

# Minutes



## Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

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Date: 17 June 2015

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), V Delahaye, P Huntley, Taylor and Brookes

In Attendance: G Price (Honorary Secretary), P Dundon (Manager), J Hazelwood (Assistant Accountant), S Tom (National Association of Funeral Directors), A Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors George and Davies

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### 1 Appointment of Chair

#### **Resolved**

That Councillor B Jones (Monmouthshire County Council) be appointed as Chairman for 2015/16.

### 2 Appointment of Deputy Chair

Councillor N Davies was not in attendance at the meeting however Councillor S Brookes of Torfaen County Borough Council advised that future meetings of the Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee would clash with another committee within Torfaen. Councillor S Brookes therefore suggested that both councillors be appointed Deputy Chair to ensure the role was fulfilled.

#### **Resolved**

That Councillors N Davies and S Brookes (Torfaen County Borough Council) be appointed Deputy Chair.

### 3 Apologies for Absence

Councillors N Davies (Torfaen County Borough Council), N George (Caerphilly County Borough Council)

### 4 Declarations of Interest

None received.

### 5 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2015

It was noted that Cllr K Williams was in attendance at the meeting in March although he was not recorded as present.

The Chair wanted it noted that the Committee thanked R Bailey, Democratic Services Officer who retired recently for all of his hard work and service to the Committee.

### **Resolved**

That the minutes were recorded as a true record; subject to the above.  
That a thank you letter be sent to R Bailey on behalf of the Committee.

## **6 Gwent Crematorium Draft Accounts 2014-15 - Financial Statement**

The Assistant Accountant circulated the Draft Crematorium Accounts for 2014/15 to members of the committee.

Due to recent changes in the Accounts & Audit Regulations adopted by the Welsh Government there was no longer a requirement for preparation and audit of a full statement of accounts, which lead to difference in fees from £11,711 in 2013/14 to £920.

The Balance Sheet had shown a great improvement for this year.

Councillor Huntley referred to the payment of the balance which there was no commitment to pay earlier than the 15 years originally agreed.

It was considered however by the Committee that it would be preferable to pay the balance earlier than the allowed 15 years as and when funds were available.

The Assistant Accountant referred to the new format of the accounting statements which were in line with the Wales Audit Office on the last page of the report.

### **Resolved**

That the Draft Accounts for 2014/15 be approved.

## **7 Facilities Management (Oral Update)**

With no officer present to provide an oral report on facilities management, the committee moved on to the next item.

## **8 Funeral Director's Report**

Mr S Tom advised that there was nothing to feed back to the Committee at present.

## **9 Manager's Report**

Consideration was given to the Managers report providing statistical information on the number of cremation statistics, in light of a written enquiry from D Davies, MP for Monmouthshire as to the waiting times of Cremations. P Dundon responded to Monmouthshire MP's query with the permission of the Interim Head of Streetscene Environmental Services.

The cremation figures were higher by comparison than same period in 2014. March 2015 saw the highest figure of cremations ever recorded. The Crematorium were running at capacity during this period, which lead to a longer waiting time at funerals. The longest time was two working weeks for families.

Unfortunately the Easter period came into the fray, which therefore put the Crematorium back another week.

Measures had been taken however and the Manager of the Crematorium was due to meet with civil contingencies at Newport City Council and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board on 22 June 2015. This was due to the fact that when crematoriums and cemeteries were very busy there was a knock on effect at hospital mortuaries.

S Tom informed the committee that the main issue was members of the public preferring later time slots for cremations. Earlier appointments were available, such as 9-9.30am however for those that had a church service booked before the cremation the more popular times were later in the morning which gave an outward impression that the Crematorium was fully booked.

P Dundon reported the death of William "Bill" Stewart who was the Crematorium's Superintendent & Registrar from 1983 to 2000 who passed away on 26 May. A letter would be sent on behalf of the Committee to his family thanking him for his services to the crematorium.

Councillor Huntley informed the Committee of a Planning Application from Westerleigh Group for a proposed crematorium in Langstone. The company already has a crematorium in the Forest of Dean, the proposed design would be of a similar nature. The matter would be referred to Newport's Planning Committee for determination

#### 10 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting to be held on 23 September 2015 at 2pm, Civic Centre.