

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 27th March, 2023

Present:-

Councillor Powell (Chair)

Councillors	Blank	Councillors	Holmes
	Holmes		Blank
	J Innes		
	Mannion-Brunt		

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ludlow, Kenyon, Dooley and Watson.

22 MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 DECEMBER, 2022

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 19 December, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23 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 and comparisons with national and regional data from 2019 to 2022/3 was provided in Section 2 of the officer's report.

The officer's report also provided an update on the annual air emissions monitoring report in January. A summary of the report was attached at Appendix 1.

It was noted that the 2023 Service of Remembrance and Open Day would take place on Sunday 11th June. This would be the first event since before the Covid Pandemic and significant interest was expected, which may lead to another event being planned in September 2023. The Open Day was an opportunity to look behind the scenes at the workings of the Crematorium which may dispel any worries or myths about the cremation process. It was also an opportunity to ask questions about the funeral process in general, search historical records, discuss options for the disposal of cremated remains or how to commemorate a loved one.

The report also provided details around the introduction of the Medical Examiner Scheme. Currently the Medical Referee visits the crematorium to inspect and scrutinise all the official medical certified documentation regarding the deceased. The Ministry of Justice has confirmed that it was the Government's intention to work towards implementing the statutory Medical Examiner system from April 2023. Medical Examiners will be employed by NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts and once the Medical Examiner Scheme was fully operational, it would replace the Medical Referee at the Crematorium. From this point, there would no longer be a Medical Referee Fee to pay and £21.00 should be deducted from the Cremation Fee.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION –

To keep Members updated on the day-to-day operation of the Service.

24 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES RISK REGISTER REPORT

The Bereavement Services Manager submitted a report which informed Members of the high-level risks to Chesterfield and District Crematorium and the actions taken to manage and mitigate against each risk. The Risk Register for 2023/24 was attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

It was noted that where the Authority had control over containing risks, the likelihood of occurrence was generally very low and part of the report highlighted, for Members, any risks that were more likely to occur over the coming year and the reason why, namely;

- Risk – Loss of Business - due to the approval of plans for a new crematorium to be built within the constituent area.
- Risk – Loss of Business – should death rates fall after Excess Deaths in recent years.

- Risk – Loss of Business – due to the increase in demand for Direct Cremation Services.
- Risk – National Factor – Competition and Markets Authority may introduce further measures following recent investigation into the Funeral Sector, one of which may be price capping

For 2023/24, an additional Risk had been added around Ageing Workforce, Loss of Talent and Succession Planning. This was a medium-term risk (next 3-5 years).

RESOLVED –

That the Risk Register for 2023/24, as attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION –

To ensure Members are properly informed of the high-level risks to the Crematorium and approve the management and control of those risks.

25

REVIEW OF CREMATORIUM REGULATIONS

The Bereavement Services Manager presented a report to seek the approval of Members for Stakeholder Consultation prior to the adoption of revised regulations for the management of the crematorium.

The draft Regulations for Management of the Chesterfield and District Crematorium were detailed in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

The Chesterfield and District Crematorium was opened in November 1959. The Joint Committee adopted the first Rules of Management on 2 July 1982, and published them in a leaflet, the text of which was reproduced at Appendix 2 of the officer's report.

A summary of the key alterations contained within the draft regulations were listed in the officer's report.

It was noted that whilst Members could decide not to review the regulations, the Regulations had been static for 16 years and these had led to confusion at times.

Climate change considerations included confirming the materials that may or may not be included within the construction of the coffin and its contents, which in turn reduced the likelihood of harmful emissions. The Regulations had also taken into account advice for memorials and removal of plastics, and provision for cycle storage, promoting green travel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the draft Regulations for Management of the Chesterfield and District Crematorium be adopted for wider consultation, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.
2. That a further report, incorporating regulations redrafted in light of consultation responses, be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS -

1. To ensure that Regulations for Management of Chesterfield and District Crematorium are accurate, up to date and fit for the purpose of providing clear guidance to Funeral Directors, Stakeholders, Staff and the Bereaved.
2. To consult with our Stakeholders (Funeral Directors, Ministers and Celebrants) which may improve outcomes whilst building relationships, satisfaction and engagement.
3. To enable the Manager and Crematorium Staff to inform, advise and enforce using Regulations that are current and accurate.

26 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 10

The Senior Accounting Technician presented a report to the committee which provided the budget monitoring position as at the end of January 2023.

The original budget was approved on 13 December 2021 and revised at the 19 December 2022 committee. There was currently a favourable profiled variance of £127,263. Details of the variances from budgets were shown in the officer's report.

It was anticipated that the outturn for the year would be in line with the revised budget forecast.

Following the last Joint Board meeting the triennial actuarial valuation of the Crematorium pension scheme dated 31/03/2022 had been received. Overall, since the last valuation in 2019 the scheme has moved from a fund deficit of £163m to a small surplus of £3m. In order to try and maintain this fully funded position until the next valuation the ongoing employer contribution rate for future benefit accrual was to increase from 18.8% to 20.7% from 1st April 2023. However, the past service contribution (benefits already accrued) was to reduce from £29k/annum to £24k. The overall effect of these changes was to add approximately £1k/annum to the staffing budgets approved by the Joint Board in December.

It was noted that the server on which the BACAS system sits would no longer be supported so the Bereavement Services Manager & ICT would be reviewing options for 2023/24 and there could be financial implications to this.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION –

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