

COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE - FRIDAY, 6 MARCH 2020

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON
FRIDAY, 6 MARCH 2020 AT 14:00**

Present

Councillor RE Young – Chairperson

G Cox
R Turner

S Edwards
E Venables

G John

JC Spanswick

Apologies for Absence

JE Williams

Officers:

Philip Beaman Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager
Mark Galvin Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Joanna Hamilton Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
Eilish Thomas Finance Manager - Financial Control & Closing

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

66. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee dated 13 September 2019, be approved as a true and accurate record.

67. CHAPEL COMPUTERISED MUSIC AND MEDIA SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar presented a report, the purpose of which, was to advise the Joint Committee on the improvements required to the computerised music and media provision systems serving Crallo Chapel and Coity Chapel at Coychurch Crematorium and to seek approval of expenditure for their replacement, in order to provide a more modern facility to bereaved service users.

The report gave some background information, following which, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar, advised that Wesley Media Ltd has developed specialist products and applications suitable for crematoria that meet the expectations of the bereaved in the 21st Century. Due to its proven reliability in this specialist area it is utilised by most UK Crematoria and all the neighbouring Crematoria, as referenced to in bullet point format in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar proceeded to confirm, that Wesley Media provides a specialist adapted hardware computer package for each chapel, loaded with operating software with access to an unlimited range of music including any commercially available contemporary, hymn and classical styles. The software is also interfaced to ensure there is no room for error. Wesley Media also provides USB recordings of funeral services and arranges webcasts for those who are unable to attend the funeral service. Additionally it provides visual tributes that have been tailored to bereaved families' requirements, downloading them onto the Wesley Media chapel music computer to be played on their compatible tribute screens during the funeral service. She added that every aspect of the funeral ceremony was considered, from the

order of service to the acoustics of the individual venue, to the sensitive nature of personal ceremonies.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar added, that whilst organ music is still a popular accompaniment to services and all hymn singing is accompanied using the Crematorium's pipe organs, alternative types of music are frequently requested to replace or augment organ music.

Wesley Media were consulted in December 2019 and they undertook a review of the current music and media system at the Crematoria and their subsequent report, outlined that they could provide the Crematorium with all the modern facilities it required, as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

The addition of Wesley Media compatible screens in the two chapels would enable the bereaved to view the visual tributes that Wesley Media has formatted to their requirements. This is a service provided by neighbouring Crematoria which installed the Wesley Media system in more recent times with the benefit of these more modern additions to the Wesley Media service. The installation of additional Wesley Media compatible screens to the top and bottom of the cloister leading to Crallo Chapel, would utilise the Wesley Media chapel webcast camera which would be auto switched with the viewing of visual tributes, enabling mourners standing in this area on large gatherings, to view the proceedings in the chapel rather than just listening to the speakers. This would allow them to participate more in the funeral service.

To conclude her submission, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar, confirmed that due to the unique needs of the Crematorium service and the specialist nature of the digital music provision, BCBC's Contract Procedure Rules would be applied, with the application of a waiver through the Scheme of Delegation, in accordance with provision 3.2.3.

A Member asked the Officer if there was a back-up plan, should either the existing or new equipment and associated facilities fail for any reason.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed that the Crematoria always had a stock of USB sticks and compact discs on site that could provide music and families were always forthcoming to supply these also. If any such new smaller provisions for this purpose was required, then this could be achieved quickly with a minimum of expense, following a quick straightforward procurement exercise.

A Member asked if the works required were due to be undertaken in this or the next financial year and how would the works affect business at the Crematoria.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar advised, that the works would be undertaken in accordance with the 2020/21 Business Plan proposals and it was hoped, that the works required would, as far as possible and practicable, be scheduled around funerals/cremations. On a worse case scenario, she added that there may be the possibility that the main Chapel would be temporarily closed in order for the works to be completed on schedule, with Coity Chapel then being used in its place during this time.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee approved expenditure for the works outlined in the report by Wesley Media Ltd, in the sum of £41,696, in conjunction with the approval of the Business Plan.

68. **CREMATORIUM BUSINESS PLAN AND FEES**

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The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar, Bereavement Services, presented a report, seeking the Joint Committees approval of the Business Plan and expenditure programme for 2020-21, which includes a proposed increases in cremation fees.

She advised 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 period.

She confirmed that the total number of cremations for 2019 was 1,625, made up of 1,004 from Bridgend, 143 from Vale of Glamorgan and 400 from Rhondda Cynon Taff, with 78 non-residents. An agreement with the Princess of Wales Hospital for the cremation of non-viable foetal remains (NVF) has resulted in an additional 11 communal cremations. A further 8 individual NVF cremations were arranged directly with families. Statistical records for the period from January to December 2018 and 2019 are included in the Business Plan for comparison.

The proposed Service Level Business Plan for 2020-21 was attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and this outlined the service objectives for the period. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar gave a resume of this for the benefit of Members by extracting some of the more important elements of this.

The Business Plan covered the following key areas following it's introduction:-

- Section 1 – Serving our Community
- Section 2 – Service Developments
- Section 3 – Revenue Budgets
- Section 4 – Business Plan Review
- Section 5 - Contacts

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar stated that the Crematorium's cremation charge was placed at 267 out of 299 cremation authorities, in a national fee league table published in summer 2019 by the Cremation Society of Great Britain (where the highest cost is detailed first). It was recommended that the cremation charge is increased by inflation from £680.70 to £696.40. This is based on a general increase in fees of 2.3% (1% plus CPI at 1.3% in line with the most recent CPI figure published in December 2019). The table in paragraph 4.3 of the report, indicated a comparison on current (2019-20) cremation fees for adjoining crematoria.

A Member noted from the report, that cremations were free for those aged under 18 on weekdays, but not for any cremations for this age category on a Saturday.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar, advised that only the standard basic service was free under the appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on weekdays for under 18's, whereby on Saturday there was an added charge to cover the Crematorium staffing costs to support and/or administer cremation work out of normal weekday hours. There were very few cremations however on a Saturday, she added.

A Member noted with some pleasure, that the Flower Court extension was now progressing.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed, that planning permission had been applied for this and that preparation works were presently ongoing. She added that the planning application for this project had taken a bit longer to prepare than had firstly been anticipated as the structure was a Listed Building.

A Member made reference to the report and Service Level Business Plan referring to issues such as, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment, Mercury Abatement and also Climate Change is something that also has to be considered moving forward, in relation to certain levels of decision making by the Authority. With all this in mind, she asked if the Crematoria had any long term plans or vision regarding global warming and emissions, etc.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar advised that the way and manner in which the Crematoria operated in a considerable number of aspects of its work, was governed by legislation and in accordance with its permit the provisions of which had to be complied with. Public Health Wales also monitored Crematoria, in order to ensure that they were complying with statutory guidance relating to the protection of the environment etc, in relation to for example, Cremators and Mercury Abatement plant.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:-

- (1) Approved the Service Level Business Plan 2020-21
- (2) Approved the cremation fee for 2020-21 at £696.40 and a general increase of all fees of 2.3%

69. **PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2020-21**

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar presented a report, that sought approval from Members for the proposed programme of meetings of the Joint Committee for year 2020-21.

These were as follows:-

Friday 12 June 2020 – Annual General Meeting and Site Visit;
Friday 4 September 2020;
Friday 5 March 2021.

RESOLVED: The Joint Committee approved the Programme of Meetings for 2020-21, as outlined in the Officer's Report.

70. **PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET 2020-21**

The Finance Manager, Financial Control and Closing submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to inform the Joint Committee of the projected financial performance for the Crematorium for 2019-20, and to obtain approval from the Joint Committee for the Proposed Budget and Fees and Charges for 2020-21.

Table 1 in paragraph 4.1 of the report, showed the financial position as at 31 January 2020 and the projected outturn for 2019-20. This reflected an under spend of £652k for 2019-20.

She advised that when the budget was set, there was an anticipated deficit of £336,000. The projected outturn as at the end of January showed a surplus of £316,000, which will require a transfer to the Crematorium's Accumulated Surplus.

An explanation of the main variances between the Budget and Projected Outturn is detailed in bullet point format in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

Table 2 in the report, then showed a breakdown of the Planned Maintenance Budget along with the Projected Outturn and Variances for 2019-20. This outlined an under

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spend for the Flower Court in the sum of £272k and a similar under spend for Street Lighting of £300k.

Paragraph 4.3 of the report (Table 3) then showed the proposed Revenue Budget for 2020-21. This had been set at a deficit of £395k.

Table 4 in paragraph 4.6 of the report, contained details of Planned Capital Maintenance Spending Requirements, with these being met from the Capital Financing Costs budget identified in Table 3 referenced above.

The income budgets had been prepared, assuming a general increase in fees of 2.3% (1% plus CPI at 1.3%), based on current levels of activity. The 2020-21 proposed Fees Table was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Paragraph 4.8 of the report, detailed the effect on the accumulated balance of the proposed budget for 2020-21 in Table 5. It was projected that as at 31 March 2020, there will be an accumulated balance of £1,675, 000. The balance of Reserves as at 31 March 2021 was considered a sufficient level to maintain and protect the service, in light of any unknown demands or emergencies.

Finally, the Finance Manager, Financial Control and Closing, confirmed that Capital expenditure will not require any loan charge or contribution from constituent authorities in 2020-21. Items of a capital nature for 2020-21 in Table 4, paragraph 4.6 of the report, would be directly funded from revenue contributions and the accumulated surplus from previous years.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:-

- (1) Noted the projected financial performance for 2019-20.
- (2) Confirmed and approved the revenue budget to be adopted for 2020-21.
- (3) Approved the increase in fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2020, outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

71. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 14:55