

# **Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee**

**Thursday, 25th June, 2015**

**At  
4.00 pm**

**Committee Rooms, King George V House, King George V Road,  
Amersham**

## **LATE REPORT:**

### **Item 8: Annual Report 2014/15**

In accordance with Standing Order 7 the Joint Committee is asked to formally approve and adopt the Sixtieth Annual Report of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee.



# **CHILTERNS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

**SIXTIETH ANNUAL REPORT 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2015**

## **CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Aylesbury Vale District Council**

Councillor Howard Mordue  
Councillor Brian Roberts (Vice Chairman)

### **Chiltern District Council**

Councillor Michael R. Smith (Chairman) (until May 2014)  
Councillor Nick Rose (until May 2014)  
Councillor Peter Martin (from May 2014)  
Councillor Graham Harris (from May 2014)

### **Wycombe District Council**

Councillor Tony Green (Chairman)  
Councillor Hugh McCarthy

### **Superintendent and Registrar**

Charles Howlett DMS, FICCM(Dip)  
Chilterns Crematorium  
Whielden Lane  
Amersham  
Buckinghamshire

#### **Clerk**

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

#### **Treasurer**

Jim Burness  
Director of Resources  
Chiltern District Council  
Council Offices  
King George V Road  
Amersham  
Buckinghamshire

Item 8

**CHILTERNS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE  
SIXTIETH ANNUAL REPORT**

1) **CREMATIONS**

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

District	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Aylesbury Vale	614	678	637	637	760
Chiltern	563	546	528	564	593
Wycombe	895	899	915	867	956
Other	973	995	1,026	1072	1,196
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,045</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>3,106</b>	<b>3,140</b>	<b>3,505</b>

Comparative figures for the previous years are:

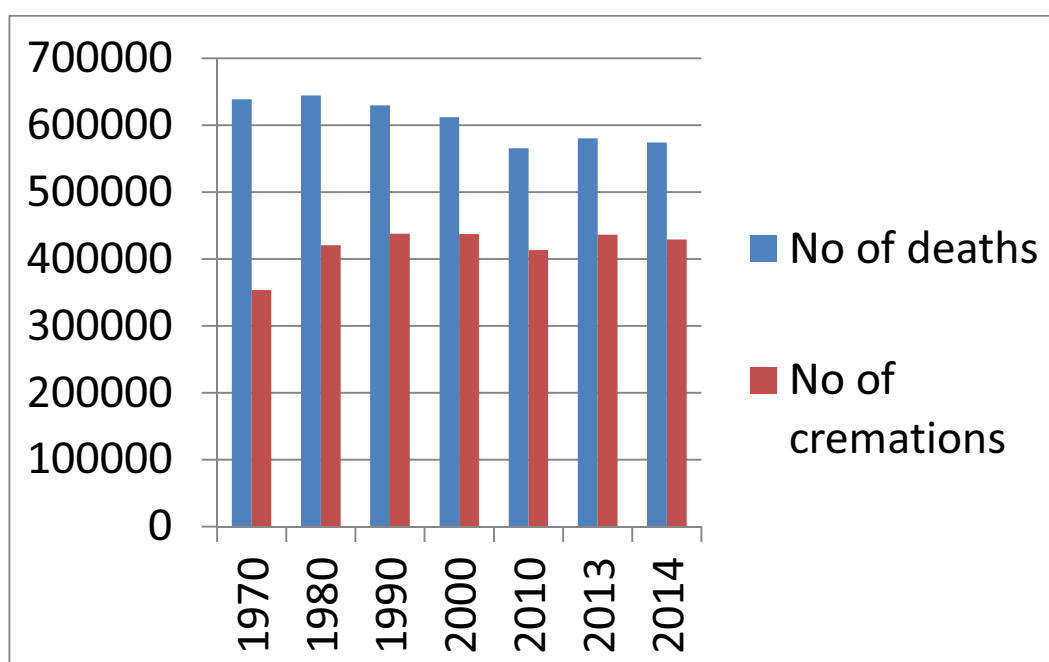
2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
3,104	3,065	3,010	2,989	2,950	2,930	3,167	2,936

The total number of cremations since opening until the end of March 2015 = 127,806.

The 3,505 cremations carried out in 2014/15 generated income of £1,811,560. In the previous year 3,140 cremations were carried out which generated £1,619,045.00

In 2014 Chilterns Crematorium ranked at 3 in a league table in order of the number of cremations carried out at each of the 273 crematoria in the UK.

The proportion of cremations to burials first reached 70% in 1992 and has increased by approximately 2% each decade since then and is currently 74%. 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 2011 when only 556,434 were recorded, 9,000 less than in the previous year. 580,582 deaths were recorded in 2013 of which 75% were cremated – a 1% increase on the previous year - but in 2014 this fell slightly to 574,093 of which 74.77% were cremated. But overall mortality rates are showing signs of rising since 2011 in line with national predictions.



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 were disposed of at crematoria nationally by being scattered or buried in the garden of remembrance. By 2004 this had reduced to 40% and this gradual decline has continued. In 2012 the national figure was 27%.

At Chilterns (where ashes have only ever been scattered), in the 1970's around 80% of ashes were being disposed of in the garden of remembrance. By 2004 this was reduced to 35%. 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 and 64 were received in 2014-15 generating an income of £2,056.00.

The table below gives details of ashes being scattered in the garden of remembrance over the last seven years.

<b>Cremation Ashes</b>	<b>% of ashes scattered in the garden of remembrance.</b>	<b>Number of ashes received from other crematoria.</b>
2007/8	34	59
2008/9	32	61
2009/10	30	65
2010/11	28	56
2011/12	30	62
2012/13	27	67
2013/14	30	83
2014/15	30	64

Although the reduction in ashes being scattered is also reflected in decreasing memorial sales, nevertheless the Garden of Remembrance remains an important feature in providing an appropriate setting for the place of cremation and afterwards for mourners to visit when it helps to act as a focal point in the mourning process.

### 3) **COMMEMORATION**

An additional 60 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 2,306. Together with the income from renewals, the total income from the new shrubbery and remaining original rose bed commemorative plaques amounted to £40,122.

An additional 23 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 756 since the scheme was introduced in 1994. Together with the income from renewals the income for the year amounted to £26,725.

An additional 6 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 £4,722

A total sum of £1,595 was donated for the purchase of trees, shrubs and flowering plants and bulbs.

A further 308 inscriptions were entered in the Book of Remembrance and the income, including the sale of miniature replica books and memorial cards, amounted to £34,666.

## Item 8

Scheme	Year	No. Sold	Gross Inc	Cost of supplies	Nett inc
Rosebed Plaques	2011-12	93	£41769	£ 1290	£40479
	2012-13	87	£45716	£ 1340	£44376
	2013-14	81	£45191	£ 1080	£44111
	2014-15	60	£40122	£ 1866	£38256
Stones	2011-12	34	£28182	£ 3490	£24692
	2012-13	25	£21186	£ 4661	£16525
	2013-14	25	£26692	£ 4903	£21789
	2014-15	23	£26725	£ 6219	£20506
Leather Plaques	2011-12	17	£ 6222	£ 591	£ 5631
	2012-13	8	£ 5671	£ 368	£ 5303
	2013-14	19	£ 3875	£ 458	£ 3417
	2014-15	6	£ 4722	£ 265	£ 4457
Book of Remembrance	2011-12	357	£33495	£13328	£20167
	2012-13	325	£31285	£13356	£17929
	2013-14	342	£35789	£12170	£23619
	2014-15	308	£34666	£15191	£19475

### 4) **FEES**

The scales of fees were reviewed by the Joint Committee in March 2014. Increases of around 3% in line with the projected rate of inflation were approved in relation to the majority of the fees, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

The cremation fee was increased by a similar percentage from £520 to £535. However, it is relevant to note 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, and the installation of cremator filtration equipment, has achieved significant energy savings (in the region of £50,000 per annum) without which larger increases in the cremation fee would be necessary.

The national average cremation fee in 2014 was £646.31, and in a league table of the 276 crematoria in the UK, starting with the most expensive, Chilterns' cremation fee ranked at 265.

#### **Table of fees for local crematoria 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 £**

<b>Crematorium</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Chilterns	490.00	505.00	*520.00	*535.00
Slough	610.00	680.00	720.00	735.00
Milton Keynes	651.00	670.00	*687.50	*701.50
Reading	589.00	662.00	699.00	715.00
West Herts	500.00	500.00	510.00	520.00
National Ave	576.41	612.03	646.31	679.56

\*Does not include organist fee (currently £42.00 at Chilterns)

### 5) **STAFF**

There were no staff changes during the year.

A diagram showing the current staffing establishment at the Crematorium at 51st March 2015 is included as *Appendix 1*.

6) **PROPOSED CREMATORIUM – AYLESBURY**

The search for a crematorium site in the Aylesbury area, reported over the last seven years, finally led to a planning application being submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) in April 2014. It was considered at the planning meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 when delegated authority to determine the application was given to the planning officer and consent was subsequently issued on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

Dignity UK plc, who were refused permission by Wycombe District Council to build a crematorium near Little Kimble in October 2013, resubmitted the application in May 2014 but in November 2014 were refused again and did not appeal against the decision.

Meanwhile in June 2014 the Westerleigh Group submitted a planning application to AVDC for a crematorium at Watermead in Aylesbury and following a planning meeting the officer was given delegated authority to determine the application. If built, this crematorium would compete with the CCJC's proposed crematorium at Berton.

In December 2015 Westerleigh lodged an application in the High Court to apply for leave for a judicial review against AVDC's decision to grant planning permission for the Berton site which was successful. Subsequently in February 2015 the High Court found that the planning authority had given insufficient consideration to great crested newts as a European protected species as information should have been sought from Natural England (the licensing body for works which could affect the newts) on the likelihood of a licence being granted in the context of a similar proposal for a crematorium at the site at Watermead, before the Berton application was determined.

However, after so many years working on this project the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee remained undeterred and at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015 the reiterated its commitment to building Aylesbury Crematorium.

7) **ROSE BED COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES**

In last year's report details were given about the commencement of the phased conversion of the commemorative rose beds to shrubberies and the reasons for it (principally deer eating the roses) and it was reported that initial reaction from families had been favourable.

During 2014-15 this process continued and by the end of the period nearly half the rose beds had been converted. The new shrubberies, with the plaques fixed on stout wooden posts located along their edges, have been generally very well received. Three rose beds will be retained where plaques can be fixed for the remainder of the lease for those who object to the new scheme – all such leases will have expired at the latest by the end of 2019 – but to date the majority of plaque holders have opted for the new scheme which has been very encouraging. One reason for this is certainly that the shrubberies look better and are more in keeping with the woodland garden setting than the rose beds.

8) **MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS**

Over the years regular preventative maintenance has been carried out on the buildings meaning they are generally in good condition. Consequently a decision was taken in 2013

to temporarily suspend the rolling maintenance programme, other than essential maintenance, in order to ensure sufficient capital funds are accumulated to fund the building of Aylesbury Crematorium.

During the year the key maintenance projects related to the on-site staff bungalows, including removal of asbestos identified by an asbestos survey, the replacement of the hot-air heating with a radiator system and electrical rewiring of Bungalow No 1.

## 9) **DONATIONS TO CHARITY**

### **Recycling of metals after cremation**

At some time in our lives we may need to have an operation to replace a joint or have a metal insert to assist the repair of a bone. Often we will die with these metal implants still in our body. Following cremation these metal implants, along with the remaining metals from the construction of the coffin, are removed from the ashes, collected and recycled through a national scheme co-ordinated by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. Recycling prevents their build up in the Garden of Remembrance (where they used to be buried) and ensures that the use of non-renewable resources is minimised, thus helping protect our long term environment.

Any surplus monies raised from the recycling process is donated to ‘death related’ charities such as the Heart Foundation and Cancer Research, and since the scheme started about 8 years ago over £2 million have now been distributed. Participating cremation authorities are invited after each collection to nominate an appropriate national or local charity to receive a donation. In the last three years the Chilterns Crematorium has made the following nominations:

2012, Cruse Buckinghamshire, £4,000

2013, Ian Rennie Hospice at Home, £3,372

2013, Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS), £4,333

2014, Cruse Buckinghamshire, £4,412

2014, Marie Curie Cancer Care, £3,333

### **The Royal British Legion**

Collections for the national poppy appeal in 2013 was £214.22 and 2014 was £259.33.

### **Christmas Tree stars**

In 2013, for the first time, a real Christmas Tree was placed in the chapel of remembrance in the run up to Christmas. Small tagged gold and silver stars were provided on which people could write a personal message to hang on the tree, and those doing so were invited to make a donation to charity. Collection boxes for two local hospices were placed in the chapel, being Florence Nightingale Hospice, Aylesbury, and South Bucks Hospice, High Wycombe, and over £400 were collected for each.

Having been so well received this was done again in 2014 when £455.99 was raised for the Nettlebed Hospice near Henley on Thames and £450.20 for The Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
CHILTERNNS CREMATORIUM

