

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 18th March, 2024

Present:-

Councillor Kerry (Chair)

Councillors	Barker	Councillors	J Innes
	Clarke		Staton
	Davies		Stone
	Holmes		Raspin
	Dooley		Yates
	Pickering		

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

25 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON
20TH NOVEMBER 2023**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 20 November, 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26 **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 2023/4 was provided in Section 4 of the officer's report.

The officer's report also provided an update on the Security arrangements following the burglary in April 2023. It was reported that security improvements included the installation of new doors/windows, additional lighting, alarm improvements, blocking of access/escape routes and the locking of the gates outside of operating hours. Additional CCTV Coverage and Lighting around the Car Park was expected to be installed in 2024 along with a further fence and gate in the maintenance yard.

It was also noted that closing the gates had led to some criticism at the time, particularly from bereaved people wishing to visit the grounds outside of normal operating hours to pay their respects. However, closing the gates added another deterrent that helped prevent low level anti-social behaviour and this had declined since the gates were locked, helping to preserve the sanctity of the grounds.

It was reported that the 5-year Service and Maintenance Contract for the Cremation Equipment had come to an end and a new agreement was currently being investigated. The cost of an 'all inclusive' contract that included service, call-out, maintenance, parts, labour, refractory works and dealing with filtration waste etc had risen from approximately £80,000 p.a. 5 years ago to £115,000 p.a. today.

Following initial conversations and enquiries between the Manager, Supplier and the Lead Authorities Legal/Procurement Teams, a basic 'service only' contract had been proposed. This included routine servicing and maintenance and boiler cleaning at a cost of £20,128.00 p.a.

The proposed contract also ensured attendance to faults along with parts and labour, but the costs of these would be invoiced separately. Other works that would be guaranteed but invoiced separately included Filtration Reagent, Waste Removal, Operator Training, Software Upgrades and Refractory Repairs. The costs of this basic 'service only' contract were anticipated to be very similar to a more inclusive contract over the course of 5 years but Members were made aware that there was additional financial risk should unforeseen work be needed.

A summary of the progress against Service Improvement Plan Projects was included at Section 7.1 of the officer's report.

The annual testing of stack emissions was carried out in December 2023. All measured values were reported to be below the limit values. A summary of those results was included in the table in the officer's report.

RESOLVED –

That authority be delegated to the Manager to decide when to re-open the Crematorium grounds outside of normal operating hours following the completion of all security improvements.

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. To allow the Manager to act accordingly in attempting to manage, deter and prevent further anti-social behaviour as far as practicable whilst allowing appropriate access to site for the bereaved.
2. To ensure adequate support and cover is in place to maintain and service cremation equipment and to minimise the risk of disruption and loss of service.

27 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 2024/25 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.
- Risk – National Factor – Introduction of the Medical Examiner System replacing the current Medical Referee.

RESOLVED –

That the Risk Register for 2024/25, 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.

28 PERIOD 10 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Senior Accounting Technician presented a report to the committee which provided the budget monitoring position as at the end of January 2024.

The original budget was approved on 19 December 2022 and revised at the 20 November 2023 committee. There was currently a favourable profiled variance of £39,347. Details of the variances from budgets were shown in the officer's report.

It was noted that although the current position appeared favourable there were still a number of repairs/improvements to undertake which could be subject to inflationary pressures. In addition, cremation income was under pressure from a significant reduction in cremation numbers as death rates were beginning to return to pre-pandemic levels.

There were four outstanding capital schemes included in the revised 2023/24 forecast (chapel air conditioning, crematory ventilation, car parking lighting & CCTV and repairs to the garage). The air conditioning had now been installed and came in £1k under budget. Work to the crematory ventilation had just been completed. The repairs to the garage

were partially complete but the lighting and CCTV project was unlikely to commence this financial year. An update would be provided at year-end.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

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