

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE**Monday, 20th September, 2021**

Present:-

Councillor Ludlow (Chair)

Councillors Holmes
Watson

Councillors

Mannion-Brunt
Renwick

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blank, Dooley, Innes, Kenyon and Powell and Ian Waller.

**11 MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON
24TH MAY 2021****RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 24 May, 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 5

The Senior Accounting Technician submitted a report on the Period 5 Budget Monitoring position as at the end of August 2021. It was noted that there was a favourable variance in income. Additional expenditure on staffing, cleaning etc in relation to the pandemic were reduced and expected to reduce further in the future. Delayed starts to projects on the Service Improvement Plan had caused an underspend but it was advised that these had been rescheduled and a further update would be provided at the next committee meeting.

The committee was advised that it was anticipated that the outturn for the year would be in line with the revised budget forecast.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

13 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 numbers were considerably lower than they were at the height of the pandemic.

It was explained to the committee that there were almost two years worth of projects to complete that had been delayed by the pandemic and some of these were already underway. It was noted that the woodland walkway needed some repair work and a quote had been obtained to increase the number of pond markers as the remaining space was limited.

The Bereavement Services Manager advised the committee that the City Road Crematorium in Sheffield was closing for a temporary period and this may result in increased numbers. However, having dealt with the high numbers during the pandemic, he was confident that any additional services could be dealt with without concern.

The results of a stakeholder survey were attached to the report showing positive feedback and also the results of an inspection by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities that took place in June, for which a 96% compliance score was received.

It was explained to the committee that an asbestos survey had been carried out which resulted in a recommendation from the Chesterfield Borough Council Health and Safety Advisor to carry out work necessary to make safe two areas at the crematorium.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report, including the results from the Annual Satisfaction Survey be noted.
2. That additional of £21,000 be approved for use for the development and repair of the pond and woodland walk area.
3. That the £14,000 cost of carrying out necessary asbestos related works be retrospectively approved.

14 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 from 1st April 2021 to 31st August 2021. The figure was 3.5% higher than the average.

The government lifted all restrictions on funeral events on 12th July 2021 and the chapel capacity was increased to 98 but a decision had been made not to allow any standing room at this time. The waiting room had re-opened with capacity for 18 additional guests. The books of remembrance had re-opened along with the public toilets and the security company that had provided weekend cover was no longer required.

Staff members were still following all appropriate risk assessments and the overall feeling was that things were returning to normal.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

15 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.

16 CHESTERFIELD CREMATORIUM FEES AND CHARGES 2021/2022

The Bereavement Service Manager presented a report recommending for approval a proposed increase in the Crematorium fees and charges for 2022.

The report provided a detailed service analysis, which included a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities across Derbyshire. The review identified that Chesterfield Crematorium was placed seventh out of nine local crematoria that were looked at, ranking them in terms of price from highest to lowest. The committee was advised that other crematoria were likely to increase their prices from 1st April, 2022. It was noted that additional costs had been incurred during this financial year due to the pandemic.

The Competition and Markets Authority report published earlier in the year made a number of recommendations and some of these had since been made law through an order. The order requires crematoriums to clearly display their fees and charges and this had been actioned. A further investigation is referred to in the conclusion, to take place once conditions were more stable.

The committee heard that the increase in memorialisation fees had been recommended due to increasing costs from suppliers as material costs continued to go up. These fees had previously been held for five years.

Direct Cremations had seen a rise in popularity and the committee was advised that a price increase for this service was not recommended in the report to enable residents of the constituent authorities to have access to a dignified service at a competitive cost.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Fees and Charges for 2022 as shown in Appendix A of the officer's report be approved.
2. That Memorial Fees be increased by 5%.

3. That no increase be made to Band A (remaining at £436.00) with delegated authority for the Manager, in conjunction with the Chair, to adjust pricing on this Band be approved.
4. That the increase to Band B by 3% from £603.00 to £619.00 be approved.
5. That the increase to Band C and other miscellaneous fees by 3% (BAND C would increase from £808.00 to £830.00) be approved.