility could become a reality.

Following consideration of the advantages the Joint Committee supported the proposal and accordingly

### **RESOLVED -**

- 1. That the Joint Committee allow the Crematorium chapels to be used for burial services.**
- 2. That a fee of £175.00 be charged for burial services.**
- 3. That authority be delegated to the Superintendent to suspend temporarily bookings for burial services during periods of peak demand for cremation.**

## **22 ANNUAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2007/08 AND 2008/09**

The Joint Committee at their meeting on 24 June 2009 had been advised that sign off of the 2007/08 Accounts was still awaited from the then appointed External Auditors, Grant Thornton, and the Joint Committee received a report explaining that the an unqualified audit opinion on the 2007/08 accounts had finally been received on 26 October 2009.

The report went on to:

- Explain the Value for Money (VFM) regime;
- The criteria used by the external auditors in assessing VFM; and
- The criteria which in the opinion of the external auditor had not been fully met when assessing the 2007/08 accounts.

The report went on to explain that a draft Annual Governance Report (AGR) had been received from the external auditors, now the Audit Commission, that reported on the results of their 2008/09 audit. The Joint Committee noted that

the external auditors were expected to be able to issue an unqualified opinion on the accounts subject to the finalisation of two outstanding issues with officers and to give an unqualified VFM conclusion.

After agreeing the proposed arrangement for responding to the AGR and for finalising the 2008/09 accounts and noting the four Key Lines of Enquiry which apply to the Crematorium and the requirement to approve the Letter of Representation the Joint Committee

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That receipt of the external audit opinion on the 2007/08 accounts be noted**
- 2. That the Annual Governance Statement for 2008/09 be reviewed and adopted.**
- 3. That the draft Annual Governance Report of the external auditor in respect of 2008/09 be noted.**
- 4. That authority be delegated to the Treasurer, in consultation with the Chairman, to respond to the draft Annual Governance Report and to finalise the 2008/09 accounts for audit sign off.**
- 5. That the Letter of Representation be approved.**

## **23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

One of the issues highlighted by the external auditor was the lack of a formal Treasury Management Strategy that had been approved by the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee therefore considered a report setting out a proposal to adopt the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement and seeking approval to the following investment priorities:

- Security of the sums invested;
- Liquidity of the sums invested; and
- Yield optimisation, commensurate with security and Liquidity.

After noting the current position on investments the Joint Committee

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That the Treasury Policy Statement of Chiltern District Council be formally adopted.**
- 2. The investment priorities set out in the report be approved.**
- 3. That the latest position in respect of the Crematorium's investments be noted.**

## **24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 TO 2013/14**

The Joint Committee received a report setting out details of the proposed Chilterns Crematorium Capital Programme covering the period 2009/10 to 2013/14. The report, after setting out in a table proposed changes from the current approved Capital Programme position, went on to provide an overview of each of the following capital projects included within the Programme:

- Milton Chapel Project
- Mercury Abatement and Heat Transfer/Recovery Plant;
- Relining Cremators;
- Replacement Analysers;
- Landscaping A404 Boundary;
- Cabling; and
- Boundary Fencing.

### **RESOLVED -**

**That the proposed Capital Programme for 2009/2010 to 2013/2014 be agreed.**

## **25 REVIEW OF FESS AND CHARGES**

The Joint Committee received a report setting out proposed fees and charges from 1 April 2010 based on a general increase of 3% over the current year charges.

With regard to the main cremation fee, following a discussion it was agreed that the fee be increased to £450 with effect from 1 April 2010.

### **RESOLVED -**

**That the fees and charges for 2010/11 as shown in appendix 4.1 of the report be agreed and the main cremation fee be set at £450.**

## **26 REVENUE BUDGET REVISED 2009/10 AND ORIGINAL 2010/11**

The Joint Committee received a report setting out details of the Chilterns Crematorium Revenue Budget for 2009/10 Revised and 2010/11 Original.

The revised budget for 2009/10 showed an estimated revenue surplus, before capital expenditure, of £603,990 compared to an original projected surplus of £652,990. The original budget for 2010/11 showed an estimated revenue surplus, before capital expenditure, of £627,850 compared to an original base position in 2009/10 of a projected surplus of £652,990.

After noting that the estimates for 2010/11 would need to be amended to reflect the decision made in Minute 25 above the Joint Committee

**RESOLVED -**

**That, subject to the figure for income being amended to reflect the decision made in minute 25 above in respect of the main crematorium fee, the 2009/2010 Revised and 2010/11 Original estimates be approved.**

**27 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED -**

**That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

*Note: The relevant paragraph number from Part 1 of Schedule 12A is indicated at the end of the Minute heading.*

**28 DESIGN SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF A NEW MERCURY ABATEMENT AND HEAT TRANSFER/RECOVERY PROJECT AT THE CHILTERN'S CREMATORIUM - PARAGRAPHS 7, 8 AND 12**

The Joint Committee received a report reminding members of the decisions that had previously been taken in respect of the project to procure and install cremator abatement equipment and associated works, including heat transfer for a new heating and hot water system, at the Crematorium.

The report went on to describe the process that Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd had followed to seek tenders for the works together with the tender evaluation process, application of which had resulted in Facultatieve Technologies Ltd (FT) achieving the highest score of the two Companies which had submitted tenders.

After expressing satisfaction with the way the tender process had been carried out and after noting the next steps (which included having further discussions with FT with a view to reducing their tender costs) the Joint Committee agreed with the recommendations in the report and accordingly

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That, based on Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd's technical evaluation, the Abatement and Heat Recovery contract be awarded to Facultatieve Technologies Ltd.**
- 2. That discussions be held with Facultatieve Technologies Ltd to seek to reduce the price by reviewing their fees submitted relating to training costs.**
- 3. That based on Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd's study £655,601 be agreed for the installation for the abatement and heat recovery**

**equipment and associated works, and to note a contingency of up to £197,400 is in place within existing budgets.**

- 4. That up to £8,000 be approved for additional consultants' fees which may be required to carry out the ancillary works design and installation.**
- 5 That, in accordance with the decision taken on 17 December 2007, the Joint Committee continue to work with Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd on the concluding stages of the project.**

## **29 CREMATORIUM BUILDINGS STRUCTURAL, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL SURVEY - PARAGRAPH 3**

General maintenance at the Crematorium had in the past been carried out as required on an ad hoc and partly planned basis and the Joint Committee considered a report explaining why this approach was no longer adequate. The report went on to set out a proposal to commission an independent survey to obtain the necessary information for producing a budgeted maintenance plan. The report also identified a process for selecting a company to carry out the survey.

The Joint Committee endorsed the proposals in the report and accordingly

### **RESOLVED -**

- 1. That agreement be given to carry out a structural and mechanical survey of the Crematorium.**
- 2. That the two most competitive companies who tendered for the Chiltern District Council surveys be invited to provide a schedule and quotation to carry out a similar survey at the Crematorium.**
- 3. That approval be given to award and spend up to £10,000 on the survey when Officers have detailed and agreed the consultant's brief and fees.**

**30 GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE - WOODLAND MANAGEMENT - PARAGRAPH 1**

Since being built in 1965 the Crematorium site had expanded to 22 acres, over half of which was woodland. The trees in the garden of remembrance had been managed reactively by the grounds maintenance staff and the Joint Committee received a report identifying the need to develop a long term woodland development plan, the adoption of which would conserve the landscape and wildlife of the area.

The report went on to explain the process that could be followed to develop this plan by appointing Chiltern Woodlands Project to act as a consultant and provide advice.

The Joint Committee, after recognising that the current arrangements were not satisfactory, supported the proposals in the report and accordingly

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That Chiltern Woodlands Project be appointed to act as forestry consultant to the Joint Committee, to formulate a long term woodland management plan and to provide advice to the Crematorium on proposed work, programme a timeframe for work, assist in grant applications and the setting up and overseeing of contracts for operational works defined in the management plan.**
- 2. That approval be given to provide funding of £1,500 for this consultancy and management work in the first year and in future years, such funding to be included in the annual revenue budgets**

**31 PROPOSED CREMATORIUM: AYLESBURY - PARAGRAPHS 7, 8 AND 12**

Following the decisions made on 24 June 2009 the Joint Committee received a report setting out the progress made in identifying a site for a proposed Crematorium in Aylesbury.

After considering the conclusions from the feasibility study carried out by Classic Cremation Partnership the Joint Committee reaffirmed its wish to provide a new crematorium at Aylesbury, endorsed the approach set out in the report and accordingly

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That the feasibility study into the provision of a new crematorium at Aylesbury be agreed as a basis for action.**
- 2. That the wish to provide a second Crematorium in Aylesbury Vale be confirmed.**

3. That Officers be authorised to negotiate on site acquisition using appropriate professional advice subject to (i) a further report before acquisition is authorised and (ii) the sums expended on the advice being agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm