

COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE - FRIDAY, 7 MARCH 2025

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON FRIDAY, 7 MARCH 2025 AT 14:00

Present

Councillor John Spanswick – Chairperson

Present Virtually

H T Bennett
S J Griffiths
B Stephens

E L P Caparros
G John
Turner

P Davies
JC Spanswick

H Griffiths
C Stallard

Apologies for Absence

Z Shell

Officers:

Joanna Hamilton
Dean Jones
Chris Morris
Michael Pitman
Nimi Chandrasena

Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
Accountant - Financial
Accountant
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer

Declarations of Interest

None

57. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED :</u> That the Minutes of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee dated 13/09/24 were approved as a true and accurate record
Date Decision Made	07/03/2025

58. Crematorium Business Plan and Fees

Decision Made	<p>The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar presented the report the purpose of which was to gain approval for the Crematorium Service Level Business Plan and Fees report for 2025-26. She added that the committee may wish to defer approval of point 9.2 pending the presentation of the Treasurer's report which was the next item to be discussed.</p> <p>A member referred to page 22 of the report and the statistics mentioned therein, specifically, the overall cremations for this 2025 compared to 2024. He noted that there was an almost a 23% increase particularly during the months of May, June, July and August. He queried if it was because the death rate in the borough was increasing or if it was because there were more people choosing to come to the Coychurch Crematorium. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that there could be a number of factors such as the weather and its impact on people's health, the population in Bridgend being higher now than it was before. She stated that funeral directors have fed back to her team that with the County's borders with RCT there seemed to be a tendency for families to choose Coychurch crematorium as the facility within close proximity to where they reside.</p> <p>The Chairperson asked if there was a comparison made with other crematoriums such as Margam as an example. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that such a comparison had not been conducted. However, she felt that the service had busier winters and quieter summers.</p> <p>A member inquired if there were statistics available on Direct Cremations and the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that the statistics were included within the report. She also estimated that there were 1-2 direct cremations conducted per week.</p> <p>The member commended the Flower court facilities and purpose served during the Christmas service.</p>
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	<p>There was also a discussion around a price increase in the Vale of Glamorgan services, where the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that she did not have access to the price increases but was aware that costs increase considerably every year.</p> <p>A member commended the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar for the performance of the entire department over the years and agreed to support the increase in the budget mentioned to allow for high standards in service to be maintained.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Joint Committee approved the Service Level Business Plan 2025-26 (Appendix 1).• The Joint Committee approved an increase in all fees of 2.6% for 2025-26.
Date Decision Made	07/03/2025

59. Financial Performance 2024-25 and Proposed Revenue Budget 2025-26

Decision Made	<p>The Accountant presented the report the purpose of which was to inform the Joint Committee of the projected financial performance for the Crematorium for 2024-25, and to obtain approval from the Joint Committee for the Proposed Budget and Fees and Charges for 2025-26.</p> <p>A member inquired what the projected cost was for the major refurbishment mentioned in relation to the plant and machinery and also inquired if the Council was on track with the projections.</p> <p>The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that when the cremators were replaced the last time, extensive building works also took place. The Crematory building was extended, therefore, there were additional costs for the building works. The building was now fit for purpose to replace the cremators. She stated that she did not anticipate a requirement for any further building works.</p> <p>She drew the members attention to the removable roof on the new extension which enabled movement of equipment in and out of the facility. She stated that this would ensure that there was no downtime incurred while equipment was being changed over. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar stated that the equipment at that time cost the Authority under a million.</p> <p>During the installation in 2016, the service took out an all-inclusive service and maintenance contract for a</p>
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	<p>15 year period. That was the anticipated time frame of the Cremator's lifespan. She stated that this was why she anticipated refurbishment in six years. She stated that the equipment might last longer, or the Environmental Protection Act might alter during that time period, and the service might be required to act sooner.</p> <p>The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar anticipated a cost of a million pounds for the replacement of equipment. She added that it was too early yet to make inquiries because technology in this regard moved on so swiftly.</p> <p>She mentioned that it would be better to wait a few years before the authority start to look towards how to proceed, as by then, the service may not have to look at just cremators, they may be looking at electric cremators at that time. She added that the service may also be looking at another form of disposal as well as cremators. She stated that there were sufficient funds in the surplus funds to cover additional works required within that time frame (Eg: broken road surface in the car park). She stated that there was also extensive work to be undertaken at the services' lake, further, a new land extension was anticipated to commence in a few years' time.</p> <p>She assured members that while it sounded like a high expenditure of funds, this was compensated by money currently in the surplus fund.</p> <p>A member asked if a comparison had been made in terms of fees, whether Bridgend were under or on a balance level with other facilities.</p> <p>The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that there were different groups of fees relating to books of remembrance, media information provided in the chapels, visual tributes and web casts. She stated that she kept herself informed on a regular basis in relation to the fees and charges for surrounding crematorium thereby ensuring that Bridgend remain consistent with their charges. She stated this also helps in ensuring that Bridgend do not under-charge. She assured members that there were regular checks in place to ensure Bridgend remained sustainable and stay similar to others in the surrounding boroughs.</p> <p>A query was made as to the effects of costs of Cremators in line with Bridgend's targets for 2030. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that she had not looked into this specifically but was guided by the Federation of British cremation authorities who undertake work with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium management who study energy usage and environmental implications. She stated that Bridgend Council aimed to be as environmentally friendly as they possibly could in their operation.</p>
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	<p>The Chairperson inquired about what would happen in the event of shortages in the supply of Gas. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar responded that there were huge refrigerators on site and also a second source of gas, this allowed the service to store bodies hygienically for a 2 days. The service were provided a legal statutory allowance in emergency situations where they were allowed to store for three days. She added that the service were authorized to store for a slightly longer period of time in an emergency. In the event of an interruption to the gas supply, she did not anticipate it to last more than a day or two because the Crematorium were a priority service and receive a very immediate response to any issues that they may face in that regard.</p> <p>A member requested a short report to the committee on a comparison conducted on similar facilities in the surrounding boroughs.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED :</u></p> <p>The Joint Committee agreed to :</p> <p>(a) Note the projected financial performance for 2024-25. (b) Confirm and approve the revenue budget for 2025-26. (c) Approve 2.6% increase in fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2025 as outlined in Appendix 1</p>
Date Decision Made	07/03/2025

60. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	07/03/2025

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 10:50.

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