

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON FRIDAY, 8 MARCH 2019 AT 14:00**

Present

Councillor R Turner – Chairperson

S Edwards
RE Young

G John

AA Pucella

E Venables

Apologies for Absence

G Cox, G Hopkins, JC Spanswick, DBF White and JE Williams

Officers:

Adele Ahearn	Accountant
Philip Beaman	Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Joanna Hamilton	Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members/Officer:-

Councillor G Cox
Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor JC Spanswick
Councillor DBF White
Councillor JE Williams
Zak Shell

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

41. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee dated 14 September 2018, be approved as a true and accurate record.

42. PIPE ORGAN REPAIRS

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar presented a report, the purpose of which, was to advise the Joint Committee on repairs required to the pipe organ in Crallo Chapel at Coychurch Crematorium and to seek approval for improvement and maintenance works.

She explained that the Crematorium is a Grade 2* listed and an important work by architect Maxwell Fry. The existing organ was original to the 1970 building and was built by the distinguished company N P Mander of London.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed that the pipe organ has many tangible advantages over an electric organ, such as visual beauty, longevity and

the quality of materials and craftsmanship employed, but primarily it's the sound quality. The Crematorium she felt, was extremely fortunate to have a pipe organ of such size and quality. This was without doubt one of the unique selling points, which was demonstrated by the wonderful singing that we have come to be known for, attracting many choirs and soloists.

She proceeded by stating, that the organ has received minimal financial input since 1970, other than that required for basic tuning and maintenance. However, its reliability of late has become more challenging and causing lengthier and more expensive tuning visits. The tuners recommended in 2016 some modernisation of the electrical contacts and some consideration for the safety of the tuner when accessing the pipes at height. The 2017/18 and 2018/19 business plans made provision of £20,000 for minimal repairs, but these had again been postponed in order to fully assess requirements. The original builders, Manders Organs Ltd, were subsequently consulted to carry out a full inspection in October 2018.

She then gave a full resume of the outcome of the inspection, including details of some expansive works that were now required to the organ as a result of such an inspection.

Following this, she added that the organ unusually does not include a reed instrument sound and so it is planned to include an oboe as part of the solid state.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar advised the Joint Committee, that a substitute organ would be made available during the 4 to 5 month duration of the works.

Considering the Crematorium's Grade 2* listing is it proposed that this work is carried out by Manders Organs Ltd, as a trustworthy means of rendering it mechanically reliable for the future and in order to preserve its authenticity.

The cost of the above works is £96,400 and is included in the Crematorium's Business Plan for 2019/20. (for clarification, £20,000 is carried forward from this financial year plus an additional £76, 000 from Crematorium reserves).

A Member asked why the works required to the organ had not gone out to tender, in order to obtain 'best value' in terms of the cost for its repair/upgrading.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar, advised that the pipe organ was a very unique and complex instrument and as such, it was considered extremely important to secure the company who originally constructed it, to undertake its upgrading works. She added that as well as this, there were very few companies available to carry out the works that were required to such an instrument.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee approved the works as outlined in the report and verbally at the meeting, by Manders Organs Ltd, in the sum of £96,400.

43. EXTERNAL LIGHTING

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager presented a report, in order to seek approval from the Joint Committee for the proposed installation of external lighting at the Crematorium

By way of background, he explained that the provision of such lighting would not just make the site more aesthetically pleasing, but this would also improve safety and security of the Crematoria building and the surrounding grounds, including the car park. Such lighting would also improve visibility for visitors/mourners.

He proceeded further by stating, that the provision of lighting would improve the Crematorium's ability to comply with the current disability access requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The proposal was, added the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager, to install low level lighting bollards along the main entrance driveway and pathways, complimented by column lighting to the two main Chapel and office car parks. The style of the lighting would be chosen to compliment the architectural style of the building.

He confirmed that the lighting scheme proposed had been assessed by the Council's Electrical Engineers and an estimated budget cost calculated which has taken account of all associated fees for design works, planning applications, ecology reports and Contract and Project Management costs.

Finally, the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager confirmed to Members, that the estimated cost of the works ie £300k, had been accounted for in the Crematorium's Business Plan for 2019/20.

A Member asked if the lighting would be LED and set on a timer so as to reduce electricity costs. She also asked if the lighting would have any adverse effect on any neighbouring properties situate in the nearby vicinity of the Crematoria.

The Bereavement Services Manager stated that the lighting would utilise modern technology, as it was more cost effective than standard lighting. She added that such provision of lighting would not have any impact on neighbouring dwellings, particularly as it was low level style lighting and timing devices would be utilised.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) The Joint Committee approved, in principle, the provision of external lighting to the grounds at Coychurch Crematorium.
 - (2) The Joint Committee further authorised the Clerk and Technical Officer to invite tenders in respect of the works to be undertaken and report back to the Joint committee with a view to commencing works within the 2019/20 financial year.

44. **CREMATORIUM BUSINESS PLAN AND FEES**

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar presented a report, the purpose of which, was to approve the Business Plan and expenditure programme for 2019/20, which includes proposed increases in cremation fees.

By way of background information, she confirmed that a Business Plan is presented annually to the Joint Committee for approval, which includes service objectives and proposed maintenance and improvement projects to enhance and maintain the Crematorium grounds and buildings for the forthcoming financial year.

She then referred to the Business Plan, which commenced on Page 19 of the report, where Members will see Awards and Achievements noted (on Page 22), and of particular note, the achievement of the Green Flag award once more in 2018, as well as further noting, that the service remained financially self-sufficient.

The report then detailed the staffing structure and the business hours; the types of memorialisation provided, the different ways that the Crematorium marketed itself and

communicates with its service users and finally, the different ways that the Crematorium remains environmentally sustainable.

On Page 25 of the report, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar highlighted the key achievements over the past 10 years so listed there, with the most recent being the construction of the crematory extension followed by the replacement of the cremators for bariatric cremators, including refrigeration facilities and full mercury abatement plant. Also detailed in this section of the Plan, was the replacement of the flat roof above the original part of the crematory. She then further highlighted the extension of the grounds into the new land and the associated new memorialisation in that area, together with the further extension of the road infrastructure and additional car parking in 2017, named as Phase 2, and the landscaping of this new area in 2018.

The refurbishment of the Chapel of Remembrance also took place in 2018, she added.

At the bottom of Page 26 the performance indicators were highlighted for the previous five years, which related to user satisfaction, the results of which are taken from the service questionnaires sent to cremation applicants. The target, was to achieve 100% overall satisfaction levels rated good or excellent and these remained constant at 100%, with a target set for the same result in 2019/20.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar, then referred to the annual statistics for cremations, details of which were included on page 28/29 of the Business Plan. The total number of cremations for 2018 was 1614, made up of 998 from Bridgend, 145 from Vale of Glamorgan and 415 from Rhondda Cynon Taff, with 66 non-residents. An agreement with the Princess of Wales Hospital for the cremation of non-viable foetal remains (NVF) had resulted in an additional 12 communal cremations. A further 9 individual NVF cremations were arranged directly with families, she further added.

The statistical record tables for the period from January to December 2018 and 2017, were included for comparison purposes on pages 27 and 28 of the Plan and from this Members would note, that the total number of cremations for 2017 was 1620. The annual cremation figures were now remaining fairly constant, although the cremations from Vale of Glamorgan were down by 35, while the cremations from Rhondda Cynon Taff have increased by 36, with the number of non-residents remaining exactly the same.

The Business Plan then outlined the service developments and objectives for the period 2019/20. These were detailed on Pages 29 and 30 of the Business Plan.

With regard to mercury abatement charges to CAMEO, the Joint Committee may have recalled that those crematoria that have abated more than 50% of their cremations, can sell the excess mercury abated cremations to those which have abated less than this target, via CAMEO. Those who have excessively abated derive an income, and those who have not, share the financial burden. Consequently, Coychurch Crematorium paid £41k for the period 2015/16 as a result of burden sharing costs for non-abated cremations in 2015. This burden sharing figure was reverted to income in 2016/17, due to the completion of the installation of mercury abatement plant in April 2016, which enabled the Crematorium to abate more than 50% of its cremations during 2016/17, generating an income of £5,950.10 and again in 2017/18, generating an income of £6,415.92. The Crematorium abated all of its cremations in 2018 and awaits confirmation of the potential amount of income it can expect to generate for 2018/19.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed that the main focus of service objectives in 2019/20 will be:-

- the upgrade and repairs to the pipe organ already discussed in the first report to the Joint Committee today,
- repairs to flat roofs above the Waiting Room and Porte-cochère. These works were authorised in last year's Business Report but have been delayed until June 2019 due to their close proximity to the chapel entrance and a desire for them to proceed during the quieter summer months when the weather should also be more reliable.
- The Flower Court Extension feasibility study was approved by the Joint Committee on 15th June 2018 to be funded out of the 2018/19 revenue budget. This report will be submitted to the June 2019 meeting. The project can be accommodated in the Crematoriums reserve funds and will be considered in more detail in June. However, an estimated amount of £300,000 has been included in the 2019/20 budget to accommodate the construction phase of the project, subject to further approval by Members.
- External lighting had already been discussed in a previous report considered by the Joint Committee today.
- The refurbishment of the crematory teams restroom facilities is required to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. From 2014 until early 2016, the restroom additionally provided welfare facilities for contractors who constructed the crematory building extension and installed the new crematory equipment.
- The Crematorium's electrical distribution boards, housed within the crematory electricity and fan room, are mostly original to the opening of the building in 1971, and in order to meet current standards they require replacement.
- In addition to these proposed service developments, a property contingency is included in the Crematorium's Revenue Budget to cover minor unplanned works and general repair and maintenance works.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar reminded the Joint Committee also, that the surplus fund is designed to build up reserves for the future replacement of the cremators and ancillary plant in approximately 12 years time, as well as fund all future service improvements.

Maintaining this reserve would ensure the Crematorium has sufficient long term funds for both, plus any unplanned eventualities that could occur.

The table on Page 31 of the Plan detailed the projected costs for these objectives, upon which the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar gave a resume for the benefit of Members, as she did also on the proposed Budget details individually listed on page 32 of the Plan.

The table on Pages 33/34, summarised the timescales and officer responsibilities for the projects over the past and current financial year and for the reported new objectives for 2019/20.

Referring back to the report on page 16, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar highlighted paragraph 4.3 which related to the of setting charges for 2019/20, in particular the weekly adult cremation charge and accordingly a general increase in all fees. The cremation charge for the current financial year places the Crematorium at 258 out of 291 cremation authorities in a national fee league table that was published in the summer of 2018 (where the highest cremation charge is detailed first). It is recommended that the cremation charge is increased by inflation from £662.20 to £680.70. This is based upon a general increase in fees of 1% plus the current inflation figure of 1.8%, in line with BCBC's protocol.

The table on Page 16 of the report, showed a comparison of current cremation fees for adjoining crematoria:-

Crematorium Cremation Fee 2018/19

Vale of Glamorgan (Barry) £850.00+ (excl. £47 organist)
Llanelli £785.00
Glyntaff (Pontypridd) £690.00 (excl. organist)
Llwydcoed (Aberdare) £690.00 (excl. organist)
Croesyceiliog (Gwent) £684.00 (excl. organist)
Morrison (Swansea) £665.00 (excl. organist)
Coychurch (Bridgend) £662.20
Margam £605.00
Narberth £581.00
Thornhill (Cardiff) £560.00 (excl. organist)

All variations to expenditure and income, was as outlined in the Service Level Business Plan, including the proposed increase in fees, which had been incorporated in the Treasurer's Report, to be debated later on in the agenda for today's meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:-

- (1) Approved the Service Level Business Plan 2019/20.
- (2) Approved the cremation fee for 2019/20 at £680.70 and a general increase in all fees of 2.8%

45. **CHRISTMAS SERVICE 2018**

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to update the Joint Committee on the arrangements that took place for the Christmas Service 2018.

She advised that as part of these arrangements, the Joint Committee had been previously advised that refreshments for the Service would be sponsored by Rosemount Funeral Home, Bridgend (Co-operative Funeral Care.)

She further explained that unfortunately Rosemount Funeral Home, Bridgend (Co-operative Funeral Care) withdrew sponsorship at a late stage, for corporate business reasons. Refreshments were then instead sponsored by WH Preene and Son Funeral Directors, Pontyclun.

Members agreed to send a further letter of thanks from the Joint Committee to WH Preene and Son Funeral Directors, appreciating their stand-in assistance with regard to the support of the Christmas Service.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report.

46. **PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2019/20**

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar submitted a report, seeking Members approval for the proposed Programme of Meetings for 2019/20.

The proposed dates for such meetings in the next term were as follows:-

- Friday 14 June 2019 – Annual meeting and Site Visit (of the Crematorium grounds);
- Friday 13 September 2019;
- Friday 6 March 2020

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee approved the Programme of Meetings for 2019/20.

47. **PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET 2019-20**

The Accountant, Financial Control and Closing presented a report, the purpose of which, was to inform the Joint Committee of the projected financial performance for the Crematorium for 2018-19, and to obtain approval from the Joint Committee for the proposed Budget and Fees and Charges for 2019-20.

She referred Members to paragraph 4.1 of the report and Table 1, which reflected the financial position at 31 January 2019 together with the projected outturn for 2018-19.

The Accountant, Financial Control and Closing, advised that when the budget had been set, there was an anticipated surplus of £373k. The projected outturn as at the end of January was a surplus of £464k, which will require a transfer to the Crematorium's Accumulated Surplus. Paragraph 4.2 gave an explanation of the main variances between the Budget and Projected Outturn, and the presenting Officer outlined these for the benefit of Members, including in Table 2, Planned Maintenance for 2018-19.

Paragraph 4.3 of the report gave details of the Proposed Revenue Budget for 2019-20, which currently showed an estimated overall surplus of £336k. She added that employee budgets have been adjusted to reflect salary increments where applicable, including a 2% uplift for the 2019-20 pay award.

Paragraph 4.6 then gave information on the Business Plan for 2019-20, that included a budget requirement of £776k to meet proposed expenditure itemised in Table 2 in this section of the report, entitled Business Plan Spending Requirements.

The income budgets had been prepared she advised the Joint Committee, on the assumption of a general increase in fees of 2.8% (1% plus CPI at 1.8%) based on current levels of activity. The 2019-20 Proposed Fees Table was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Paragraph 4.9 of the report gave the effect on the accumulated balance of the proposed budget for 2019-20 in table form (ie Table 5), with any deficit taken from the accumulated surplus. It was projected that at 31 March 2020, there will be an accumulated balance of £1,387,000. The Accountant, Financial Control and Closing informed Members, that the balance of Reserves (at 31 March 2020) was considered a sufficient level to maintain to protect the service in light of any unknown demands or emergencies.

Finally, she concluded her submission by stating that capital expenditure will not require any loan or charge contribution from constituent authorities in 2019-20. She added, that items of a capital nature for 2019-20 in Table 4 (paragraph 4.6 of the report), will be directly funded from revenue contributions and the accumulated surplus from previous years.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:-

- (1) Noted the projected financial for 2018-19.
- (2) Confirmed and approved the revenue budget to be adopted for 2019-20.
- (3) Approved the increase in fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2019, outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

48. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 15:05