

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 24th May, 2021

Present:-

Councillor Dooley (Chair)

Councillors	Holmes	Councillors	Mannion-Brunt
	J Innes		Powell
	Ludlow		Renwick
Ian Waller	Service Director	Helen Fox	Chief Finance
Ross	Bereavement Services		Officer
Fawbert	Manager	Dave Corker	Accounts

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

1 APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR (TO BE APPOINTED FROM CHESTERFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL)

Councillor Ludlow was appointed Chair of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee for 2021/22.

(Councillor Ludlow then took the Chair.)

Councillor Dooley thanked officers for their support in her role as chair of the committee 2020/2021 under unusual circumstances. The Chair and members thanked Councillor Dooley for her commitment during her period as chair.

2 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIR (TO BE APPOINTED FROM NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL)

Councillor Powell was appointed Vice-Chair of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee for 2021/22.

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

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

5 MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 MARCH, 2021

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 22 March, 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2021

The Senior Accounting Technician 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, 2021, including the Revenue Account and Balance Sheet.

The report noted that at year end there had been a net surplus of £755,307 and outlined the areas where there had been variances from the approved budget including the significant increase in cremations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 3.3 of the officer's report provided detail on the schemes that required carry forwards to 2021/22 which totalled £5,700.

The report noted that a redistribution of £700k 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 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic there had been increased contributions to the Mercury Abatement Fund and the Revenue Reserves. The £147k additional surplus would be retained in the Revenue Reserve until the medium term effects of the pandemic were fully known.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.

2. That the carry forward requests, as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the officer's report, be approved.
3. That the re-distribution to the three constituent authorities be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Joint Committee approves the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 and that a balanced revenues budget is maintained for 2021/22.

7 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 17% increase from the previous year on cremations taking place in the period from April to March.

Section three of the report included a request to extend the contract of the seasonal gardener with a plan to further upskill him as a Cremator Technician. This would increase the resilience of the service in preparation for any potential COVID-19 variants or other pressures.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted and approval given to extend the Seasonal Gardener Position over Winter 2021/22.

REASONS FOR DECISION –

1. To keep Members informed on the day to day operation of the Crematorium.
2. To develop the Crematorium Staff and provide further resilience over the Winter 21/22

8 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. A total of 424 excess cremations had been carried out since the beginning of the pandemic.

The decision taken in February to adjust service times to increase capacity proved to be the correct one and waiting times were kept to an acceptable level. Numbers permitted in chapel had increased from 30 to 38 mourners and witnesses to strewings of cremated remains had increased from 6 to 15.

The legislation that required the crematorium to remain closed outside of service times had been revoked but the Bereavement Services Manager had taken the decision not to reopen at this time to maintain the safety of staff and visitors. Most staff had received their second dose of the vaccine and were participating in Community Testing.

Additional cleaning and free web-casting service would continue and be reviewed in June. The Bereavement Services Manager highlighted that the second wave coincided with the typically most challenging months of the year but that staff had coped well and were now being encouraged to take their leave and make use of support services where needed. The committee agreed that the whole team had performed well and should be thanked for their efforts.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION –

1. To inform members on the current situation at the Crematorium, the changes from 17th May 2021 and for reassurance that services continue to be delivered in a Covid Secure manner