

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON FRIDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2008 AT 2.00PM

Present:-

Councillor G A Cox – Chairperson
representing Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council

Representing Bridgend County Borough Council

Councillor D Pugh
Councillor J C Spanswick
Councillor K Watkins

Officers:

Mr R Fletcher - Clerk and Technical Officer
Mrs J Hamilton - Crematorium Superintendent and Registrar
Mr A Rees - Senior Cabinet and Committee Officer

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:-

Councillor A J Preston - Mayoral engagement
Councillor W C Vaughan - Other commitment
Councillor R K Turner - Other commitment
Councillor C Westwood - Mayoral engagement

Mr K Fowler - Group Accountant - Other commitment
Mrs S Hooper - Principal Bereavement Officer - Other commitment

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2008, be approved as a correct record, subject to the word 'months' being inserted following the word 'six' in paragraph 3 of minute number 19 - Crematorium Roof.

24 AGREEMENT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Clerk and Technical Officer advised that the re-draft of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee Agreement had been sent to the legal officers of the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Councils for comment. It was hoped that the revised agreement for the Joint Committee to be presented to the next meeting.

25 MEETINGS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Members noted the lack of attendance and apologies for absence by Members at meetings of the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson write to the members of the Joint Committee to advise of the Committee's disappointment at the lack of attendance at meetings and also to advise of the date of the next meeting of the Joint Committee which was the 6 February 2009.

26 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported that Bridgend County Borough Council's Internal Audit Section had carried out a recent audit of the Crematorium. It was noted that the Audit recommendations had been agreed and implemented by management apart from recommendation 1(b) "There should be segregation of duties evident between ordering, receiving goods, and authorising payments". It was considered by management that this could not be achieved effectively at the Crematorium because of the limited number of staff available. It was considered that there are existing arrangements which provide a satisfactory alternative to "checks on site", whereby transactions were checked on a monthly basis by the Bereavement Officer and the accountant for the Crematorium, both of whom are based at the Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend.

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported that the overall audit opinion on Coychurch Crematorium was that the systems operating provide adequate assurance that the key risks to the operation are controlled.

The Joint Committee commended the Crematorium Superintendent and Registrar and her staff on the actions which they had taken to rectify the issues raised by the Internal Audit Report.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report.

27 BUILDING WALES PUBLICATION

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported that the Coychurch Crematorium had been identified as one of the buildings in a recent publication written by Monica Cherry of the Welsh School of Architecture, supported by the Arts Council for Wales which illustrated thirty seven of the most "outstanding and representative" examples of post war Welsh architecture. One of the photographs of the Crematorium used in the book was taken before the original cowl, roof light, was taken down. The cowl was the signature feature of Maxwell Fry's original design. Unfortunately the cowl had to be removed during the early 1990's in order to ensure that cremator emissions, from the adjacent flue stack, complied with more stringent regulations required at the time, by the Environment Protection Act 1990.

Since the cowl was removed, flue emission technology has moved on and it may be feasible to replace the cowl when the cremators have to be replaced in five or six years time. However this was an issue which did not require consideration at this time.

RESOLVED: (1) The Joint Committee note the report.
(2) The Clerk and Technical Officer investigate the feasibility of replacing the cowl due to the standing of the building architecturally and to restore the building to how the architect envisaged it.

28 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported that in order to assess satisfaction levels of the Crematorium's services, all bereaved families had been sent a questionnaire following a cremation. The responses to the ongoing survey were monitored as part of Bridgend County Borough Council's performance management arrangements. The Joint Committee were informed of the survey results for the second quarter, July to September 2008 and noted that the overall satisfaction level, to a standard of good to excellent, was 100%.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report and congratulated the staff at the Crematorium on the levels of performance attained.

29 CREMATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2008 MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported that arising out of the formal inquiry into issues surrounding the Shipman Case, the Ministry of Justice had published the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 which revises guidance and forms relating to cremation procedures. The revisions come into effect from 1 January 2009, with a transitional period up to the end of January 2009.

An important amendment to the existing procedures provides the Applicant for the Cremation (normally the next of kin or a relation of the deceased) with the right to inspect the medical certificates, which have to be provided to crematoria, and to make representations to the medical referee provided that he/she has given due prior notice of such a request to the Crematorium. The Crematorium Superintendent and Registrar outlined to the Joint Committee the relevant clause of the legislation.

At present medical certificates were submitted no later than 10.30am on the day prior to a cremation taking place. This submission time will now have to be brought forward in order to comply with the new regulations, which may result in instances of cremations being delayed. It was not anticipated, however, that there will be many requests for medical certificates to be inspected.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report.

30 CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported on the arrangements for the holding of this year's Christmas Service which had been arranged for Thursday, 18 December 2008 at 7.00pm. Invitations had been sent to the Mayors of the Councils of the Joint Committee, the members of the Joint Committee and local Councillors.

The event would be advertised in the local press, radio and on Bridgend County Borough Council's web site.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Joint Committee endorse the arrangements for the Christmas Service.
(2) The donation of the service "collection" to the Chairman's Mayor's fund be approved.

31 PALM SUNDAY SERVICE

The Clerk and Technical Officer reported that unlike the Christmas Service, the Crematorium's Palm Sunday Service had seen a decrease in the size of congregations. As well as congregations becoming smaller, problems were sometimes encountered securing the services of ministers on this busy Sunday, as they often had other similar engagements.

RESOLVED: That the holding of the Palm Sunday Service cease and utilise the Christmas Service as a service of remembrance as well as a Christmas celebration.

32 REVENUE MONITORING STATEMENT 1 APRIL TO 31 OCTOBER 2008

The Clerk and Technical Officer presented the report of the Treasurer on the Revenue Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 31 October 2008 which gave details of the income and expenditure for the Crematorium in this financial year and gave a projection of the final outturn. The net effect on the projected surplus was to increase it to £57,000, The accumulated surplus of £72,000 brought forward had remained unchanged as a result of the audit of the accounts.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report.

33 AUDIT OF THE 2007/08 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Clerk and Technical Officer presented the report of the Treasurer which as part of the accounts finalisation process the committee was required to provide its auditors KPMG LLP, with representations on specific matters such as financial standing, and whether transactions within the accounts are legal and unaffected by fraud. A Letter of Representation to KPMG had been prepared, submitted as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee also received KPMG's "Report to those Charged with Governance" (Appendix 2 of the report) which was made at the time of the final consideration of the accounts. The audit had now been completed satisfactorily by the external auditors, KPMG LLP and the slightly amended Statement of Accounts was attached as Appendix 3 to the report. There had been no changes made other than those of a typographical or presentational nature and the surplus for the year of £54,000.00 remained unchanged.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note and approve the letter of representation to be provided to KPMG LLP, the auditors " Report to those charged with Governance" and the Audited Statement of Accounts for 2007/08.

The meeting closed at 2.40pm.