

MINUTES of the Meeting of the
CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
held on **24 JANUARY 2012**
at **AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL** at **2.30 pm**

PRESENT:

Councillor M R Smith Chiltern District Council - Chairman

Councillors: D Thompson Aylesbury Vale District Council
N M Rose Chiltern District Council

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors B Roberts (Aylesbury Vale District Council), D Carroll (Wycombe District Council) and Mrs J Teesdale (Wycombe District Council).

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 21 June 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Thompson declared a personal interest in Item 23 - Site Search: Aylesbury Crematorium before this item was discussed. Nature of interest – Councillor Thompson knew the land owner of the site being discussed.

14 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The next Annual Conference of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management was due to be held in October 2012 and it was

RESOLVED –

That the Chairman of the Joint Committee and the Superintendent be nominated to attend the 2012 Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Annual Conference.

15 LIAISON MEETING WITH PERSONS TAKING SERVICES AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS

The Joint Committee acknowledged the benefit of holding annual liaison meetings with persons taking services and funeral directors. It was suggested that the provisional date be circulated to those Members not in attendance at in order to confirm their availability.

RESOLVED –

That the next Liaison Meeting be provisionally scheduled to be held at the Crematorium at 6.45 pm on 12 June 2012 to be preceded by refreshments at 6.00 pm.

16 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 2011

The Joint Committee received a report giving details of the complaints and compliments that had been received about the Crematorium in 2011 and the action that had been taken in response to the comments received.

The Joint Committee noted a substantial complaint that had been received in relation to a temporary container containing ashes which had been released to the family labelled with the correct name and also attaching one label in another name. The Superintendent had been able to discover the sequence of events which proved conclusively that there was absolutely no question the family had taken anything other than the correct ashes. A full report was sent to the family, with a profuse apology, which was accepted. In light of this mistake a review of procedures was undertaken and it had been agreed that any boxes that were returned to the Crematorium would be destroyed as soon as ashes were taken out of them, and extra checks would be made before ashes were released from the office.

In response to another complaint the Joint Committee were advised that all funeral directors had been reminded of the importance of observing the traffic light system and to be mindful of other services that were taking place.

The Joint Committee, in light of comments received regarding the ability to hear people taking the service, suggested that a feasibility study be undertaken to assess the possibility of installing a PA facility in the Hampden Chapel.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That a feasibility study be undertaken to explore the prospect of installing a PA system in the Hampden Chapel.**

17 ADDITIONAL FUNERAL SERVICE TIME

Increasingly requests were being received for additional service time (90 minutes instead of the normal 45 minutes). Historically the policy at the Chiltern Crematorium had been not to allow additional service time due to the potential to restrict availability. However, funerals were changing and one consequence was that forty five minutes was sometimes not enough. Many

crematoria allowed extended service time and charged a fee to do so. The Joint Committee were therefore asked to consider whether to allow additional service time, and the level of fee to be charged to do so. It was also recommend that the Superintendent be given the discretion to temporarily suspend bookings for additional time during periods of peak demand for cremation.

Members noted that demand for additional time had increased, an that the charge for additional time was broadly the same at other crematoria; £150 for an additional 45 minutes. As such, it was

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the Joint Committee allow the Crematorium chapels to be booked for additional funeral service time.**
- 2. That a fee of £150.00 be charged for an additional 45 minutes, with a review of the fee to be undertaken at the next Joint Committee meeting.**
- 3. That the Superintendent be given discretion to temporarily suspend bookings for additional funeral service time during periods of peak demand for cremation.**

18 MILTON FUNERAL CHAPEL: REPLACEMENT OF FLOOR

The Joint Committee received an update on the replacement of the floor at the Milton Funeral Chapel. The work was planned for summer 2011, but in the event, despite persistent encouragement, the building contractor was unable to comply with the Crematorium's timing requirement i.e. that the work must be carried out during the summer months, and after much prevarication gave a start date of 16 October 2011 which had to be declined. The works were now planned for the summer of 2012. In the meantime the remedial repairs carried out to the existing floor in summer 2010 continued to endure, although they were beginning to show signs of deterioration, and the condition of the floor has not caused any aesthetic or operational problems.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

19 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12 TO 2015/16

The Joint Committee received a report setting out details of the proposed Chilterns Crematorium Capital Programme covering the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. 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:

- Mercury Abatement and Heat Transfer/Recovery Plant;
- Relining Cremators;
- Site Development;
- Roadway Resurfacing; and
- CCTV.

RESOLVED -

That the proposed Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2015/2016 be agreed.

20 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Joint Committee received a report setting out proposed fees and charges from 1 April 2012 based on a general increase of 3% over the current year charges.

The cremation fee for a person whose age at time of death was less than 18 was discussed. It was noted that historically an incremental scale of charges, based on the child's age at death had been in place. However, this had been replaced with the current table of fees, as 18 was considered a more appropriate point to apply the main cremation fee since it was widely considered to be the age when someone was considered to be an adult.

Members considered the proposed increase in the main cremation fee and discussed whether in light of increased costs of operation, such as higher energy costs and the capital required for future site development, the main cremation fee could be increased further. Following the discussion it was

RESOLVED -

That the fees and charges for 2012/13 as shown in appendix 6.2 of the report be agreed and the main cremation fee be set at £490 with effect from April 2012.

21 REVENUE BUDGET REVISED 2011/12 AND ORIGINAL 2012/13

The Joint Committee received a report setting out details of the Chilterns Crematorium Revenue Budget for 2011/12 Revised and 2012/13 Original.

The revised budget for 2011/12 showed an estimated revenue surplus, before capital expenditure, of £764,345 compared to an original projected surplus of £775,400.

The original budget for 2012/13 showed an estimated revenue surplus, before capital expenditure, of £800,710 compared to an original base position in 2011/12 of a projected surplus of £775,400. The reasons for the budget variations that made up these increases were set out in the report.

One Member advised that a non-Joint Committee Member had enquired into the possibility of a joint dividend being issued to partner authorities. The Joint Committee felt that this would not be appropriate at a time when the development of a new crematorium was being progressed which would require capital investment to support this. The new crematorium presented an opportunity for the Joint Committee to tap into additional future revenue which may well provide an opportunity in the future for a joint dividend to be issued. It was acknowledged that there were several private sector organisations interested in the development of a new crematorium in the area and that this presented a significant risk to the Joint Committee in terms of losing future revenue.

After noting that the budget for 2011/12 would need to be amended to reflect the approved fee increases made in Minute 20 it was

RESOLVED -

That, subject to the figure for income being amended to reflect the decision made in Minute 20 above in respect of the main cremation fee, the 2011/2012 Revised and 2012/13 Original budgets be approved.

22 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Joint Committee received a report reviewing the financial position of the Chilterns Crematorium in the medium term from 2013/14 to 2015/16. The report set out in a table the forecast position for the next three years which showed that although the Joint Committee was in a strong financial position, funding would be extremely tight based on the current cost projections for 2013/14 when the site development plans came to fruition.

RESOLVED –

That the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast be noted.

23 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Joint Committee identified Thursday 21 June at 2.30 pm (Chiltern District Council) as the provisional date of the next meeting, subject to the date being canvassed with the Joint Committee Members not present at the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the next meeting would be provisionally scheduled for Thursday 21 June at 2.30 pm at Chiltern District Council.

Note: The provisional date of the next meeting was confirmed following the meeting.

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.

25 SITE SEARCH: AYLESBURY CREMATORIUM

The Joint Committee received a report providing an update on the progress made in identifying a site for a proposed crematorium in Aylesbury. It was suggested that the search area should be widened.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.46 pm