

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held on 30 JULY 2010 at CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL AT 2.00 pm

PRESENT:	Councillor	M Smith	Chairman (Chiltern District Council)
	“	D Thompson	Aylesbury Vale District Council
	“	N Rose	Chiltern District Council
	“	T Green	Wycombe District Council
	“	R Scott	Wycombe District Council

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillor K McPartland.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Following a question from Councillor T Green, Alan Goodrum confirmed that there was no provision in the Committee's Terms of Reference that required the Chairman to be a member from Chiltern District Council.

Councillor D Thompson felt that it was appropriate for the Chairman to be a member from CDC, given that the Crematorium was in the District.

It was moved by Councillor N Rose, seconded by Councillor D Thompson and

RESOLVED -

That Councillor M Smith be elected as Chairman of the Joint Committee for 2010/11.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor D Thompson, seconded by Councillor N Rose and

RESOLVED -

That Councillor K McPartland be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for 2010/11

3 MINUTES

In connection with minute 17 – Declarations of Interest - Councillor T Green referred to correspondence sent to Alan Goodrum confirming that his declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in the report setting fees and charges had not been necessary.

Councillor M Smith clarified that his personal and prejudicial interest had arisen because of his membership of a Committee set up by Chesham Bois Parish Council

Subject to the above, the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 24 February 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 LIAISON MEETING WITH PERSONS TAKING SERVICES AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS

The Joint Committee received the notes of the Liaison Meeting held on 20 May 2010.

In connection with Minute 4 – Car Parking and Signage – the Joint Committee, after concurring in the view expressed by the Superintendent that using the area at the entrance to the Crematorium as an overflow car-park would create some practical problems, agreed that no further action could be taken to improve car parking.

Arising from the third bullet point on Minute 6, the Superintendent confirmed that the web-casting facility had gone live and had been used on a few occasions. The Joint Committee, in recognising that it will take some time for awareness of the equipment to become widespread, felt that it would be useful for the facility to be demonstrated at the next Liaison Meeting.

With regard to the date of the next Liaison Meeting, in 2011 the Joint Committee noted that this would be dependent upon completion of the abatement works.

RESOLVED -

That the notes of the Liaison Meeting held on 20 May 2010 be noted and the date of the next meeting in 2011 be the subject of further discussion at a future meeting.

6 SERVICE PLAN 2010 - 2011

The Joint Committee received a copy of the Crematorium's service plan for 2010/11.

In connection with Key Objectives for the next 3 years, the Joint Committee agreed with the suggestion made by Councillor Green that the possibility of providing a crematorium for animals/pets should be considered when a site for a new facility in Aylesbury has been identified and plans were being developed.

RESOLVED -

That the Crematorium Service Plan for 2010/2011 be approved.

7 MILTON FUNERAL CHAPEL: COMPLETION OF BUILDING WORKS

The Joint Committee received a report providing further information on the work that had been carried out in the Milton Funeral Chapel to repair the defect to the floor.

The Joint Committee noted with concern that the defect could be indicative of a more serious defect relating to the sub-structure of the floor which could result in the Chapel having to close to enable repairs to be carried out. The Superintendent, after explaining that the Architects were progressing the matter with the builders as a matter of urgency, said that he would keep the Joint Committee aware of developments. The Clerk indicated that he would be consulting the Joint Committee's legal advisers on the issue.

RESOLVED -

That report be noted.

8 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2008/09

The Joint Committee receive a report attaching as an appendix the external auditor's Annual Letter in respect of the financial year 2008/09.

RESOLVED -

That report be noted.

9 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10

The Joint Committee received a report on the Statement of Accounts 2009/10 and the Annual Governance Statement for 2009/10.

With regard to the Statement of Accounts the report was broken down into three sections as follows:

- Explanatory Forward, Accounting Policies and Statement of Responsibilities;
- Core Financial Statements including incomes and expenditure account; and
- Annual Governance Statement.

After noting the need for the Accounts to be formally approved by the Chairman, the Joint Committee

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the Statement of Accounts 2009/10 be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Joint Committee**
- 2. That Annual Governance Statement for 2009/10 be approved and signed.**

10 55TH ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with Standing Order 7 the Joint Committee received the Fifty Fifth Annual Report which covered a number of issues including:

- The number of cremations;
- Fees;
- Staff; and
- Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds

RESOLVED -

That the Fifty Fifth Annual Report of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee be formally approved and adopted.

11 INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

Chiltern District Council and Wycombe District Council had both recently taken decisions to introduce charging for credit card payments to off set what was becoming an increasing budgetary pressure through escalating bank charges and Aylesbury Vale District Council were considering likewise.

The Joint Committee considered a report setting out a proposal to impose a charge on the credit card transactions carried out at the Crematorium.

After noting that the number of transactions processed by credit card was relatively small - less than a hundred in 2009/10 incurring bank charges of approximately £500 – and after considering the options together with the arguments for and against, the Joint Committee agreed in principle that a fee of 1.6% should be charged for credit card payment transactions.

As part of a strategy to encourage electronic payments, the Joint Committee also agreed that the option of imposing a charge to cover the costs of payments by cheques should be considered.

RESOLVED -

That agreement be given in principle to impose a fee of 1.6% for credit card payment transactions and authority be delegated to the Treasurer and the Superintendent to finalise procedural details and agree a date for implementation.

12 UPDATE ON 2009/10 AUDIT OPINION FEE

The Joint Committee received a report attaching a letter from the Audit Commission indicating that they were satisfied that the fee they had estimated for the 2009/10 audit of £9, 400 was appropriate and that no adjustment was required at this stage. The Joint Committee was advised that the fee for 2008/09 had been £5,600.

The Joint Committee, after being advised that there was little they could do to challenge the Audit Commission's decision, expressed their dismay at the increase in the fee which had reached a level out of proportion to the operation of the Committee. Authority was delegated to the Chairman to write to the Audit Commission deploring the increase in the audit fee.

The Joint Committee also agreed that investigations should be carried out to see if the Joint Committee could be changed to the status of a Company.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the 2009/10 opinion letter be noted and authority be delegated to the Chairman to write to the Audit Commission deploring the disproportionate increase in the audit fee for 2009/10.**
- 2. That authority be delegated to the Treasurer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Committee, to agree any amendments to the audit fee.**

13 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

In considering the suggestion of the Audit Commission on dates for future meetings, the Joint Committee saw no need to programme meetings for March or December.

The Joint Committee went on to agree that the next meeting be held on 23 September at 11am at CDC.

14 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.

15 ANCILLARY WORKS - PARAGRAPH 7, 8 AND 12

The Joint Committee received a report providing an update on the number of quotations that had been received for the ancillary building works and advising that the relevant procurement rules were being followed.

RESOLVED -

That report be noted.

16 PLANNED PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE (CONDITION SURVEY) - PARAGRAPHS 7, 8 AND 12

The Joint Committee considered a report setting out the quotations that had been received to carry out an independent structural, mechanical and electrical survey of specific areas of the Crematorium.

After expressing satisfaction with the tendering procedure the Joint Committee supported the proposals in the report and accordingly

RESOLVED -

- 1. That an additional £2000 be approved to carry out an independent structural, mechanical and electrical survey of specific areas of the Crematorium.**
- 2. That the contract to carry out the independent survey be awarded to Parsons Brinckerhoff in the sum identified in the report.**

17 SITE SEARCH: AYLESBURY CREMATORIUM - PARAGRAPHS 7, 8 AND 12

The Joint Committee received a report providing an update on the progress made in identifying a site for a proposed Crematorium in Aylesbury. Whilst considering the merits of the five sites identified members expressed a preference for the site identified in paragraph 4. (5).

After agreeing that the issue needed to be progressed as quickly as possible, the Joint Committee

RESOLVED -

That report be noted.

18 PERFORMANCE RELATED PAY SCHEME - PARAGRAPH 4

The Joint Committee received a report explaining that Chiltern District Council, through its Personnel Committee and the Chiltern District Council and Staff Joint Committee, was currently reviewing its Performance Related Pay Scheme with a view to terminating it.

Crematorium staff were covered by the Scheme and the Joint Committee was asked to consider its approach to the issue.

After asking for further information on the cost of the Scheme in so far as it related to Crematorium staff the Joint Committee

RESOLVED -

That the option in paragraph 6 (ii) of the report be supported and a further report setting out the results of the review be submitted to a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm