

CHILTERNS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

FIFTY SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT 1st APRIL 2010 – 31st MARCH 2011

CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES

Aylesbury Vale District Council

Councillor David Thompson
Councillor Kevin McPartland

Chiltern District Council

Councillor John Warder (Chairman April 2010 – July 2010)
Councillor Michael Smith (Chairman from July 2010)
Councillor Nick Rose (from July 2010)

Wycombe District Council

Councillor A.R. Green
Councillor Katrina Wood (April 2010 – July 2010)
Councillor R. Scott (from July 2010)

Superintendent and Registrar

Charles Howlett DMS, F.ICCM(Dip)
Chilterns Crematorium
Whielden Lane
Amersham
Buckinghamshire

Clerk

Alan Goodrum

Chief Executive
Chiltern District Council
Council Offices
King George V Road
Amersham
Buckinghamshire

Treasurer

Alison Howes

Chief Financial Officer
Chiltern District Council
Council Offices
King George V Road
Amersham
Buckinghamshire

**CHILTERN'S CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
FIFTY SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT**

1) CREMATIONS

The following tables show the number of cremations from 1st April to 31st March for the past five years and their originating Districts:

District	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Aylesbury Vale	619	575	668	639	614
Chiltern	622	558	596	552	563
Wycombe	835	872	899	834	895
Other	874	925	1,004	911	973
Total	2,950	2,930	3,167	2,936	3,045

Comparative figures for the previous years are:

1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
3,161	3,169	2,967	3,021	3,104	3,065	3,010	2,989

The total number of cremations since opening until the end of March 2011 = 114,936.

The 3,045 cremations carried out in 2010/11 generated income of £1,395,077.00

In 2010 Chilterns Crematorium ranked at 8 in a league table in order of the number of cremations carried out at each of the 256 crematoria in the UK.

The proportion of cremations to burials first reached 70% in 1992 and in the 17 years since then it has only increased by a further 3%. By 1995 the actual number of deaths in the UK had risen to 650,000, but since then there has been a general downward trend, with the least number of deaths so far in 2009 when only 564,000 were recorded, 20,000 less than in the previous year.

2) DISPOSITION OF CREMATION ASHES

Nationally there has been a steady reduction in the number of cremation ashes being placed in the grounds of the crematorium where the cremation has taken place, with a higher incidence of ashes being removed from the crematorium for disposal elsewhere.

In 1970 approximately 86% of ashes remained at crematoria nationally (including about 15% being buried as opposed to scattered), but since then there has been a gradual decline and in 2004 the national figure was 40% (including 10% being buried).

At Chilterns (where ashes have only ever been scattered), in the 1970's around 80% of ashes were remaining in the garden of remembrance. By 2004 this was reduced to 35%. In 2006 approximately 32% of ashes were scattered in the garden of remembrance, 34% in 2007, 32% in 2008, 30% in 2009 and 28% in 2010.

The number of cremation ashes being taken away for disposal elsewhere is being offset to a degree by those being received from other crematoria for scattering at the Chilterns with an average of 61 being received over the past five years. 56 were received in 2010/11 generating an income of £1,517.00

Although the reduction in ashes being scattered is reflected in memorial sales, nevertheless the Garden of Remembrance remains an important feature helping provide an appropriate setting for the place of cremation and also acting as a focal point in the mourning process.

3) **COMMEMORATION**

An additional 92 commemorative plaques were added to the kerbing around the rose beds and the total number of plaques, after deducting those that were not renewed at the expiration of the lease period, is 2,749. Together with the income from renewals, the total income from rose bed commemorative plaques amounted to £43,524.

An additional 30 stone memorial plaques were sold, and the total number of plaques, after deducting those that were not renewed at the expiration of the lease period, is 727 since the scheme was introduced in 1994. Together with the income from renewals the income for the year amounted to £29,860.

An additional 23 leather memorial plaques were sold in the chapel of remembrance, and the total number of plaques, after deducting those that were not renewed at the expiration of the lease period, is 283 since the scheme was introduced in January 2001, with income for the year of £4,617.

A total sum of £1,225 was donated for the purchase of trees, shrubs and flowering plants and bulbs.

A further 392 inscriptions were entered in the Book of Remembrance and the income, including the sale of miniature replica books and memorial cards, amounted to £34,379.

4) **FEES**

The scales of fees were reviewed by the Joint Committee in January 2011. Increases of around 3% in line with the projected rate of inflation were approved in relation to the majority of the fees, effective from 1st April 2011.

The cremation fee was increased by 4.5%, from £450 to £470, an above inflation increase taking into account the rising cost of energy (gas and electricity) and to help build up reserves for the future capital programme to provide cremator abatement plant by 2013 (in compliance with new legislation) and the Joint Committee's wish to provide a Crematorium in Aylesbury Vale. However it should be noted that measures taken in recent years to operate the cremators more efficiently, notably the move away from the previous policy of carrying out all cremations on the same day as the funeral service, has achieved significant energy savings without which larger increases in the cremation fee would be necessary.

The national average cremation fee in 2010 was £505.62, and in a league table of the 256 crematoria in the UK, starting with the most expensive, Chilterns' cremation fee ranked at 203.

5) **STAFF**

There were no staff changes during the year.

A diagram showing the current staffing establishment at the Crematorium is included as *Appendix 1*.

6) **CREMATIONS EMISSIONS ABATEMENT**

Facultatieve Technologies Ltd, of Leeds, who won the contract for the installation of the cremations emissions abatement and heat recovery equipment, commenced work in November 2010.

Prior to the installation work commencing a tendering exercise was carried out by invitation to four suitable local building contractors to carry out enabling and other associated building works. The successful contractor was Clipfine Ltd of Holborn, London.

The work proceeded steadily over the winter months with minimum disruption to funeral services and by the end of March the installation phase was nearing completion, with commissioning of the equipment scheduled for May 2011.

The total projected cost of the project, including associated works (building works etc), is £655,000.

7) **PROPOSED CREMATORIUM: AYLESBURY**

By the end of the period covered in last year's Annual Report (2009/10) the CCJC had agreed to accept as a basis for action the findings of a feasibility study on a proposed crematorium for Aylesbury. The study confirmed the Chiltern Crematorium Joint Committee's (CCJC) previous conclusion that a new crematorium is needed. The CCJC also resolved to endeavour to provide the facility itself.

The Joint Committee resolved in September 2010 to engage the consultant, Chris Johns of Classic Cremation Partnerships, who had previously carried out the feasibility study and who also has considerable experience in finding crematorium sites.

This assignment had not been concluded at the end of the year but CCJC remains confident negotiations on a site will be concluded in 2011-12.
