

Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee

19 June 2017

4.30 pm

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

Sixty Second Annual Report

1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

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

Annual Report (3 – 10)

Appendix 1 (11 – 12)

Appendix 2 (13 – 14)

CHILTERNNS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

SIXTY SECOND ANNUAL REPORT 1st APRIL 2016 – 31st MARCH 2017

CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES

Aylesbury Vale District Council

Councillor Howard Mordue (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Angela Macpherson

Chiltern District Council

Councillor Peter Martin
Councillor Michael R. Smith (Chairman)

Wycombe District Council

Councillor Julia Adey
Councillor Dominic Barnes

Superintendent and Registrar

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

Clerk

Bob Smith
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

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	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Aylesbury Vale	637	637	760	721	756
Chiltern	528	564	593	593	579
Wycombe	915	867	956	904	910
Other	1,026	1072	1,196	1,155	1,437
Total	3,106	3,140	3,505	3,373	3,682

Comparative figures for the previous years are:

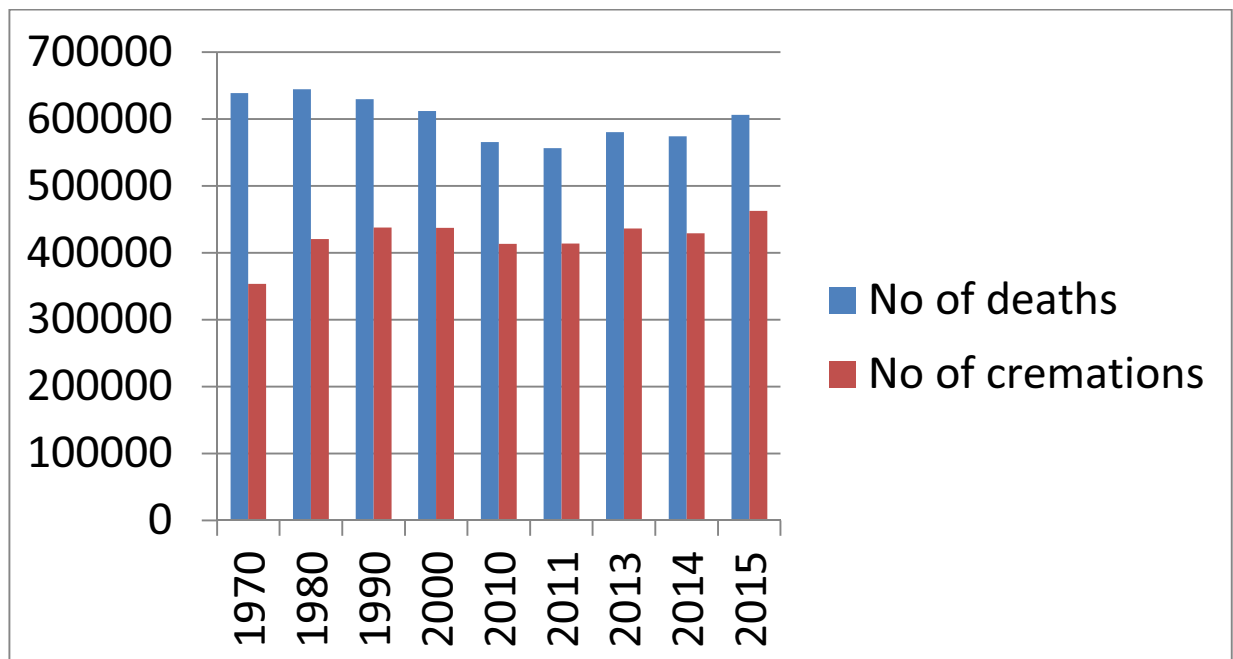
2004/05	2005/06	2006/7	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
3,010	2,989	2,950	2,930	3,167	2,936	3,045	3,118

The total number of cremations since opening until the end of March 2017 = 134,861

The 3,682 cremations carried out in 2016/17 generated income of £2,026,072. In the previous year the 3,373 cremations carried out generated £1,791,815.

In 2015 Chilterns Crematorium ranked at 3 in a league table in order of the number of cremations carried out at each of the 278 crematoria in the UK (the statistics for 2016 are not yet available).

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 statistics for 2016 are not yet available). 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 2016 it was under 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 59 were received in 2016-17 generating an income of £1,946.30.

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

Cremation Ashes	% of ashes scattered in the garden of remembrance.	Number of ashes received from other crematoria.
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
2016/17	20.4	59

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 (inc. repl)	No. not renewed	Total no. of plaques (as of 10th May 17)^	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
	2016-17	103	98	2,289	£44321	£1360	£42961
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
	2016-17	28	15	825	£35797	£7018	£29066
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
	2016-17	13	17	257	£4959	£435	£4524
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			£29161	£15370	£13791
	2016-17	344	n/a	n/a	£30305	£13422	£16883

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

^this amount includes all current plaques as the figure cannot be separated up to the end of March 2017.

A total sum of £1,454 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 2016. 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 1st April 2016.

The cremation fee was increased from £546 to £575.

The national average cremation fee in 2016 was £709.70, and in a league table of the 278 crematoria in the UK, starting with the most expensive, Chilterns cremation fee ranked at 269.

Crematorium	2014	2015	2016	2017
Chilterns	*520.00	*535.00	*546.00	*575.00
Slough	720.00	735.00	760.00	^760.00
Milton Keynes	*687.50	*701.50	*910.00	*914.50
Reading	699.00	715.00	725.00	745.00
West Herts	510.00	520.00	540.00	^560.00
Oxford	830.00	886.00	943.00	Not available
National Ave	646.31	679.56	709.70	Not available

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

^Extra charge for out of area cremations

5) **STAFF**

Harmonisation of terms and conditions and review of staff structure

Under the CCJC constitution Chiltern District Council (CDC) has lead authority responsibility which includes, amongst other things, the requirement to ‘appoint, employ and remunerate staff at the direction and for the use of the Joint Committee.’

Over the last few years, as part of the increased joint working between CDC and South Bucks District Council (SBDC), each of the individual service teams have gone through a service review process to bring individual teams together as one to serve both Councils. Part of this review process has been to ensure staff at both councils are on the same harmonised terms and conditions of employment.

Unlike the situation between CDC and SBDC, the crematorium is already operated as a joint service between Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and Wycombe District Councils and managed by a single team, so there was no need to bring separate teams together through a fully comprehensive service review process. However, as CDC employs staff on behalf of the CCJC it was necessary to implement the harmonised terms and conditions for the crematorium staff. This process was completed with the new terms and conditions coming into force for the crematorium staff on 1st January 2017.

Leading on from the harmonisation process, it was considered an appropriate time to bring all job descriptions and key competencies for crematorium staff up to date and then re-evaluate the salary grades. This was to ensure they accurately reflected changes which had occurred since this was last done, in most cases over twenty years ago. Two new posts were created (replacing existing posts which were vacant) to help bring about service improvements to the current operation at Amersham and a future staffing structure for the new crematorium at Aylesbury was also put in place.

A diagram showing the current staffing establishment at the Crematorium at 31st March 2017 is included as **Appendix 1**, and the new structure from 1st May 2017 as **Appendix 2**.

Retirement

One of the crematorium attendants, Christopher Holloway, retired on 31st March 2017 after eighteen years’ service.

6) **PROPOSED CREMATORIUM – AYLESBURY**

Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee (CCJC) first started considering a project to build a crematorium in Aylesbury as long ago as 2006. After years of searching with many

setbacks a site which was suitable and available was eventually found off Cane End Lane near Bierton for which consent was granted in October 2014. Subsequently an application was made for a judicial review of the decision by the Westerleigh Group Ltd (which is building a crematorium at Watermead). This was successful and the permission was quashed.

The CCJC re-submitted its application and planning permission was regained in October 2015. Westerleigh again applied for a judicial review of the decision, firstly to the High Court and then, when this was twice refused, to the Court of Appeal. Unfortunately the time between submission and consideration of an application for a judicial review can be several months and the CCJC was unable to progress its project until the outcome was known, although in the interim Buckinghamshire County Council did carry out its statutory consultation on the blocking of access to Cane End Lane from Rowsham Road which was something local residents had asked for. The outcome of this consultation was approval for the blocking up to be implemented once the construction of the crematorium is underway.

In November 2016 the Court of Appeal refused Westerleigh permission to judicially review the current planning consent finally bringing the legal challenge to an end. This opened the way for the project to restart and in January 2017 a specialist company installed underground ducting for the overhead power cables which currently cross the site to be removed. And in February/March special fencing was erected and trapping carried out to remove any greater crested newts (an EU protected species) and to prevent them from re-entering until construction is completed.

An increased project budget was agreed by Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and Wycombe District Councils, the three constituent authorities of the CCJC, to make up a shortfall resulting largely from the planning delay since permission was first granted in October 2014 as well as additional costs incurred in resolving the ongoing planning situation.

Invitations to tender were planned to be sent out in May 2017 with building expected to start later in the summer. The new crematorium is expected to open in the autumn 2018.

7) **MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS**

Over the years regular preventative maintenance has been carried out on the buildings meaning they are generally in good condition. 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. In January 2017 a professional condition survey of the buildings was carried out and no significant issues were found.

During the year work was carried out to resurface the stone memorial-garden car park, replacing a scalping surface with tarmac. This is a particularly welcome improvement as the scalping surface was not very smooth and difficult for people with walking aids or in wheelchairs to negotiate. The pathways around the on-site staff bungalows were also resurfaced, replacing the original tarmac laid when they were built in 1965, and repairs were also carried out to a badly worn section of the overflow car park.

8) **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

2016, Second Hope (for sufferers of secondary breast cancer) £4,444

2016, The Trevor Collins Foundation (bowel cancer research) £4,336

The Royal British Legion

Collections for the national poppy appeal in 2014 was £259.33 and 2015 was £245.54. In 2016 the amount is not known.

Christmas tree stars

A Christmas tree is placed in the chapel of remembrance in the run up to Christmas. Small tagged gold and silver stars are provided on which people can write a personal message to hang on the tree, and those doing so are invited to support a local charity by placing a donation in collection boxes placed in the chapel. Charities supported in this way over the last few years have been as follows:

2013, Florence Nightingale Hospice, Aylesbury, £400

South Bucks Hospice, High Wycombe, £400

2014, Nettlebed Hospice near Henley on Thames, £455.99

The Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted, £450.20

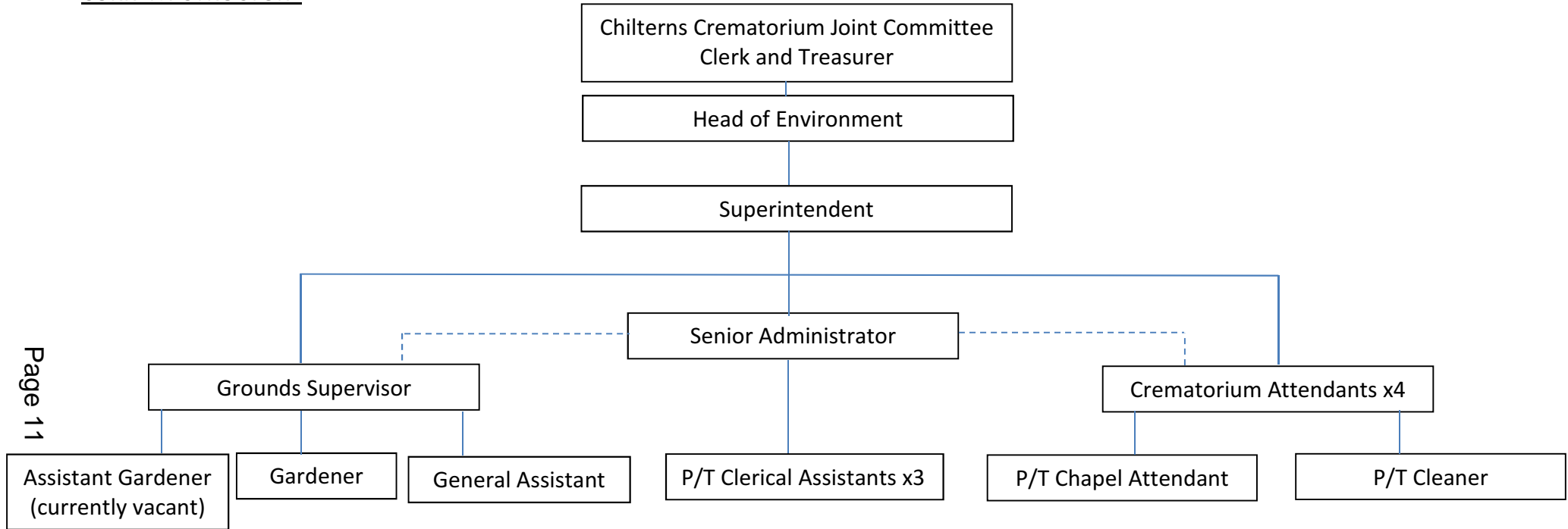
2015, Rennie Grove Hospice in Tring, £518.49

Helen and Douglas House in Oxford, £347.98

2016, Cruse Bereavement Care £431.68

Carers Bucks, £446.11

APPENDIX 1
CHILTERN'S CREMATORIUM
CURRENT STRUCTURE



APPENDIX 2
CHILTERN AND AYLESBURY CREMATORIA
FINAL STRUCTURE

