

CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting of the CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held on 27 JANUARY 2011 at CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESENT:

Councillor K McPartland Aylesbury Vale District Council - Vice-Chairman

Councillors: T Green Wycombe District Council
N M Rose Chiltern District Council
R Scott Wycombe District Council
D Thompson Aylesbury Vale District Council

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors M R Smith (Chiltern District Council).

26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 23 September 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The next Annual Conference of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management was due to be held in October 2011 and it was

RESOLVED -

That the Chairman of the Joint Committee and the Superintendent be nominated to attend the 2011 Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Annual Conference

29 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 provisionally scheduled to held at the Crematorium at 6.45 pm on 15 June 2011 to be preceded by refreshments at 6.00 pm.

30 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 2010

The Joint Committee received a report giving details of the complaints and compliments that had been received about the Crematorium in 2010 and the action that had been taken in response to the comments received.

The Joint Committee was pleased to note that the number of complaints had fallen from the previous year. From the comments received from the returned questionnaires the following changes were proposed:

1. Position of the loudspeaker to improve effectiveness
2. Remind funeral directors of the temporary nature of the container provided by the Crematorium for cremation ashes
3. Review the hard of hearing loop in the Milton Chapel.

It was advised that the “temporary container” had changed from a plastic container to a cardboard container principally for environmental reasons and to facilitate the storage of the containers at the Crematorium. Funeral directors were asked to inform families in relation to this arrangement so that families knew what to expect and this would be reiterated at this year's Liaison Meeting. In response to a question it was advised that funeral directors returned ashes to families in the majority of cases and for this reason it was suggested that there would be insufficient demand to warrant the provision of a longer term storage container.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

31 SCANNING OF MANUAL CREMATION REGISTERS AND DECEASED ON LINE

The Joint Committee considered a report at the meeting on 15 January 2009 highlighting the eventual need to scan alphabetical indexes into an electronic format. In light of further deterioration of early cremation registers and indexes, which as original documents were only in existence in paper form, it was advised that these needed to be scanned now in order to retain and safeguard the records.

A further recommendation was made to process the records using a data capture system to allow for quick access of the records and this process was required if the records were to be accessed via Deceased On Line in the future. It was established that the paper records would be retained once the records had been scanned. The Joint Committee noted that data capture was a tried and tested method, proven to generate searchable records once scanned.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the manual cremation registers and indexes be scanned for an estimated cost of £4,500.**
- 2. That the data capture of the manual cremation registers and indexes proceed at an estimated cost of up to £7,500.**

32 MILTON FUNERAL CHAPEL: REPLACEMENT OF FLOOR

The Joint Committee received an update report regarding the defect to the floor inside the Milton chapel. As previously advised the building contractors admitted liability for the building fault and as such had agreed to rectify the defect flooring at the contractor's expense. Concerns were previously raised about the potential loss of income and was decided that litigation for loss of revenue would only be pursued as a last resort.

It was noted that since the last meeting there were now reasonably good indications that the carpeted areas were not affected and that it would be possible to re-screed and lay new tiled floor over the existing heating pipes. On the basis of this information the closure period of the chapel was not expected to exceed two months which would result in minimal, if any, loss of income.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

33 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 TO 2014/15

The Joint Committee received a report setting out details of the proposed Chilterns Crematorium Capital Programme covering the period 2010/11 to 2014/15. 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;
- Site Development;
- Roadway Resurfacing; and
- Structural survey.

It was noted that the structural survey of properties and infrastructure at the Crematorium still had to be returned and would be reviewed at that time. Concerns were raised regarding the large increase in costs to cover the

mercury abatement. It was advised that it was part of phasing for the upgrade project which had already been approved.

RESOLVED -

That the proposed Capital Programme for 2010/11 to 2014/2015 be agreed.

34 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Joint Committee received a report setting out proposed fees and charges from 1 April 2011 based on a general increase of 3.3% over the current year charges.

With regard to the main cremation fee a question was raised about whether there had been a slight decrease in the number of people using the facility after an increase in fees and charges last year. It was noted that there were fewer cremations this year but this decrease was negligible and could be explained by the natural fluctuation in demand. It was agreed that the fee be increased to £470 with effect from 1 April 2011.

RESOLVED -

That the fees and charges for 2011/12 as shown in appendix 6.2 of the report be agreed and the main cremation fee be set at £470.

35 REVENUE BUDGET REVISED 2010/11 AND ORIGINAL 2011/12

The Joint Committee received a report setting out details of the Chilterns Crematorium Revenue Budget for 2010/11 Revised and 2011/12 Original.

The revised budget for 2010/11 showed an estimated revenue surplus, before capital expenditure, of £715,990 compared to an original projected surplus of £678,000. The original budget for 2011/12 showed an estimated revenue surplus, before capital expenditure, of £772,650 compared to an original base position in 2010/11 of a projected surplus of £678,000.

In response to a question regarding future audit fees it was advised that there may be a decrease in auditing fees for the current year as a result of the reduced level of auditing being undertaken.

After noting that the estimates for 2011/12 would need to be amended to reflect the approved fee increases made in Minute 34 and the cost of scanning manual records made in Minute 31 it was

RESOLVED -

That, subject to the figure for income being amended to reflect the decision made in Minute 31 above in respect of the main Crematorium fee, the 2010/2011 Revised and 2011/12 Original estimates be approved.

36 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Joint Committee received a report reviewing the financial position of the Chilterns Crematorium in the medium term from 2012/13 to 2014/15. The report set out in a table the forecast position for the next three years which showed that the Joint Committee was in a strong financial position.

RESOLVED -

That the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast be noted.

37 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Joint Committee noted that a meeting would be held in the third week of June 2011 to approve the statement of accounts, and went on to agree that the actual date of the next meeting would be determined following the District Council elections.

38 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.

39 SITE SEARCH: AYLESBURY CREMATORIUM (PARAGRAPH 3)

At the last meeting the Joint Committee agreed to the appointment of an external consultant to help with the search for a suitable site for a proposed Crematorium in Aylesbury. The Joint Committee received a report providing an update on the progress made to date and were asked to note developments with two of the sites previously identified and the responses in relation to one new site.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.22 pm