

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Friday, 5th June, 2020

Present:-

Councillor Powell (Chair)

Councillors Blank
Holmes
J Innes
Cupit
Parkin

Councillors Ludlow
Mannion-Brunt
Watson
Dooley

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

32 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kenyon.

33 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON 16
DECEMBER 2019**

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 16 December, 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

34 **ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2020**

The Treasurer to the Committee and the Bereavement Services Manager submitted a report on the final accounts of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee for the year ended 31 March, 2020, including the Revenue Account and Balance Sheet.

The report noted that at year end there had been a surplus of £623,733 this was £92,853 more than budgeted and outlined the areas where there had been variances from the approved budget.

Section 3.3 of the officer's report provided detail on the schemes that required carry forwards to 2020/21 which totalled £4,900.

The report noted that a redistribution of £639k had been made to the constituent authorities, the details of which were set out in paragraph 5.2 of the officer's report.

It was noted that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was not yet quantifiable. The death rate had increased in the short term but there had been increased expenditure due to additional cleaning costs, PPE and extended opening hours etc. As a consequence, the committee was advised that the additional surplus made in 2019/20 had been put into reserves pending budget updates being presented to the Board at future meetings.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Statement of Accounts be approved.
3. That the carry forward requests, as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the officer's report, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION –

To ensure that the Joint Committee approves the Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 and that a balanced revenues budget is maintained for 2020/21.

35 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves 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 it contains information relating to financial or business affairs.

36 **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 2019/20 was provided in Section 2 of the officer's report.

It was noted that the Funerals Market Study by the Competition and Markets Authority had been extended due to COVID-19. All vacant positions at the Crematorium had been filled and a team member had completed a successful phased return to work following a long term sickness absence.

The committee was advised that the environmental impact of the Crematorium will be a key feature of the management reports in the future. Carbon offsetting schemes and other ideas were already being considered.

Members acknowledged that the staff at the Crematorium had been very busy but behaved admirably through this difficult period. The committee felt that the team had exceeded expectations and expressed their gratitude to all involved.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION –

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

37 **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.

The value of the risk register was acknowledged by the committee following its effectiveness in helping to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. A suggestion was made to add the vulnerability of the crematorium drains to the register and this was accepted as a prudent action.

RESOLVED –

That the Register amendments be noted and that the Risk Register for 2020 be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION –

To annually inform Members of the risks to Chesterfield and District Crematorium and the actions taken to manage each risk.

38 **COVID 19 UPDATE REPORT**

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. Gratitude was expressed to the lead authority for the readily available support that the Crematorium had received throughout the pandemic.

It was explained that, due to the high proportion of the team that were required to self-isolate, it had been necessary to second staff from other departments in order to maintain service levels. Initial training took around a month to complete. Professionalism was demonstrated by both the existing team and the new colleagues.

Work had taken place in conjunction with the emergency planning departments, mortuaries, funeral directors and ministers to ensure that government guidelines were complied with whilst using a common-sense approach. A number of practical measures were brought in to safeguard the staff and the public and these had been well received. It was noted that Building Cleaning Services had been invaluable in ensuring a safe working environment and helping to prevent the spread of the virus.

Time slots for funeral services had been reduced at the start of the pandemic in order to increase capacity but the Bereavement Services Manager advised that this had been closely monitored throughout. This meant that the normal diary had been reinstated from Monday 22nd June 2020.

The committee formally thanked the Bereavement Services Manager for his exemplary leadership and management during this difficult time. It was also noted that the conduct of all the Crematorium staff had been superb, maintaining a sensitive service whilst operating within the government guidelines.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the formal thanks of the committee be placed on record to the Bereavement Services Manager and staff for their professionalism and adaptability during a very challenging period.