

COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE - FRIDAY, 9 MARCH 2018

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1 - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON FRIDAY, 9 MARCH 2018 AT 14:00**

Present

Councillor RE Young – Chairperson

G Cox
E Venables

S Edwards
JE Williams

G John

AA Pucella

Apologies for Absence

G Hopkins, JC Spanswick and R Turner

Officers:

Adele Ahearn	Accountant
Joanna Hamilton	Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
Michael Pitman	Business & Administrative Apprentice
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

17. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee of 15th September 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

18. CREMATORIUM BUSINESS PLAN AND CREMATION FEES

The Clerk and Technical Officer sought approval of the Business Plan and expenditure programme for 2018/2019 which included proposed increases in cremation fees.

He reported that the total number of cremations for 2017 was 1620, made up of 995 from Bridgend, 180 from Vale of Glamorgan and 379 from Rhondda Cynon Taff, with 66 non-residents. He stated that an agreement is in place with the Princess of Wales Hospital for the cremation of non-viable foetal remains (NVF) which has resulted in an additional 8 communal cremations. A further 11 individual NVF cremations were arranged directly with families.

The Clerk and Technical Officer also reported that the charges for the crematorium placed Coychurch Crematorium at 241 out of 284 in the national fee league table published in summer 2017 by the Cremation Society of Great Britain. He stated that the funding strategy included in previous Business Plans had recommended an increase in the cremation charge by inflation plus £25, to ensure that sufficient funding was available to support the future programme of improvements, but still retain the Crematorium's competitive position. Following a review, it was not considered necessary to implement the additional £25 fee, but, this will continue to be reviewed annually.

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The Clerk and Technical Officer reported on a proposal to increase the cremation charge by inflation from £636.70 to £662.20, based on a general increase of 4% (1% plus CPI in line with the most recent CPI figures published in December 2017). He highlighted a comparison of the current cremation fees for adjoining crematoria.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- 1) Approved the Service Level Business Plan 2018/19
- 2) Approved the cremation fees as presented for 2018/19

19. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2018/19

The Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar presented a report seeking approval for the proposed programme of meetings for 2018/2019. The Memorandum of Agreement for the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee states that the Joint Committee will hold at least two meetings in each municipal year, one of which will be the Annual General Meeting. The first meeting of the Joint Committee after the Annual Meetings of the Councils will be the Annual General Meeting, at which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be elected.

There will be three meetings in the year 2018/2019 held on the dates below:

Friday 22nd June 2018 Annual General Meeting and site visit

Friday 14th September 2018

Friday 8th March 2019

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee approved the programme of meetings for 2018/2019.

20. PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET 2018-19

The Accountant presented a report on the projected financial performance for the Crematorium for 2017-18 and sought approval from the Joint Committee for the proposed budget and fees and charges for 2018-19.

The Accountant stated that the anticipated budget deficit would be £35,000; however actual projected outturn as at the end of January is a surplus of £44,000 which would require a transfer to earmarked reserves. She presented an explanation of the main variances between the Budget and Projected Outturn, which showed an underspend of £21,000 on employees; attributable to two vacancies for part of the year, which meant that additional Security Services had to be employed to cover these hours. An overspend of £8,000 on Premises was attributable to an overspend on Business Rates of £18,000, offset by underspends on Day to Day Maintenance of £5,000 and Gas of £5,000. A further overspend of £2,000 on Supplies, Services and transport was identified, which was made up of an overspend on Security Services of £20,000, offset by savings on Equipment Repairs of £10,000, Protective Clothing of £2,500, Purchase of Equipment £2,500 and Audit Fees of £2,100. The underspend in Administration was due to lower costs in Facilities Management compared to the previous year.

The Accountant informed the Joint Committee that included in the Capital Financing Costs is the Planned Maintenance budget of £350,000, where an underspend of £30,000 had been identified due to a delay in carrying out organ repairs of £20,000 and also attributable to an underspend on Infrastructure works of £10,000. The organ

repairs were scheduled to take place in 2018-19 and the sum of £5,000 would need to be provided in 2018-19 for the retention payment due on the Infrastructure works. The Bereavement Services Manager outlined the repairs required to the organ which had been commissioned by a distinguished company NP Mander, in 1970. She stated that the repairs which are essential had been postponed from 2017/18 in order to fully assess the repair strategy and procurement methodology, as the organ manufacturer may need to be involved in the procurement process.

The Bereavement Services Manager clarified the position in relation to the standard cremation fee, which is not applied to under 18 year olds.

The Accountant informed the Joint Committee of a breakdown of the planned maintenance budget for 2017-18 of £350,000. She stated that income is higher than budgeted by £32,000 as a result of increased cremation fees of £25,000 and income in relation to the sale of items of £7,000.

The Accountant reported on the proposed revenue budget for 2018-19 where a net surplus of £373,000 was proposed. All non-employee budgets had been reviewed and any necessary adjustments made to meet expected expenditure for 2018-19. Employee budgets had been adjusted to reflect salary increments and to include a 2% uplift for the 2018-19 pay award. She stated that the Business Plan for 2018-19 indicated a budget requirement of £75,000 to meet expenditure, which would be met from the Capital Financing Costs budget. Income budgets had been prepared assuming a general increase in fees of 4%, based on the current levels of activity of 1589 cremations.

The Accountant reported on the effect of the accumulated balance of the proposed budget for 2018-19, wherein an accumulated balance of £1,499,000 was projected as 31 March 2019. This was considered to be sufficient in order to maintain the service in light of unknown demands or emergencies.

The Accountant reported that capital expenditure would not require any loan or contribution from constituent authorities and items of a capital expenditure in 2018-19 would be directly funded from revenue contributions and the accumulated surplus from previous years.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Joint Committee confirmed and approved the revenue budget and capital expenditure to be adopted for 2018-2019
 2) That the Joint Committee approved the increase in fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2018 outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

21. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 14:30