

MINUTES of the Meeting of the
CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

held on **15 FEBRUARY 2017**

at **Cabinet Room, King George V House, King George V Road, Amersham**
at **4.00 pm**

PRESENT:

Councillor H Mordue Aylesbury Vale District - Chairman
Council

Councillors: A Macpherson Aylesbury Vale District Council
P E C Martin Chiltern District Council
J Adey Wycombe District Council
D Barnes Wycombe District Council

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors M R Smith
(Chiltern District Council).

Charles Howlett	Superintendent
Jim Burness	Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils
Chris Marchant	Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils
Tracey Campbell	Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils
Paul Marston-Weston	Aylesbury Vale District Council

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr H Mordue was elected Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee held on 4 February 2016 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

31 FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2015/16

The Director of Resources outlined key points in the report which included but was not limited to, the fact that the crematorium continued to make a substantial operating surplus, with a financial outturn position for the year end of £903k. Appendix 2 of the report detailed an accumulated surplus of £5.4m, and £4.7m was shown as earmarked against the Aylesbury Crematorium project. It was noted that the budget reflected the higher level of capital

expenditure throughout the year. Due to a change in Council audit regulations, an external audit review is no longer required for the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee because it is a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee would continue to be managed under policies that are subject to external and internal audit.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32 SIXTY FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 1 APRIL 2015 - 31 MARCH 2016

The Joint Committee considered the Annual Report that provided an overview of operational aspects of the crematorium throughout the year and gave a brief update on the main points of the report. It was noted that a member of staff had retired after 48 years of service, and that a new computerised crematorium administration system had been successfully implemented at the crematorium. In response to a question on how Chiltern's Crematorium decided which charity to support annually, it was advised that the Chairman of the Joint Committee usually confirmed the nomination. Joint Committee Members were keen to participate in nominating future charities. The nomination for a charity is for the donation from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's (ICCM) Scheme for the Recycling of Metals Following Cremation.

RESOLVED:

- **That the report be noted; and**
- **That Members would put forward nominations for future charities for Chiltern's Crematorium to support on an annual basis.**

33 REVENUE BUDGET

The Joint Committee received a report that summarised the Revenue Budget for 2017/18, as well as the main expenditure changes and the crematorium's position of having a projected operating surplus of £1.1m. The majority of the surplus had been put aside for the Aylesbury Crematorium project and a reasonable level of reserves would be retained. An assessment of reserves is completed annually at the time of considering the budget and after considering financial risks.

The report highlighted main expenditure changes, which included but was not limited to:

- salaries – the financial costs set out did not take into account new staff appointments in the next financial year. However, costs associated with staffing changes to the current staff structure arising from the harmonisation of Chiltern & South Bucks services were taken into account;
- business rates – a revaluation has meant an increase in business rates by over 50% from 1 April 2017; and
- cremation fees - estimates were based on a 2.2% increase on fees, which could be amended by the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Revenue Budget for 2017/18 and the capital expenditure be approved.

34 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Joint Committee considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This set out the Joint Committee's financial position of the over next three to four years. It was noted that the income figures for Amersham reflected a reduced volume in cremations per year to March 2020 and that energy costs were expected to increase by 20% from 2018. It was anticipated that there would continue to be a surplus for the Amersham and Aylesbury Crematoriums.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

35 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

It was noted that the fees and charges were reviewed annually by the Joint Committee and the report gave comparative figures of surrounding crematoria. The recommendation to the Joint Committee set out to increase the cremation fee to £575, a 5.3% increase on the current fee. In response to questions from Members regarding fees, it was noted that organists are booked on an ad hoc basis which meant the fee with an organist was higher. Concerning potential discounted fees for residents it was reported that discount schemes were usually unpopular and complex to run. Members were

keen to review fees and charges more regularly for the Amersham and Aylesbury Crematoriums, and not just at the time of the annual review.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Joint Committee agree to increase the Chiltern's Crematorium cremation fee to £575; and**
- **That the Joint Committee receive a report at a future meeting regarding a pricing strategy for the Amersham and Aylesbury Crematoriums.**

Councillor A Macpherson left the meeting at 5pm.

36 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 TO 2020/21

Members received the proposed five year capital programme and an overview of major upcoming projects.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2020/21 be agreed.

37 ANNUAL LEARNING CONVENTION

It was noted that the Superintendent attended the autumn 2016 Annual Learning Convention and that the Joint Committee were to decide on attendance for the next Annual Learning Convention.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman of the Joint Committee and the Superintendent be nominated to attend the 2017 Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Annual Learning Convention.

38 LIAISON MEETING WITH PERSONS TAKING SERVICES AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS

The Joint Committee were asked to identify a suitable date for the next Liaison Meeting with persons taking services and funeral directors.

RESOLVED:

That the next Liaison Meeting take place at the crematorium at 6.45pm on 19 June 2017, to be preceded by refreshments at 6.00pm.

39 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 2016

Member's noted the questionnaire responses received. These comments revolved predominantly around car parking provision and the busy nature of the chapels. It was reported that car parking provision was difficult to increase on the site, but the opening of the Aylesbury Crematorium could alleviate the problem. Further car parking spaces were available but required walking a distance uphill to get to the crematorium. The Joint Committee heard that the chapels had indeed been busier; this was potentially due to the fact that Milton Chapel had been closed for six weeks owing to a floor replacement, and that Slough Crematorium was closed completely for six weeks for a complete refurbishment in November/December 2016. The Slough Crematorium has been operating since with bookings restricted to 5 per day until the end of May 2017. Concerning the operation of the hearing loop systems, some changes were made at the recommendation of the sound engineer which resolved the problem.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

40 SERVICE PLAN 2017 - 2018

The key achievements for the last twelve months were detailed in Appendix 1 and Members were informed that the key task for the coming year was the Aylesbury Crematorium project. It was noted that the new computerised crematorium administrative system was a vast improvement on the previous system, which would improve efficiency and accuracy of records.

41 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED –

That the next meeting would be held on 19 June 2017 at 4.30pm.

42 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.

43 CREMATORIUM STAFF

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The report advised Members on the recent harmonisation of staff terms and conditions for the team and the key changes to staff appointments, as well as a revaluation of job descriptions.

RESOLVED:

- **That the harmonisation of staff terms and conditions and the decision to recruit temporary staff be noted, and that the posts be made permanent once the consultation process is complete;**
- **That the proposed updated job evaluation process and new posts be approved;**
- **That the proposed timetable to implement these changes be agreed; and**
- **That the future staffing arrangements for the Aylesbury Crematorium be approved with the appointment made to these posts at the appropriate time.**

44 NEW AYLESBURY CREMATORIUM

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Members received a report providing an update on the progress of the new Aylesbury Crematorium project and a risk register. It was noted that the Joint Committee had previously agreed expenditure to purchase land, build and operate the crematorium in Aylesbury. The project costs had increased since then due to planning and legal matters outside the Joint Committee's control. The Joint Committee received an updated business case for the project. . Following approval from the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee for the

revised expenditure, authority would then be sought from the constituent authorities. It was therefore

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the contents of the report be noted;**
- 2. That, subject to recommendation 4, that construction commences as soon as possible and that the decision when to enter into the construction contract is delegated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman in consultation with the Clerk and Treasurer of the Joint Committee be agreed;**
- 3. That the SCAPE framework to procure further consultant support be agreed**

4. AND RECOMMENDED: That the budget increase from £6,000,000 to £7,250,000 for the Aylesbury Crematorium project be agreed by the Cabinets of the constituent authorities.

The meeting ended at 6.07 pm