

# **Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee**

**Wednesday, 15th February, 2017**

**At**

**4.00 pm**

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

## **Sixty First Annual Report 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016**

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



**CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**  
**SIXTY FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2016**  
**CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES**

**Aylesbury Vale District Council**

Councillor Brian Roberts (Vice-Chairman) (until June 2015)  
Councillor Howard Mordue (Vice-Chairman) (from June 2015)  
Councillor Angela Macpherson (from June 2015)

**Chiltern District Council**

Councillor Peter Martin  
Councillor Graham Harris (until June 2015)  
Councillor Michael R. Smith (Chairman) (from June 2015)

**Wycombe District Council**

Councillor Tony Green (Chairman) (until June 2015)  
Councillor Hugh McCarthy (until June 2015)  
Councillor Julia Adey (from June 2015)  
Councillor Dominic Barnes (from June 2015)

**Superintendent and Registrar**

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

**Clerk**

Alan Goodrum (retired June 2015)  
Bob Smith (from June 2015)  
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 6

**CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE  
SIXTY FIRST 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	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Aylesbury Vale	678	637	637	760	721
Chiltern	546	528	564	593	593
Wycombe	899	915	867	956	904
Other	995	1,026	1072	1,196	1,155
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>3,106</b>	<b>3,140</b>	<b>3,505</b>	<b>3,373</b>

Comparative figures for the previous years are:

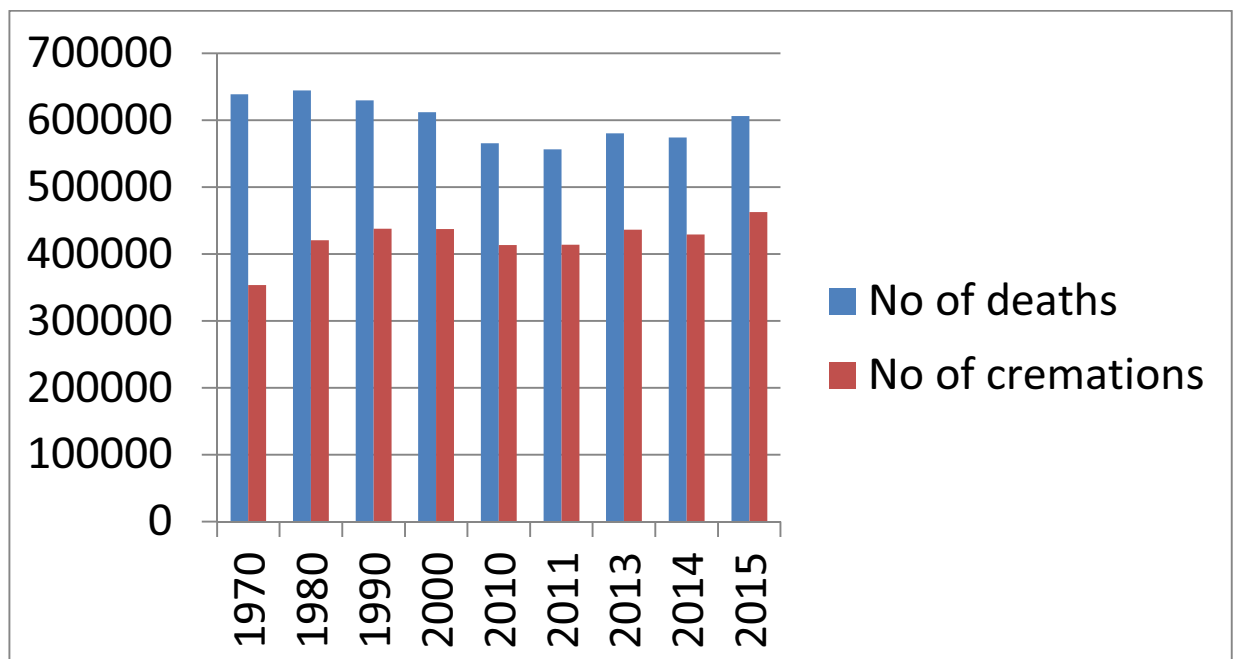
2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
3,065	3,010	2,989	2,950	2,930	3,167	2,936	3,045

The total number of cremations since opening until the end of March 2016 = 131,179

The 3,373 cremations carried out in 2015/16 generated income of £1,791,815. In the previous year the 3,505 cremations carried out generated £1,811,560.

In 2015 Chilterns Crematorium ranked at 3 in a league table in order of the number of cremations carried out at each of the 277 crematoria in the UK.

In 1995 the number of deaths in the UK was 650,000, but after that there was downward trend until 2011 when 556,434 deaths recorded. Overall mortality rates are showing signs of rising since 2011 in line with national predictions. The proportion of cremations to burials reached 70% in 1992 and in 2012 it was 74%. In 2015 the number of recorded deaths was 606,543 of which 76.32% were cremated. The 2% increase in the proportion of cremations to burials in just three years is probably due to the relatively large number of new crematoria which have been built in the last decade compared to the previous three decades.



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 but since then there has been a gradual decline and by 2015 the national figure was 25%.

At Chilterns in the 1970's around 80% of ashes were disposed of in the garden of remembrance but in 2015 it was 21%.

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 73 were received in 2015-16 generating an income of £2,357.90.

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

<b>Cremation Ashes</b>	<b>% of ashes scattered in the garden of remembrance.</b>	<b>Number of ashes received from other crematoria.</b>
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
2015/16	21	73

The reduction in ashes being scattered is reflected in decreasing memorial sales, but 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 for their mourning.

3) **COMMEMORATION**

Scheme	Yr	No. sold	No. not renewed	Total no. of plaques	Gross income	Cost of Supplies	Net income
Rosebeds – converted to Shrubberies from 2014/15	2011-12	93		2,684	£41769	£1290	£40479
	2012-13	87		2,599	£45716	£1340	£44376
	2013-14	81		2,560	£45191	£1080	£44111
	2014-15	60		2,306	£40122	£1866	£38256
	2015-16	65	87	2,284	£41518	£1050	£40468
Stones	2011-12	34		730	£28182	£3490	£24692
	2012-13	25		726	£21186	£4661	£16525
	2013-14	25		738	£26692	£4903	£21789
	2014-15	23		756	£26725	£6219	£20506
	2015-16	33	9	780	£32975	£16846*	£16129
Leather	2011-12	17		278	£6222	£591	£5631
	2012-13	8		265	£5671	£368	£5303
	2013-14	19		272	£3875	£458	£3417
	2014-15	6		278	£4722	£265	£4457
	2015-16	9	10	277	£6152	£203	£5949
Book of Remembrance	2011-12	357			£33495	£13328	£20167
	2012-13	325			£31285	£13356	£17929
	2013-14	342			£35789	£12170	£23619
	2014-15	308			£35789	£15191	£19475
	2015-16	271	n/a	n/a	£29161	£15370	£13791

\*this includes the cost of the new sanctums which were purchased in Dec 2015 although none were sold until May 2016

A total sum of £1,170 was donated for the purchase of trees, shrubs and flowering plants and bulbs.

4) **FEES**

The scales of fees were reviewed by the Joint Committee in March 2015. Increases of around 2-3% 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 2015.

The cremation fee was increased by a similar percentage from £535 to £546. 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, the installation of cremator filtration equipment, and most recently technical changes to the cremators to reduce the amount of gas consumption. These measures have achieved progressive energy savings, now in the region of £90,000 per annum (calculated at present day prices) compared to twelve years ago. Without these savings it is likely larger increases in the cremation fee would have been necessary.

The national average cremation fee in 2015 was £679.56, and in a league table of the 277 crematoria in the UK, starting with the most expensive, and Chilterns cremation fee ranked at 269.

**Table of fees for local crematoria 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 £**

<b>Crematorium</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Chilterns	505.00	*520.00	*535.00	*546.00
Slough	680.00	720.00	735.00	760.00
Milton Keynes	670.00	*687.50	*701.50	*910.00
Reading	662.00	699.00	715.00	725.00
West Herts	500.00	510.00	520.00	540.00
National Ave	612.03	646.31	679.56	709.70

\*Does not include organist fee (currently £45.00 at Chilterns)

## 5) **STAFF**

The assistant gardener retired in March 2016 after forty eight years' service and at the end of the year the post was vacant.

A diagram showing the current staffing establishment at the Crematorium at 31st March 2016 is included as *Appendix 1*.

## 6) **PROPOSED CREMATORIUM – AYLESBURY**

The search for a crematorium site in the Aylesbury area and attempts to obtain planning consent and build the crematorium have been reported over the last eight years.

A suitable site having been found at Bierton, planning consent was originally issued on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014 but this was challenged through a judicial review applied for by the Westerleigh Group (a private company building a crematorium at Watermead) which was successful at the hearing on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 when the consent was quashed.

Having addressed the reasons cited for this decision another planning application was submitted and consent was regained on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015. However the Westerleigh Group submitted an application to the High Court for another judicial review and the outcome of this application was still awaited on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Clearly in view of the ongoing planning issues no further progress could be made on the project itself. However the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee remains committed to building Aylesbury Crematorium once these issues have been resolved.

## 7) **NEW COMPUTERISED CREMATORIUM ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM**

The original computerised crematorium administration system was installed in 1993 and, though still working well within its design limitations, had clearly reached the end of its useful working life in terms of its capability compared to newer systems. In addition some of the operating software was no longer supported by the manufacturer. Consequently it was decided to tender for a new system.

Although there are obviously many similarities, no two crematoria are exactly the same in terms of the services they provide or the way they provide them, meaning the system has to

be tailored to meet the individual requirements of each crematorium. Transferring records from an existing to new system, a process called ‘conversion,’ is also a significant and relatively complex task. Consequently there is a lot of preparation work which needs to be done in advance of a new system going live to ensure there are no significant problems once in use which could have a detrimental impact on the service.

During the year a tender process was carried out and the successful tenderer was Gower Consultants Ltd for their ‘Epilog’ system. Work then commenced in November 2015 to ensure the new system was set up and ready to go live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 which was achieved.

## 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 Milton chapel and ancillary buildings, constructed in 2004, were redecorated externally.

## 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 9 years ago nearly £3 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 few years the Chilterns Crematorium has made the following nominations:

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

2015, SADS UK (Sudden arrhythmic death syndrome) £4,487

### **The Royal British Legion**

Collections for the national poppy appeal in 2014 was £259.33 and 2015 was £245.54.

### **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. In 2015 donations were made to Rennie Grove Hospice in Tring for £518.49 and £347.98 to Helen and Douglas House in Oxford.

---



**CHILTERNNS CREMATORIUM**  
**CURRENT**

