

# CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

NOTES of the Meeting of the **CHILTERN CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**  
held on **2 JULY 2007 at 2.15pm**  
at **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J F Warder - Chiltern District Council (Acting  
Chairman)  
G E Sussum - Chiltern District Council

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** were received from Councillors B Jennings (Wycombe District Council), Mrs A Jones (Wycombe District Council), K McPartland (Aylesbury Vale District Council) and D Thompson (Aylesbury Vale District Council).

## 1. QUORUM

The meeting did not have a quorum, but it was agreed to discuss the items and reach conclusions which would have the status of recommendations to the next quorate meeting of the Committee.

*Note: Councillor Warder took the position of Acting Chairman for the meeting.*

## 2. LIAISON MEETING WITH PERSONS TAKING SERVICES AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS

At the meeting of the Joint Committee on 5 December 2006 (Minute 4 refers), it had been agreed that the next liaison meeting would take place in June 2007. However, due to the opening and dedication ceremony taking place in early July it was suggested that the meeting be deferred until spring 2008.

### **RECOMMENDED –**

**That the next liaison meeting be held on a date in Spring 2008.**

## 3. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT - VACANCY

A minor review of the staffing establishment had been undertaken which had resolved the vacancy. The Assistant Superintendent and full-time Clerical Assistant posts had been deleted, in favour of a new full-time Senior Administrator post. The existing full-time Clerical Assistant, who had helped cover the original vacancy, had been appointed to the position.

It was noted that as a result of the changes, the overall staffing cost had been reduced.

### **RECOMMENDED –**

**That the report be noted.**

## 4. CREMATIONS EMISSIONS ABATEMENT

The Government had set a legal requirement that all Cremation Authorities must abate at least 50% of mercury emissions by 2012. At its meeting on 5 December 2007, the Joint Committee had resolved to delegate authority to Officers to appoint a consultant to develop the project to install plant to abate cremation emissions.

The Superintendent reported that progress was being made, with one interview with a company having taken place and others scheduled. Cremator filtration was a new concept in the UK, and the need to learn from and observe the experiences of other local authorities was noted.

**RECOMMENDED –**

**That the report be noted.**

#### 5. **COLLIER AND CATLEY: CLAIM FOR EXTENSION OF TIME**

At the meeting on 5 December 2006, it had been reported that a settlement agreement by both parties had been achieved with the outstanding works expected to be completed in time for the opening of the new chapel on 7 July 2007. However, the Contractor had not produced a programme of works despite repeated requests, and only one and a half days of remedial work had been undertaken.

Particular concerns were expressed regarding the quality of the timber work, parts of which had visible evidence of moisture and mould build-up. The Superintendent reported that Collier and Catley had commissioned a timber report, and Members suggested that it would be useful if a copy could be obtained.

It was noted that if the inactivity continued, it might be necessary for lawyers to facilitate action.

**RECOMMENDED –**

**That the report be noted.**

#### 6. **COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 2005**

In 2006 there had been 2,984 cremations and questionnaires were sent to all those who requested a cremation. A summary of the results were set out in an appendix to the report.

Where complaints were received, procedures had been examined and where possible appropriate changes implemented. The report detailed the complaints, and it was noted that all had been resolved.

**RECOMMENDED –**

**That the report be noted.**

#### 7. **CREMATORIUM REGULATIONS**

The Superintendent reported that it had been his intention to circulate the Crematorium Regulations to Funeral Directors had they been approved at the meeting. He was particularly concerned to highlight issues surrounding wicker coffins. It was noted that many Funeral Directors were not specifying that the wicker coffin they required was for cremation rather than burial, which was causing problems for the cremator. It was suggested that the Superintendent write to Funeral Directors highlighting the issue.

**RECOMMENDED –**

**That the revised Crematorium Regulations be approved at the next meeting of the Joint Crematorium Committee.**

**8. ANNUAL REPORT – 1 APRIL 2006 TO 31 MARCH 2007**

The Fifty Second Annual Report of the Joint Committee was included in the papers for the meeting for approval.

**RECOMMENDED –**

**That the Fifty Second Annual Report of the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee be approved and adopted at the next meeting of the Joint Crematorium Committee.**

**9. 2006/07 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2006/07 had now been finalised, subject to External Audit by Grant Thornton. It was noted that the figure for Net Worth for 2006/07, as detailed on the balance sheet, should read £3,249,429 rather than £3,248,429.

The main point arising from the accounts was that a net surplus for the year of £415,446 had been achieved. This had been allocated to constituent authorities in accordance with agreed accounting policy.

It had been intended that the Joint Committee would approve the Statement of Accounts at the meeting. Due to the need for them to be approved, the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007 were signed by the Acting Chairman as a matter of urgency and the Audit Commission Smaller Bodies Annual Return was signed by the Clerk and the acting Treasurer as a matter of urgency. Any significant changes to the accounts would be reported to the next meeting.

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the increase in total income past £1million would mean that in future the Crematorium Accounts would be subject to full accounting standards and need to comply fully with the Statements of Recommended Accounting Practice (SORPs). This would result in an increase in audit fees.

**10. FUTURE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN**

At the last meeting of the Joint Committee on 5 December 2006, it had been agreed to investigate supporting the Aylesbury development either in an advisory capacity for a Site Search or to be involved in the longer term creation of a new facility.

Potential sites in Aylesbury had now been identified with the support of Aylesbury Vale District Council, and these were detailed in the report.

It was noted that if a private sector organisation established a crematorium in Aylesbury, it would have a significant impact on the Joint Committee's crematorium at Amersham. Although the Amersham facility would still be viable, business would be lost and the anticipated growth in the Aylesbury area would not be capitalised upon.

The Superintendent explained how the Crematorium at Aylesbury might operate.

Those Members in attendance supported the site preferences contained in the report, and were minded to progress the work further. Officers were encouraged to start the financial feasibility work with a view to reporting back to the next meeting.

*Note: The above item was discussed in private session as required by Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act – paragraphs 7 and 9 refer.*

18. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place in early October (after the 4<sup>th</sup>) at 2.00pm at the Chiltern District Council Offices.

**The Meeting ended at 3.34pm.**