

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

Monday, 5th June, 2023

Present:-

Councillor Kerry (Chair)

Councillors	Davies	Councillors	Barker
	Holmes		Pickering
	Stone		Dooley
	Staton		Clarke

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

1 APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR (TO BE APPOINTED FROM NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL)

Councillor Pat Kerry was appointed Chair of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee for 2023/24.

(Councillor Kerry then took the Chair.)

2 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIR (TO BE APPOINTED FROM BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL)

Councillor Clarke was appointed Vice-Chair of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee for 2023/24.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry and J Innes.

5 MINUTES OF THE JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE HELD ON 27

MARCH 2023

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee on 27 March, 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Senior Accounting Technician submitted a report on the final accounts of the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee for the year ended 31 March, 2023, including the Revenue Account and Balance Sheet.

The report noted that at year end there had been a net surplus of £854,968 and outlined the areas where there had been variances from the approved budget.

The outturn was £155k more than budgeted, largely due to an underspend on the service improvement plan of £37k and a rise of £157k in Cremation fees due to the number of cremations being more than forecast. This meant that it was not necessary to use the £72k budgeted for from the Revenue Reserve. The total variances were detailed in Table 1 of the officer's report.

Section 3.3 of the officer's report provided detail on the schemes that required carry forwards to 2023/24 which totalled £36,795.

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 had not been necessary to use any reserves to balance the budget as forecast and so the reserves would be retained in order to maintain a prudent approach.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted and the Statement of Accounts be approved.
2. That the carry forward requests be approved.
3. That the re-distribution to the three constituent authorities be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that Joint Committee approves the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 and that a balanced revenue budget is maintained for 2023/24.

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 2022/23 was provided in Section 2 of the officer's report.

The Service of Remembrance and Open day were due to take place on Sunday 11th June and the Bereavement Services Manager invited both the Chair and/or Vice Chair to attend the event and present a poem or reading on behalf of the Committee.

The recycling of metals presentation had been provisionally planned for 30th June and the first two charities nominated by the Committee in 2022 would receive £6000 each. The Bereavement Services Manager invited the Chair or Vice Chair to present the cheque.

Section 5.0 of the officer's report detailed the delay in introduction of the Medical Examiner Scheme. This had been planned to be implemented from April 2023 but notification from the Coroner's Office of the Ministry of Justice had confirmed that implementation would now take place from April 2024.

The report noted that the Crematorium had been broken into and burgled in the early hours of 10 April 2022. A Grounds Maintenance Vehicle and a number of powered hand tools had been stolen, totalling approximately £30,000. An Insurance Claim Process and Replacement Programme for stolen equipment was being undertaken. It was also noted that a review of onsite security had taken place with further measures in place. This review had identified the need for the additional planned CCTV, additional fencing and gates in the maintenance yard and prompted a review of the main entrance gates locking and unlocking times.

Members asked questions around the earlier closing times and if these could be reviewed in future. The Bereavement Services Manager confirmed that this would be reviewed on an ongoing basis in addition to any extra security measures being put in place. The Chair of the Committee requested a further update on progress in the next scheduled Committee meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That approval be given for the purchase of replacement Grounds Maintenance Equipment over and above what is successfully claimed via Insurance.

REASON FOR DECISION –

To cover the full cost of replacement items and any potential negative budget implication.

8 CREMATORIUM REGULATION REVIEW

The Bereavement Services Manager presented a report seeking approval for the adoption of the revised Regulations for the Management of the Crematorium.

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 first and only comprehensive review of those regulations (Rules of Management) took place in 2004/2005 and the existing Regulations were published in 2007.

At the meeting of the Joint Crematorium Committee on 27 March 2023, the Manager discussed how the 2007 Regulations were outdated and presented draft Regulations which were approved for wider consultation with our staff and stakeholders, including Funeral Directors, Ministers and Funeral Celebrants.

The proposed revisions to the Regulations made necessary changes to outdated Regulations around Hours of Opening, Admission of Visitors, Conduct on Site, Medical Certification, Music, Updated Music and Media Technology, Metal Recycling, New Memorials and Funeral Services in general.

Full details of the revised Regulations were shown in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

RESOLVED –

That the revised Regulations at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.

REASON FOR DECISION -

To ensure that the Regulations, which determine matters relating to the operation and management of the Crematorium were up to date and fit for the purpose of providing clear guidance to Funeral Directors, Stakeholders, Staff and the bereaved.

9 APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

The Bereavement Services Manager presented a report to seek approval of the creation of an Apprenticeship Placement opportunity at Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium from February 2024.

It was noted that in the last meeting of the Committee, the Bereavement Services Manager highlighted the risk of loss of talent and ageing workforce within Bereavement Services. The introduction of an Apprentice now would be the right time to train and develop a member of staff to mitigate against that future loss of experience with an opportunity for career progression in future.

Additionally, Funerals had changed dramatically over the past decade. Until relatively recently, most Funerals would have followed a similar format, led from The Churches Common Book of Funeral Services, often accompanied by an Organist. Many funerals were now unique celebrations of life with photographic tributes and recorded music, often recorded or streamed. To administer and usher funerals required more resources now. Whilst often, one Chapel Attendant would be able to manage the arrival and ushering of a funeral service, two members of staff were almost always now required in Chapel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the addition of a two year Level 2 Horticulture and Landscape Construction Operative to the establishment be approved.
2. That a maximum of £48396 additional budget to cover the cost of the apprenticeship over 2 years be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS -

1. To mitigate against future loss of talent and experience.
2. An additional staff member, primarily committed to the grounds would release other staff when required to concentrate on Funeral Services and relieve the stress placed upon the team.
3. An Apprenticeship at the Crematorium would be an exciting opportunity for a person to receive high quality training in a rewarding and interesting service. Whilst the focus would be on grounds maintenance, opportunities to learn about administration, technical and front of house duties would be offered.
4. The addition of an apprentice would also add further resilience to the service during times of excess deaths and pandemic.