

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 22nd March, 2021

Present:-

Councillor Dooley (Chair)

Councillors	Blank	Councillors	Ludlow
	Holmes		Mannion-Brunt
	J Innes		Kenyon
	Powell		Parkin
Ross Fawbert	Bereavement	Ian Waller	Service Director
	Services Manager	David Corker	Senior
Richard Staniforth	Deputy Chief		Accounting
	Accountant		Technician

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Renwick and Helen Fox.

12 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 DECEMBER, 2020**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 14 December, 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 10**

The Senior Accounting Technician submitted a report on the Period 5 Budget Monitoring position as at the end of January 2021.

It was noted that there was a favourable variance in income, due to the higher number of cremations that took place than originally profiled, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although, this had been offset to some extent by additional costs incurred keeping the Crematorium operational.

The premises costs were under-budget due to the delay commencing some improvement works but it was understood that these may increase once the programme of works resumed.

It was acknowledged that the increased number of cremations that took place in the last year may have an impact on the income in the forthcoming year. This was to be discussed further with the Treasurer and would feature in subsequent budget plans.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That approval be given for Bereavement Services Manager to spend up to £20k to be met from the Cremator Repairs Reserve in 2021/22 on the improvements outlined in para 4.1.

REASON FOR DECISION

1. To keep the Joint Committee informed about the financial performance of the Crematorium.
2. To request a variation to the approved budget.

14 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT

The Bereavement Services Manager submitted a report on matters relating to the operation of the Crematorium.

Information on cremation totals, comparisons with national and regional data, and geographical information on which areas funerals had been received from in 2020/21 was provided in Section 2 of the officer's report. It was noted that there was a 16% increase from the previous year on cremations taking place in the period from April to January.

The committee heard that the management plan and works had been impacted by the pandemic but that some tasks had been completed, some were in progress and the rest had been deferred to 2021/22. The Competition and Markets Authority Investigation had been disrupted by the pandemic and following the report publication in December 2020 some of the remedies suggested had yet to be developed. The Bereavement Services Manager was confident that the Crematorium was transparent in its pricing and that fees and charges information was publicly available. A review of the information on each Council's website would be conducted to ensure complete compliance.

It was highlighted that on 6th January 2021, Chesterfield and District Crematorium was awarded the Gold Standard following assessment against the Institute of Cemetery and Crematory Management Charter for the Bereaved Assessment Process for Cremation.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted and thanks passed onto staff regarding the recent achievement.

REASONS FOR DECISION –

1. To keep the Joint Committee informed of matters relating to the operation of the Crematorium.

15 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Bereavement Services Manager presented a report to the committee updating the members on the impact of COVID-19 on the Chesterfield and District Crematorium. The committee was given a summary of the number of excess cremations compared to the five year average, that had been carried out over the last year. April, May and June of 2020 were particularly busy months and then numbers returned to a level typically seen over the winter before another surge occurred in February.

Service times had been reduced during February to accommodate the increase in numbers but only to 25 minutes due to an enhanced cleaning regime. This had been in place for 6 weeks but had returned to normal on the day of the meeting due to a decline in numbers. All staff had been

offered the vaccine and the majority had received it. Staff were attending the community testing facility on a regular basis.

The free webcasting offer and the additional cleaning continued to be essential to providing a safe environment for staff and mourners. The limit on the number of mourners permitted in chapel remained at 30 and this would be continued until 19th June 2021 at the earliest followed by a staged return to full capacity. The number of people permitted to attend a strewing of ashes had been adjusted to six people to fall in line with the outdoor 'rule of six'.

RESOLVED –

1. That the webcasting of services is continued to be offered free of charge and that delegated authority be given to the Manager to review and end at the appropriate time.
2. The additional cleaning regime is extended until further notice and the additional service to be regularly reviewed by the Manager and ended at the appropriate time

REASON –

To continue to provide Cremation Services in a Covid 19 Secure manner.

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BEREAVEMENT SERVICES RISK REGISTER REPORT

The Bereavement Services Manager presented a report on the risks to Chesterfield and District Crematorium and the actions taken to manage each risk. Amendments to the Register made since the previous year were highlighted to the committee.

It was noted that in the Additional Foreseeable Risks section of the report, a proposal for a crematorium in Shirebrook, in the Bolsover District Council area had been included. The proposal was in its early stages of development with local Funeral Directors having been contacted for comment. The report stated that between 300 to 500 applicants per annum would potentially live as close or closer to the new crematorium than they did to Brimington. It was acknowledged that location is only one of the considerations family members take into account when choosing a crematorium. The Chair reminded the committee that she was a representative of Bolsover District Council.

A number of points from the register were highlighted as follows;

- The improvements to the ventilation system for the benefit of staff and guests
- The annual emissions testing in line with the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 which was under the acceptable levels
- The back up of all cremation records on to the electronic system which will be complete by the end of March
- An application for Priority Gas Consumer status in the event of a disruption to utility supplies
- Continuing to monitor emerging technologies

RESOLVED -

1. It is recommended that the Register Amendments are noted and that the Risk Register for 2021/22 is approved.
2. That proposals for a new Crematorium at Shirebrook are noted.

REASONS -

1. To ensure Members are properly informed of the high-level risks to the Crematorium and the Management of those Risks.
2. That Members are aware of the potential impact of the opening of a Crematorium within the catchment area, should those proposals be developed further.