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The Chair and Members of
Chesterfield and District Joint
Crematorium Committee

Dear Councillor,

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Please see attached the documents for the agenda item(s) listed below for the meeting of the CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE to be held on MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2023, the agenda for which has already been published.

4. Bereavement Service Manager's Report (Pages 3 - 14)
5. Budget Monitoring Report - Period 5 (Pages 15 - 18)

Yours sincerely,

Head of Regulatory Law and Monitoring Officer

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For Publication

Bereavement Services Manager's Report

Meeting:	Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee
Date:	18 September 2023
For publication	

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To keep Members informed of matters relating to the day-to-day operation of the Crematorium.

2.0 Cremation Figures

2.1 This part of the report details cremation service totals, comparisons and from which constituent area funerals have been received from for the 2022/23 Financial Year.

	CBC	WEST	NEDDC	BDC	AV	OUTSIDE	TOTAL
Apr-Aug 2019	355	55	240	135	3	53	841
Apr-Aug 2020	477	59	336	112	13	110	1107
Apr-Aug 2021	399	66	258	128	4	56	911
Apr-Aug 2022	444	46	277	101	4	76	948
Apr-Aug 2023	376	50	250	113	6	59	854

2.2 Member's will note that the number of cremation services carried out between April and August 2023 is similar to the same period in 2019 (pre Covid-19 Pandemic). Looking at the data above, over the past 5 years, cremation service totals were highest in 2020 at the onset of the Pandemic, remaining higher than average during 2021 and 2022 but now appear to have fallen back to expected levels.

3.0 Annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

3.1 Each year, the Service carries out an annual survey of it's Stakeholders (including Minister's, Celebrants, Funeral Director's and Stonemasons). The results of the 2023 survey are attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Overall, the feedback and satisfaction levels are positive and reinforce the positive approach that the service has in terms of its relationship with stakeholders. There are some areas to reflect upon and consider.

4.0 **Break in and Burglary**

4.1 Member's will recall that at the June 2023 meeting the Manager reported on the April 2023 break in and burglary. Member's approved the estimated spend of £30,000 to replace stolen items.

4.2 All powered hand tools have been replaced at a cost of £5,500.00. The Manager is engaged in a procurement exercise to replace the Ride on Gator Buggy Vehicle. Initial quotes appear to be in the region of £25,500.00. Therefore it is expected that the total replacement cost of equipment will be around £31,000.00.

4.3 The wooden garage doors that were damaged have also been replaced with automated roller shutter doors at a cost of £5,000.00. However, those wooden doors were already scheduled to be replaced from the improvement reserves with funds available.

4.4 The Manager is still awaiting the outcome of the insurance claim, which would offset some of the costs.

5.0 **Service and Maintenance of Cremation Equipment Agreement**

5.1 The 5 Year Service and Maintenance agreement that started in 2018 is being renegotiated and the Manager is engaged in the procurement to renew this essential service for a further 5 years. The current estimate is £116,147 per annum, an increase on the current budget. The expected budget pressure and increase is due to higher than anticipated RPI Increases along with the increase in costs (particularly materials) for the relining of the cremator refractories, all three of which are due within the next 5 year period.

6.0 **Project and Service Improvement Plan**

6.1 Member's will be aware that the Crematorium's Improvement Plan was heavily disrupted during the Pandemic but the Manager is pleased to report that there is a positive update on the backlog of projects.

6.2 Air Conditioning will be installed into Chapel over the weekend 15-18 September 2023 and costs are expected to fall within the £20k budget. Mourners will have a more comfortable experience in Chapel during the summer months from 2024 onwards. Members will note from the annual questionnaire, that air conditioning is requested by our service users; a great example of "You Said, We Did".

6.3 Quotes and proposals for CCTV and Lighting around the public car park area are also being received and those works expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

6.3 An order has also now been placed to improve the current ventilation system within the Crematory area with works expected to take place in Autumn.

6.4 Repairs and improvements to the building roofs, soffits and facias is also at the procurement stage with an order expected to be placed soon.

7.0 Apprenticeships

7.1 At the June 2023 meeting, it was agreed that members approve a maximum of £48,396 additional budget to cover the cost of one apprenticeship over 2 years. It was noted that the minimum cost would be £24,524 (all depending on the age of the successful candidate).

7.3 The Lead Authorities HR Department is currently sourcing the apprenticeship supplier and the advertisement for the post is expected to go out over Autumn 2023.

7.4 The Manager is currently looking into the feasibility of a second apprentice working across both the crematorium and Lead Authority Cemeteries, along with a review of current grounds maintenance arrangements.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 That the report be noted.

Document information

Report author	
<i>Bereavement Services Manager c/o Chesterfield and District Crematorium</i>	
Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
N/A	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Customer Satisfaction Survey



Bereavement Services Questionnaire Report, August 2023

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1. Summary

Questionnaire format: *Web/online/paper*
Responses: *23 Total*
Date range: *26th July 2023 to 29th August 2023*

2. Introduction

The Borough Council and Joint Committee aim to provide caring and quality services to meet expectations of their clients. Services are provided at: Chesterfield and district crematorium, Spital cemetery, Staveley cemetery, Boythorpe cemetery and Brimington cemetery. To help improve the service, an online questionnaire was distributed by email to funeral directors, ministers, celebrants and memorial masons to capture feedback.

Please note due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

3. Questionnaire results

Q1. How regularly do you visit the following?								
	Often		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Chesterfield and District Crematorium	17	73.9%	5	21.7%	0	0%	1	4.3%
Crematorium Reception	10	45.5%	8	36.4%	2	9.1%	2	9.1%
Boythorpe Cemetery	2	10.5%	7	36.8%	3	15.8%	7	36.8%
Brimington Cemetery	4	19.0%	10	47.6%	1	4.8%	6	28.6%
Spital Cemetery	2	11.1%	5	27.8%	3	16.7%	8	44.4%
Staveley Cemetery	2	10.0%	8	40.0%	3	15.0%	7	35.0%
Crematorium Chapel	13	65.0%	4	20.0%	0	0%	3	15.0%

Q2. Thinking about the full range of services we provide (including at the Crematorium, Cemeteries, Crematory, Chapel and the office) how do you rate the following:										
	Very good		Good		Neither		Poor		Very poor	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Attitude of staff (polite and courteous)	19	82.6%	4	17.4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Helpfulness of staff	19	82.6%	4	17.4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
How easy it is to get information or assistance	18	78.3%	5	21.7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Office and reception areas	20	90.9%	2	9.1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Please add any more detailed comments about our service here:

- Always lovely, welcoming and helpful staff at the crematorium - both in office and in chapel/back of house.
- Everyone is always helpful and friendly.
- Always a pleasure to deal with staff at Chesterfield. Very helpful and accommodating.
- Compared to some of the other crematoria I attend, the staff and service at Chesterfield is excellent.
- Some staff more helpful than others.

Q3. Thinking about the Chesterfield and District Crematorium, how do you rate the following?

	Very good		Good		Neither		Poor		Very poor		Not used	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Online booking facility for Crematorium Chapel	9	39.1%	6	26.1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	34.8%
Grounds maintenance and the Gardens of Remembrance	18	78.3%	4	17.4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.3%
Chapel for Cremation services	14	60.9%	8	34.8%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

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Please add any more detailed comments about the Crematorium here:

- In the summer the chapel gets very hot and we have to have the windows and doors open. If other people are gathering outside, there can be noise, understandably. Given the increasing temperatures is aircon an option?
- As a celebrant a second screen would be useful, as from the lectern the screen cannot be seen and so difficult to know when shows have finished.
- Online booking system works well, but would prefer the booking slot to automatically assume you want the full 40 minutes rather than 20 minutes. I understand how tight the slots are at the crematorium but sometimes I've been in the chapel and found flower debris or litter on the floor.
- Once the air con is installed it will be very comfortable, and be able to have windows closed as sometimes the noise of the waiting public can be distracting but is not something that can be controlled by the crematorium. It is good to have a member of bereavement care staff in the chapel for services just in case there is a need for assistance to people attending services.

Q4. Thinking about the full range of services each media supplier provides, how do you rate the following?

	Very good		Good		Neither		Poor		Very poor		Not used	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Obitus dashboard	14	60.9%	6	26.1%	2	8.7%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.3%
Obitus simple slideshow	15	65.2%	5	21.7%	2	8.7%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%
Obitus music tribute	15	65.2%	7	30.4%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Obitus webcasting	15	65.2%	6	26.1%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.3%
Obitus keepsakes	7	31.8%	5	22.7%	2	9.1%	0	0%	0	0%	8	36.4%

Please add any more detailed comments about Obitus here:

- Obitus keepsakes are great but take too much time to arrive from them.
- Always a good quality product from Obitus at very reasonable prices compared to other crematoriums.

Q5. Thinking just about the cemeteries, how do you rate the following?

	Very good		Good		Neither		Poor		Very poor		Not used	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Grounds maintenance	17	73.9%	5	21.7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.3%
Cemetery burial services	14	60.9%	5	21.7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	17.4%

Please add any more detailed comments about the cemeteries here:

- Staff always on hand to help and always keep a respectful distance on services.
- Garden of Remembrance and surroundings at Chesterfield is still superior to a lot of others. Grounds always kept immaculate and no matter the time of year they always look well kept and a lot of families remark on this.
- The services provided by the staff are excellent and very responsive to the needs of bereaved family members at funerals.

Q6. Table 1: When choosing where to arrange a burial or cremation, which of the following are the main priority when making that decision?

Please choose your top five reasons. (Respondents were limited to select five reasons only)

In this table, the responses given have been weighted to generate a score for each reason listed. Reasons selected as 1st priority were given a score of 5, reasons selected as 2nd priority were given a score of 4, 3rd priority scored 3 and so on.

Reason	Score	Chart
Waiting times and service time availability	70	
Proximity of the crematorium/cemetery to home of the deceased	68	
Length of service allowed	29	
Family traditions	27	
Helpfulness of staff	27	
Cremation and burial fees	27	
Size of chapel	19	
Size of car park	13	
Audio visual options	12	
Religious considerations	9	
Range of times available including evenings and weekends	5	
Funeral directors influence	3	
Condition and presentation of buildings, grounds and facilities	3	
Type and size of coffins allowed	2	
Options for the disposal of ashes on-site	2	
Environmentally friendly options available on-site	1	
Coffin charging viewing facilities	0	
If there is a café on site	0	
Memorial options available	0	
Public transport links	0	

Q6. Table 2: When choosing where to arrange a burial or cremation, which of the following are the main priority when making that decision?

Please choose your top five reasons. (Respondents were limited to select five reasons only)

This table shows the number of respondents that indicated a top five priority rating for each reason listed.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Waiting times and service time availability	10	7	1	1	1
Proximity of the crematorium/cemetery to home of the deceased	7	4	5	1	0
Cremation and burial fees	0	2	5	1	2
Environmentally friendly options available on-site	0	0	0	0	1
Options for the disposal of ashes on-site	0	0	0	0	2
Helpfulness of staff	0	2	4	3	1
Size of car park	0	0	1	4	2
Size of chapel	0	1	3	2	2
Audio visual options	0	1	1	2	1
Length of service allowed	2	0	0	3	3
Range of times available including evenings and weekends	0	1	1	2	1
Type and size of coffins allowed	0	0	0	1	0
Memorial options available	0	0	0	0	0
Public transport links	0	0	0	0	0
Condition and presentation of buildings, grounds and facilities	0	0	0	1	1
Funeral directors influence	0	0	0	1	1
Family traditions	2	3	1	0	2
Coffin charging viewing facilities	0	0	0	0	0
Religious considerations	1	1	0	0	0
If there is a café on site	0	0	0	0	0

Q7. Overall how satisfied are you with the services provided by Chesterfield Borough Council and the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee:

	Very satisfied		Fairly satisfied		Neither		Fairly dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cemeteries	18	85.7%	1	4.8%	2	9.5%	0	0%	0	0%
Crematorium	20	87.0%	3	13.0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Q9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to improve our service?

- Would love to see slot times extended to an hour but understand this is not necessarily a practical move for an already heavily subscribed facility.
- More assistance from staff, especially when a large number of people attend a service at the crematorium. It is always difficult to get people to come forward and sit or be seated in a manner which allows for all the seats to be utilised. Whilst the Director is asking for people to come forward and use all the available seats a lot of people ignore this and it can come a bit of a free for all with people sitting anywhere in a very disjointed manner, where in my opinion if the chapel attendant got involved by asking them to go towards the funeral director who will seat them appropriately I feel it would be of help and make the whole process look more professional and ultimately get people seated quicker. I appreciate this may not be in their range of duties but overall would be of great assistance on the bigger occasions.

Are you:

	No.	%
Minister / Celebrant	8	34.8%
Funeral Director	13	56.5%
Memorial Mason	0	0%
Not answered	2	8.7%

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BUDGET MONITORING PERIOD 5

MEETING: CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT
CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

DATE: 18th September 2023

REPORT BY: BEREAVEMENT SERVICES MANAGER
CLERK & TREASURER

FOR PUBLICATION:

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS:

TITLE: Budget Monitoring Report Period 5

LOCATION: Accountancy Section

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the budget monitoring position as at the end of August 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the report be noted.

3.0 PERIOD 5 BUDGET MONITORING

3.1 The original 2023/24 budget was approved on the 19th December 2022. Carry forward requests of £36,795 were approved at the 5th June meeting but are not included in these amounts.

3.2 As at August 2023 (period 5) there is a favourable profiled variance of £22,505. Details of the variances from the profiled budgets are shown below:

- **Employee costs** are under profile by £8,533, the significant variances are:
 - Normal staffing budgets are underspent by £6,546 mainly due to the budgeted pay award not being finalised and paid yet.
 - Overtime is currently underspent by £1,792.

- **Premises costs** are under profile by £43,794, the significant variances are:
 - Service improvement plan is underspent by £9,021 mainly due to improvement works to the roof not yet commencing.
 - General routine repairs – underspend £3,703.
 - Cremator repairs – there is an overall underspend of £3,929. However, there is an overspend of £862 on the maintenance contract caused by additional inflationary increases which has been offset by a £4,791 underspend on other maintenance costs outside the contract.
 - Trees & shrubs – underspend £1,397.
 - Utilities – this area is showing an underspend of £26,293, however £24,160 of this is in relation to electricity. The supplier is currently experiencing invoicing issues, and it is expected that this variance will be corrected once the supplier resolves this. There are two other significant variances, gas is currently £22,350 underspent compared to the original budget which was set when the energy markets were unstable. Secondly the business rates are £21,387 overspent caused by a revaluation of the Crematorium. It should be noted that this cost also includes £13,423 of transitional relief that will reduce over the forthcoming years.

- **Transport** costs are under profile by £1,015, mainly on car allowances and fuel for machinery.

- **Supplies & Services** costs are over profile by £8,772, the significant variances are:
 - £5,556 has been spent on replacement equipment following the break in. An insurance claim has been submitted to the insurers and these costs may therefore be recoverable.
 - General Supplies & Services – overspend of £1,910.

- **Income** is under profile by £22,110, this consists of:
 - Cremation fees (inc. Medical Referees & Mercury Abatement) – under profile by £22,767 due to less cremations being carried out than profiled.
 - All Memorial Income – under profile by £1,206.

- Other Income – over profile by £1,863.

3.3 In conclusion at this stage although the current position looks favourable there are still a significant number of repairs/improvements to undertake which could be subject to inflationary pressures. In addition, year-to-date electricity costs are still to be received.

3.4 There are two capital improvement schemes originally budgeted for this year, to replace the gutters, soffits & fascias, and improvements to the garage area. There are also three projects carried forward from last year namely air conditioning in the chapel, improved ventilation in the crematory and enhanced lighting & CCTV in the car parks. The work to the garage area has commenced with the installation of new garage doors and installation of the air conditioning is currently scheduled to take place during September.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the report be noted.

5.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 To keep the Joint Committee informed about the financial performance of the Crematorium.

Decision information

Key decision number	
Wards affected	All
Links to Council Plan priorities	To provide value for money services

Document information

Report author	Contact number/email
David Corker	01246 936279 david.corker@chesterfield.gov.uk
Background documents These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	

<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Annexes to the report	

Form to return to Democratic Services with report (will be removed before publication)

Officers/members consulted on the report	
Chief Executive (WBR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief finance officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human resources manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cabinet member portfolio holder (and consultee cabinet member if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments from Cabinet Member (if applicable)	