

CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting of the CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held on 23 SEPTEMBER 2010 at CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL at 11:00 AM

PRESENT: Councillors: M R Smith - Chairman (Chiltern District Council)
T Green (Wycombe District Council)
D Thompson (Aylesbury Vale District Council)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors K McPartland, N M Rose, and R Scott.

19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 30 July 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21 MILTON FUNERAL CHAPEL: COMPLETION OF BUILDING WORKS

The Joint Committee received a report providing further information on the defect to the floor inside the Milton Funeral Chapel, and as previously noted the building contractor Thomas Vale had admitted liability for the building fault, and had agreed to rectify the defect flooring at the contractor's expense.

An extensive investigation into the whole area of flooring would be carried out by the building contractor to ascertain the level of remedial work required and to provide an indication to the level of disruption that was likely to occur during the building works, which would be carried out in 2011 during the summer. The time scale for completion of the works would depend upon the level of work required and this would be clearer once the investigation had been completed. A further report, which detailed the outcome of the investigation, would be brought to the Joint Committee at the next meeting on 27 January 2011, prior to the commencement of building works.

In response to questions from the Joint Committee the Superintendent advised that the hours of operation for the Hampden Chapel could be extended during the summer months, and that this was one option which could be used to mitigate the potential loss of business whilst the building works to the Milton Chapel were under way. It was suggested that a temporary structure could be used for funeral services whilst the building works were being carried out, but this was problematic due to the equipment required for the funeral services and Cremations.

The Joint Committee were concerned that the building works to the Milton Chapel floor represented a significant risk for the Crematorium in terms of loss of income, and that options which mitigated the risk of loss of income should be explored. The Joint Committee would only consider litigation against the building contractor for the loss of revenue as a last resort. Members were also advised that the Joint Committee should wait until a further assessment of the defect flooring had been completed before considering the legal options open to the Joint Committee in respect of reclaiming the loss of income.

RESOLVED -

That report be noted.

22 ANNUAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10

The Joint Committee received the Annual Governance Report for 2009/10 which summarised the findings from the 2009/10 audit, set out the key matters for attention of the Joint Committee, the value for money conclusion and the audit closure certificate.

The Head of Financial Services advised that the external auditor had indicated within the report that he would issue a qualified opinion on the financial statements if the recommendations within the Annual Governance report were not carried out. The Joint Committee then reviewed each of the auditor's recommendation individually.

The Joint Committee whilst reviewing the recommendation made in relation to the Financial Statements including the error to the calculation of the pension transactions also noted that the errors identified by the auditor did not impact the performance of the Crematorium. As such, Members agreed that no changes should be made to the financial statements except for the error made in relation to the financial instruments which would be corrected accordingly. The Joint Committee was required to submit a letter of representation to the auditors, and the reasons for not adjusting the remaining statements would be detailed within this letter.

The Joint Committee noted that the 2009/10 accounts were ready for agreement before the 30 June, but the availability of Members meant that it had not been possible to arrange a meeting before the statutory deadline. It was suggested that in order to agree the accounts before the statutory deadline, in future, the auditor's recommendation to schedule meetings of the Joint Committee in time with the deadline for agreement of the accounts be adopted, and where this was not possible due to time constraints the Joint Committee would agree the accounts electronically.

Members noted that the auditor's second recommendation made in relation to accounting practices had already been implemented. The issues identified by

the auditor in respect of internal control were considered not to be significant, but the recommendations made by the Auditor would be implemented.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the Annual Governance Report for 2009/10 be noted.**
- 2. That delegated authority be given to the Treasurer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Committee, to respond to the draft Annual Governance Report, and to finalise the 2009/10 accounts for audit sign off and publication.**
- 3. That the Letter of Representation be approved subject to the inclusion of the reasons for not amending the statement of accounts.**

23 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held at Aylesbury Vale District Council in The Meeting Room, Gatehouse Way on **Friday 27 January 2010 at 11:00 a.m.**

24 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.

25 SITE SEARCH: AYLESBURY CREMATORIUM- PARAGRAPH 4

The Joint Committee received a report providing an update on the progress made to date in identifying a site for a proposed Crematorium in Aylesbury. The Joint Committee agreed in principle for an external consultant to be appointed to expedite the progress of the site search whilst discussions with the proprietors of the land at sites 5 and 2.1 were continued.

Members then reviewed the proposal from one consultant, detailed within the report, and expressed the view that the approval of planning consent at the chosen site should be a condition that was specified in the final agreement

with the consultant if a success fee was used. However, it was advised that a consultant was unlikely to agree to this condition.

It was then agreed that the proposals would be finalised with the consultant and these would be circulated via email to Members for comments prior to the appointment of the consultant.

RESOLVED -

That the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee agree in principle to the appointment of a consultant to secure a site for a Crematorium in Aylesbury with the terms of the appointment to be circulated via email to Members for comments prior to the appointment of the consultant.

The meeting ended at 11.51 am