

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 17th December, 2018

Present:-

Councillor Ludlow (Chair)

Councillors P Gilby
Gilmour
Gordon

Councillors Kerry
Lilley
Serjeant

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations were received.

17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Ross Fawbert, Bereavement Services Manager, Councillors Blank, Ritchie and Smith.

18 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON
24TH SEPTEMBER 2018**

That the minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 24 September 2018 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

19 **ESTIMATES OF REVENUE EXPENDITURE FOR YEARS ENDING 31
MARCH 2019 ONWARDS**

The Senior Accounting Technician presented the Committee's revenue estimate for 2018/19 to 2021/2022.

The following points were outlined in the report:

- The revised forecast for 2018/19 and explanations for significant variances, resulting in an expected operating deficit of £19,830, however this is after a proposed re-distribution of £498,860.
- Medium Term Forecasts for 2019/20 and 2021/22.
- The six reserves of the Joint Committee.
- The proposed re-distribution to constituent authorities.

RESOLVED –

1. That the revenue estimates for 2018/2019 be approved, subject to the approval of the fees & charges.
2. That the Capital schemes as outlined in paragraphs 3.4 and 6.7 of the officer's report be approved.
3. That pursuant to Minute No. 19 (Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee, 2016/17) approval be given to re-distribute funds to the total of £498,860 to the Constituent Authorities for 2018/19.
4. That the planned use of reserves as outlined in paragraph 6.0 of the officer's report be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION –

To enable the Crematorium to set a balanced budget and maintain adequate reserves for 2018/19 and in future years.

20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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 Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

21 CHESTERFIELD CREMATORIUM FEES AND CHARGES 2019/20

The Assistant Director – Commercial Services presented a report recommending for approval a proposed increase in the Crematorium fees and charges for 2019.

The report provided a detailed service analysis, which included a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities across Derbyshire. The review identified that Chesterfield Crematorium had the second lowest basic fee of the nine crematoria that were looked at.

The Committee was informed of the improvement work that had taken place over the last 12 months and the need to build a reserve to cover the cost of replacement cremators that are half way through their life expectancy.

It was noted that there has been recent scrutiny nationally of funeral costs and that consideration of cost pressures to the general public had been taken into account when proposing the amendments to fees.

RESOLVED –

1. That a 2.75% increase on the Current Band B Charge for 2019 be approved, to be reviewed from 1st January 2020.
2. That there would be no increase on the Current Band A Charge.
3. That there would be no increase in the charges for memorialisation and miscellaneous items.

REASON FOR DECISION –

1. To secure sufficient funds to; maintain a high level of standards for the bereaved, reach a balanced budget, maintain sufficient reserve levels and meet budget pressures in 2019.
2. To provide an affordable option for cremation for all.
3. To continue to provide affordable options to commemorate within the grounds of the crematorium at a time when national trends show a decline in remains leaving the Crematorium.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT

The Assistant Director – Commercial Services presented a report on matters relating to the operation of the Crematorium. Information on cremations carried out during 2018/19, together with comparisons and trends from previous years was provided.

The report informed the Committee that the refurbishment of the staff mess room had been completed following a delay caused by asbestos. The committee was advised that a full asbestos survey would be undertaken to identify any further potential hidden costs.

It was highlighted that the ride-on mower needed replacing to avoid potential repair bills and impact on the standard of grounds maintenance.

The Assistant Director – Commercial Services explained that there had been a 70% increase in Public Health Funerals nationally. Accurate figures for the area covered by the crematorium were not available as Chesterfield Royal Hospital was using a different service provider and their data had not been obtained at that time. Conversations were ongoing with the hospital in order to provide cremation services to them.

The Committee were advised that the fixed term contract of the Bereavement Services Assistant would need to be extended by 5 months to complete the entry of the remaining cremation register records onto the digital BACAS Administrative System.

RESOLVED –

1. That the summary of cremation statistics be noted.
2. That the decision to purchase a replacement ride-on mower from the Capital Reserves be approved.
3. That the post of Bereavement Services Assistant be extended by 5 months to August 2019. The cost of the extension would be covered by the surplus created by vacant salaries.

REASON FOR DECISION –

1. To keep the Joint Committee informed of matters relating to the operation of the Crematorium.
2. To purchase a new mower to ensure the maintenance of the Crematorium Grounds to their current standard.

3. To extend the temporary position of Bereavement Services assistant for a further 5 months to complete the project of data entry of cremation records.