

Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee

Wednesday, 18th July, 2012 at 4.00 pm

Cabinet Room, King George V House, King George V Road, Amersham

A G E N D A

- 1 Evacuation Procedures
- 2 Election of Chairman
To elect a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2012/13.
- 3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman
To appoint a Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2012/13.
- 4 Minutes of Previous Meetings
To sign the Minutes of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee held on 24 January 2012 (**Appendix 1**).

To receive resolutions 1 - 3 relating to Minute 7 (Statements of Accounts 2012/13) and the resolution relating to Minute 9 (Risk Management), and agree the recommendations of the Minutes of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee held on 21 June 2012 (**Appendix 2**).
Appendix 1 (Pages 1 - 6)
Appendix 2 (Pages 7 - 12)
- 5 Apologies for Absence
- 6 Declarations of Interest
- 7 57th Annual Report (*Pages 13 - 20*)

8 Exclusion of the Public

To resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act

9 Site Search: Aylesbury Crematorium (*Pages 21 - 24*)

Appendix 1 (Pages 25 - 26)

Appendix 2 (Pages 27 - 34)

10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Members are asked to bring their diaries to the meeting for this item.

Note: All Reports will be updated orally at the meeting if appropriate and may be supplemented by additional reports at the Chairman's discretion.

Membership: Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee

Councillor Brian Roberts
Councillor David Thompson
Councillor Nick Rose
Councillor Michael Smith
Councillor David Carroll
Councillor Katrina Wood

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Chiltern District Council
Chiltern District Council
Wycombe District Council
Wycombe District Council

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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

MINUTES of the Meeting of the
CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
held on **21 JUNE 2012**
at **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

PRESENT:

Councillor	M R Smith	Chiltern District Council	- Chairman
Councillor	N M Rose	Chiltern District Council	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors B Roberts (Aylesbury Vale District Council), D Thompson (Aylesbury Vale District Council), D Carroll (Wycombe District Council) and Ms K S Wood (Wycombe District Council).

1 QUORUM

In light of the absence of four Members of the Joint Committee, the meeting was inquorate. Due to the business under discussion, namely the Statement of Accounts and Risk Management Strategy and the timescales involved, it was agreed that the meeting proceed on an informal basis with any determinations being recommendations to the next meeting of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee.

Note: Councillor M Smith presided as Chairman for the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 24 January 2012 would be agreed at the next meeting.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 SERVICE PLAN 2012-2013

Members considered the Crematorium Service Plan for 2012/13. After noting in particular the key projects that had taken place during the previous year, and those that would continue into the following year, Members

RECOMMENDED –

That the report be noted.

5 ADDITIONAL FUNERAL SERVICE TIME

At the Joint Committee meeting held on 24 January 2012 it was agreed to allow the Crematorium chapels to be booked for additional funeral service time for a fee of £150. In light of concern that demand for additional funeral time may impact on other bookings the Superintendent was given discretion to temporarily suspend bookings for additional service time if required. Members also requested that a review of the fee be undertaken at a forthcoming meeting.

Members noted that 10 bookings for additional service time had been made, and that these had not had a significant impact on booking availability. The Superintendent had therefore not found it necessary to suspend bookings for additional time.

RECOMMENDED –

That with the proviso that the Superintendent retains the discretion to temporarily suspend the availability of ‘additional time’ bookings, the fee charged for an additional 45 minutes remain at £150.00 until the next annual review of fees and charges.

6 DISABILITY ACCESS SURVEY

At the Chiltern Disability Focus Group meeting held on 12 March 2012, comments were made about access issues at the Crematorium. Following the meeting Nigel McAlister, a member of the Group, offered to assist in carrying out a survey. The Superintendent accepted the offer and a survey took place on 30 April 2012.

Members considered the report from the access survey. A number of suggestions would be implemented immediately. However, other suggestions would require further investigation to establish feasibility and costs. Some suggestions would require more detailed consideration because they would have significant financial implications and would require advanced planning.

Members were pleased to note the positive comments regarding staff and in particular their helpful attitude. As such, it was suggested that Members' thanks be expressed to the Crematorium staff, and also to Nigel McAlister for his input into the access survey. It was also suggested that Councillor M Smith send a letter to Nigel McAlister expressing thanks for his input into the Crematorium access survey.

RECOMMENDED –

That the report be noted.

7 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2012/13

In light of the meeting being inquorate, and the requirement for the completion and submission of an annual return which needed to be approved by the relevant body by 30 June 2012. The recommendations, as detailed in the report, were agreed by the Joint Committee, with absent Members responding electronically prior to the meeting, to enable the Small Bodies Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2012 to be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Joint Committee, the Clerk and Treasurer.

The Audit Commission was consulting on the appointment of external auditors for 2012/12 – 2017/18, and Mazars LLP had been awarded the grouping in Buckinghamshire.

It was advised at the meeting that the audit would be carried out under the Audit Commission's limited assurance audit approach. In line with the previous year the audit work would continue to be carried out remotely via the Small Bodies Annual Return and supporting documents. The audit fee for the Joint Committee for 2011/12 audit was anticipated to be £2,500.

Members considered the Small Bodies Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2012, which comprised of the following sections:

- Section 1 - Accounting Statements
- Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement
- Section 3 – External Auditor's certificate and opinion
- Section 4 – Annual Internal Audit report

The Joint Committee then noted the income and expenditure, balance sheet and cashflow for 2011/12, and the General Fund balance of £2.9 million as at 31 March 2012. It was agreed that the retention of the accumulated balance by the Joint Committee was necessary to meet the scheduled future capital investment.

In response to a question it was advised that the Crematorium's asset revaluation was carried out every 3 years. The most recent revaluation which took place on 1 April 2011 took into account the abatement work. It was also noted that the apportionment between constituent authorities was calculated on the basis of the total number of cremations to derive from each district.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Joint Committee, including those Members responding electronically, raise no objection to the appointment of Mazars LLP as the appointed auditor for future audits 2012/13 – 2017/18.
2. That the Small Bodies Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Joint Committee, the Clerk and Treasurer, following the agreement of the Joint Committee, including those Members responding electronically.
3. That the Joint Committee, including those Members responding electronically, agree for the accumulated revenue surplus to be retained by the Joint Committee for future capital investment.

8 57TH ANNUAL REPORT

The 57th Annual Report would be considered at the next meeting.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

Arrangements for risk management were in place at the Crematorium and these followed the policies and protocols of the lead authority. The Joint Committee last considered the Risk Management Strategy of the lead authority in February 2010. However, the lead authority had reviewed and updated its Risk Management Strategy in October 2011.

As such, the Joint Committee was required to formally adopt the updated strategy. In light of the meeting being inquorate and the urgent need ensure that the updated strategy was adopted. It was

RESOLVED –

That the Joint Committee, including those Members responding electronically, formally adopt the updated Risk Management Strategy of the lead authority.

10 SITE SEARCH: AYLESBURY CREMATORIUM

In light of the meeting being inquorate it was considered appropriate for the private report, Site Search: Aylesbury Crematorium, to be considered at the next meeting when representatives from the other partner authorities were present.

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

A further meeting would be arranged to enable the Joint Committee to consider the deferred items, and to enable the resolutions and recommendations of this meeting to be received and agreed.

Following the meeting and in light of Members' availability the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 18 July at 4.00pm (Chiltern District Council).

The meeting ended at 5.03 pm

CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

FIFTY SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT 1st APRIL 2011 – 31st MARCH 2012

CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES

Aylesbury Vale District Council

Councillor David Thompson
Councillor Brian Roberts

Chiltern District Council

Councillor Michael R. Smith (Chairman)
Councillor Nick Rose

Wycombe District Council

Councillor David Carroll
Councillor Mrs Jean Teesdale

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

**CHILTERNS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
FIFTY SEVENTH 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	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Aylesbury Vale	575	668	639	614	678
Chiltern	558	596	552	563	546
Wycombe	872	899	834	895	899
Other	925	1,004	911	973	995
Total	2,930	3,167	2,936	3,045	3,118

Comparative figures for the previous years are:

1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
3,169	2,967	3,021	3,104	3,065	3,010	2,989	2,950

The total number of cremations since opening until the end of March 2012 = 118,056.

The 3,118 cremations carried out in 2011/12 generated income of £1,437,626.00

In 2010 Chilterns Crematorium ranked at 7 in a league table in order of the number of cremations carried out at each of the 260 crematoria in the UK.

The proportion of cremations to burials first reached 70% in 1992 and has since levelled off at about 73%. 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. 566,000 deaths were recorded in 2010 of which 73% were cremated.

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, 28% in 2010 and 30% in 2011.

The number of cremation ashes being taken away for disposal elsewhere is being offset to a small degree by those being received for scattering from other crematoria, with an average of 61 being received each year over the past five years. 62 were received in 2011/12 generating an income of £1,735.00

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 94 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 2,684. Together with the income from renewals, the total income from rose bed commemorative plaques amounted to £41,769.

An additional 34 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 730 since the scheme was introduced in 1994. Together with the income from renewals the income for the year amounted to £28,182.

An additional 19 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 278 since the scheme was introduced in January 2001, with income for the year of £6,222.

A total sum of £1,442 was donated for the purchase of trees, shrubs and flowering plants and bulbs.

A further 357 inscriptions were entered in the Book of Remembrance and the income, including the sale of miniature replica books and memorial cards, amounted to £33,495.

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 2012.

The cremation fee was increased by 4.3%, from £470 to £490, an above inflation increase taking into account the rising cost of energy (gas and electricity) and the additional running and maintenance costs incurred operating the newly installed cremation filtration equipment required by 2013 in compliance with environmental legislation. 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 2011 was £538.28, and in a league table of the 260 crematoria in the UK, starting with the most expensive, Chilterns' cremation fee ranked at 225.

5) **STAFF**

There were three staff changes during the year:-

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1. Andrea Jaffe, who was a part-time clerical assistant for seven years, left in May 2011 after accepting a job as receptionist at her local doctors' surgery. Her post was not filled at the time as the other two part-time clerical assistants asked if they could work extra hours for a trial period.
2. Our Senior Administrator, Jane Bailey, was taken seriously ill in July 2011 and sadly died just before Christmas. She had worked at the Crematorium for twelve years and had become very experienced in her key role. Her death, keenly felt by all her work colleagues, is a significant loss to the organisation. Another member of staff, part-time clerical assistant Melanie Reed, agreed to act-up to some of Jane's duties from December 2011, but her post was still vacant on 31st March 2012.
3. Julie Wright was appointed as a temporary part-time clerical assistant in November 2011 to help cover Jane Bailey's continuing long term absence.

A diagram showing the current staffing establishment at the Crematorium as of 31st March 2012 is included as **Appendix 1**.

6) **CREMATIONS EMISSIONS ABATEMENT AND HEAT RECOVERY**

Last year's report stated that the new cremation filtration equipment, which had been installed during the year, was due to be commissioned and working by May 2011. In the event this did not happen as at a late stage it was discovered that the existing electricity supply was insufficient to run the new equipment. This caused considerable delay before it was resolved and the new equipment was not finally commissioned until the end of September.

The filter installation is a retro-fit to cremators installed in the mid 1990's and only about half way through their useful working life – hence the decision to retain them. However, this presented the cremator manufacturer with a number of 'challenges', not uncommon when marrying new equipment up with old, and annoying 'teething' problems persisted nearly to the end of the period covered by this report, with the long awaited break through finally coming in March. On a positive note, it is good to be able to report that the cremator manufacturer, Facultatieve Technologies, persisted tirelessly and without any dissension until the problem was resolved.

Before the flue gases coming from the cremator can be passed through the filter they have to be cooled down. Most of this captured heat has to then be dispersed to atmosphere through a piece of equipment which is perhaps best described as like a very large car radiator. The decision was also taken at the planning stage to install equipment which enables some of this recovered energy to be reused to heat the building with the double benefit of reducing costs and also the size of our carbon footprint. This piece of equipment was working by the middle of the winter and appears to have been very successful.

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

7) **PROPOSED CREMATORIUM: AYLESBURY**

It is five years since the Joint Committee first got involved in the search for a site to build a crematorium to serve Aylesbury, the last two searching intensively since it was decided it wished to build the crematorium itself. Despite this, unfortunately a site has yet to be secured.

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At the point where last year's report ended investigations were ongoing into a number of possible sites which had already been identified, and the decision to extend the search to the eastern side of Aylesbury along the A41 into the Aston Clinton area had resulted in some more potential sites to pursue.

Three of the sites being investigated at the end of March 2011 were eventually discounted for one or other of the reasons mentioned in previous reports which can affect the suitability of a site for a crematorium, including statutory distances from roads and buildings, footpaths, the presence of cables and pipelines, access from the highway, access through residential areas, proximity to industrial estates, etc. The landowners of three newly identified sites were approached, but decided they were not interested; in relation to at least two of these a factor possibly being that, as mentioned before, until AVDC agree a Local Development Framework many landowners have long term high value aspirations for housing or commercial development.

Another site was still being investigated at the end of March 2012 where the owner had been approached and indicated he was possibly interested in selling, but little progress had been made because of planning and political issues arising from the Arla Dairies development and a number of other planning applications around Aylesbury, including one for housing in the Aston Clinton area.

8) **CREMATORIUM BUILDINGS – THEFT OF COPPER AND LEAD**

During April 2011 the Crematorium was visited three times by thieves who removed lead flashing, copper roofing sheets and copper guttering. On the first occasion, mothering Sunday, the metal was hidden in a shrubbery (possibly before the Crematorium opened) and then taken away in a van under cover of intense site activity that day, with many more visitors than usual and contractors working on site installing the cremator abatement equipment. On the other two occasions the metal was removed at night and dragged through the grounds to a waiting van parked in a lay-by at the side of the A404.

Metal theft is an increasing national problem and the epidemic, fuelled by rising costs of metal generally, and copper and lead in particular, is only expected to get worse. Nationally the concern for Britain's infrastructure relates particularly to gas pipes, electricity and telecom cables and for the railways where train signalling, electricity and data cables are being targeted. British Transport Police say that cable theft is the next biggest priority after the terrorist threat.

Locally theft of lead from churches in particular has become an all too common occurrence. Although this is the first time Chilterns Crematorium had been targeted, neighbouring Slough Crematorium had been plagued by the problem for some time, coming to a head in 2010 when staff arrived for work one morning to find an entire side of the chapel roof had been stolen. All the remaining copper had since been removed and temporarily replaced with roofing felt, but this wasn't really a viable option at Chilterns which is a significantly larger building. Markeaton Crematorium at Derby is another example, where following theft of part of the roof the ingress of rainwater damaged internal fittings and the electrics.

This was the ultimate concern to members of the Joint Committee; not only the damage and the cost of repairs to the buildings, but that service provision could be disrupted and, at worst, funerals cancelled. Consequently they approved emergency expenditure on a number of measures to combat further thefts taking place including immediately engaging a security company to carry out random

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mobile patrols, widespread marking the roof with traceable SmartWater (a deterrent product with a good track record), and in the longer term to install monitored CCTV. Fortunately the measures taken proved successful and no further thefts occurred.

The costs for the year of the additional security measures taken were in the region of £24,000, and quotations for the CCTV received towards the end of the year indicated that installing the CCTV will cost in the region of £25,000. Only temporary repairs were carried out on the buildings – it was decided not to make any permanent repairs until the CCTV was installed – but the estimate to repair the damage done by the three thefts which occurred is between £7,000 and £10,000. The fact that the security measures taken prevented any further damage, or a major incident leading to disruption or the cancellation of funerals, helps to put this extra expenditure into perspective.

9) **MAINTENANCE OF GROUNDS – WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In 2010 the Joint Committee agreed to John Morris of Chiltern Woodlands Project being appointed to act as forestry consultant, having identified the need for a long term **woodland development plan**, the adoption of which would conserve the landscape and wildlife in the area (first reported in the fifty fifth annual report). This decision was reached after the officers had advised that since the Crematorium was built in 1965 the site had expanded to 22 acres, over half of which is woodland, and over this time the trees in the woodland had only been managed reactively by grounds maintenance staff (removing dead and dangerous branches, trees, etc), but no planning had been carried out to preserve the amenity in the long term. The Committee recognised that continuing with this arrangement was not satisfactory.

In 2011 the Consultant, with the assistance of the Superintendent, drew up a twenty year woodland management plan and then, together, successfully negotiated their way through the relatively complex and bureaucratic application process to get the plan approved and also claim the £1,000 grant available for the work involved in compiling it. Most significantly, as part of the approval of the plan the Forestry Commission have issued a ten year felling licence which enables the Joint Committee to proceed with phased thinning and replanting over that period, in accordance with the agreed plan, without having to go through the process of applying for a separate licence for each stage of the work.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CHILTERN'S CREMATORIUM

Treasurer Alison Howes
 Clerk to the Joint Committee Alan Goodrum
 Interim Director of Environmental Services Derek Rowell

Treasurer's Assistant Tina Pearce
 Head of Engineering & Contract Management
 (Position vacant, currently reporting through
 Principal Engineer Oli Asbury)

Superintendent & Registrar
 Charles Howlett

Senior Administrator
 Position vacant

(Supervises administration/clerical assistants and deputises for Superintendent in his absence)

Grounds Supervisor
 Clive Dickens

Assistant Gardener John Weddell
 Grounds Maintenance Operator Scott Walker

General Assistant
 Harry Sunderland

Clerical Assistants P/T (1.75 FTE)

Vacancy
 Sandra Smith
 Melanie Reid
 Temp. Julie Wright

Chapel Attendant P/T (16 hrs)
 Margaret Drinkwater

Crematorium Attendants
 Richard Pleased
 Chris Holloway
 Mick Quigley
 Stuart Casbeard

Cleaner P/T (8 hrs)
 Andy Tutt

Item 9

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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