

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 23rd September, 2019

Present:-

Councillor Powell (Chair)

Councillors Blank
Holmes
Parker

Councillors J Innes
Mannion-Brunt

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cupitt, Dooley, Ludlow and Watson and Ross Fawbert, Bereavement Services Manager.

15 **TOUR OF FACILITIES**

Due to unforeseen circumstances the tour was postponed to a later date to be determined by the Bereavement Services Manager.

16 **APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIR (TO BE APPOINTED FROM
BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL)**

That the appointment of a Vice-Chair from Bolsover District Council be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee as no members from Bolsover District Council were present.

17 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON 23
MAY, 2019**

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 23 May, 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That under Regulation 21 (1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2000, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972' on the grounds that they contain information relating to financial or business affairs.

19 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT

The Assistant Director – Commercial Services presented a report on matters relating to the operation of the Crematorium.

It was noted that there was an opportunity to claim back the cost of a child's burial or cremation costs from the Child Funeral Fund for England. The Bereavement Services Manager intended to seek advice from the Institute of Crematorium and Cemetery Management on the matter. The committee agreed that the Bereavement Services Manager be given delegated authority to apply for this funding without delay.

The committee heard a recommendation from the recent internal audit regarding the Bereavement Services Manager having the prerogative to discount fees and charges where necessary in the form of compensation where the expected service has not been provided. It was agreed that this authorisation should be given to the Bereavement Services Manager, for compensation up to the cost of the cremation.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Bereavement Services Manager be given delegated authority to go ahead and claim costs from the government's Child Funeral Fund for England (CFF) for child burials or cremations.

3. That the committee grant delegated authority to the Bereavement Services Manager discount fees and charges when necessary in the form of compensation up to the value of the Cremation Fee.

REASON FOR DECISION –

1. To ensure Members are informed of matters relating to the management of the Crematorium.
2. To continue to provide an affordable option for cremation for all.
3. To ensure that the Crematorium satisfied the internal audit recommendations following its assessment in June 2019.

20 CHESTERFIELD CREMATORIUM FEES AND CHARGES 2020/2021

The Assistant Director – Commercial Services presented a report recommending for approval a proposed increase in the Crematorium fees and charges for 2020.

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 high level of service provided by the Crematorium was also highlighted as a consideration when looking at the fees. The fees had initially been calculated using an estimate of 2000 cremations a year but as the numbers of cremations have decreased in recent months this may create a risk.

The committee was advised that there was an increasing demand for Direct Cremation Services and that Chesterfield and District Crematorium was the only provider in the region not to offer this service. It was noted that Chesterfield and District Royal Hospital use another local provider for cremations of this nature.

Discussions took place around the possible implications on the other cremation booking slots in terms of people opting for the lowest priced option. The impact on parking and whether mourners would be permitted to attend were also considered.

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.

A vote was taken on each of the recommendations and all of the recommendations were approved by the committee. Councillor Holmes asked that it be noted that he voted against recommendations 1, 2 and 5.

RESOLVED –

1. To approve an increase of 2.7% on the Current Band B Charge, to be renamed BAND C for 2020, to be reviewed from 1st January 2021.
2. To increase the Current Band A Charge by 2.5% to £574.00 and rename BAND B.
3. To not implement an increase in the charges for memorialisation and miscellaneous items.
4. To introduce a 20-minute Direct Cremation slot, named BAND A at 08.10am and 08.30am at £415.00.
5. To approve all fees and charges at Appendix 1 for 2020, including a 2.5% increase on the Saturday Service Charge, increasing the fee from £810 to £830.
6. To approve delegated authority for the Bereavement Service Manager to discount fees and charges where necessary in form of compensation where the expected service has not been provided up to the value of the Cremation Fee

REASONS 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 2020.
2. 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 (80% nationally).
3. To provide an affordable option for cremation for all.
4. To enable the Bereavement Services Manager to deal with any issues promptly and expediently.

That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

22 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 5

The Senior Accounting Technician submitted a report on the Period 5 Budget Monitoring position as at the end of August 2019.

It was noted that there was a favourable profiled variance. A significant proportion of this was due to creditors not having invoiced for goods and services. The committee heard that the increase in income was as a result of an increase in the number of cremations, an increase in memorial income and extended use of the chapel.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

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

23 CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT CREMATORIUM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Assistant Director – Commercial Services presented a report to the committee on the environmental impact of the Crematorium. The committee was advised that since the publication of the report both Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council had declared a climate emergency.

It was noted that the Bereavement Services Manager had engaged the services of a company that calculates the Carbon Footprint of organisations. Their findings were highlighted in section 2.1 of the report.

The current measures in place at the Crematorium to mitigate its environmental impact were listed as follows;

- Introduction of bio-degradable polytainers
- Reduction in the use of pesticides
- The use of solar panels
- The use of a heat exchange plate
- Mercury abatement

- Recycling
- Encouraging biodiversity

The members suggested that the crematorium should publicise the measures already in place, perhaps with signage at the facility.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the actions suggested at 3.0 be approved with a further report presented to the committee in 2020 following investigations.

REASONS FOR DECISION –

1. To ensure that members are aware of the environmental impact of the Crematorium, current considerations and good practice and to endorse the Crematorium continuing to seek options that reduce the risk of harm to the environment over the next 12 months.