

Agenda



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: Wednesday, 15 June 2016

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre

To: Councillors Brookes, V Delahaye, P Huntley, Dally, Jones, Williams, Simmonds, Taylor and McCarthy

Item	Wards Affected
1	<u>Welsh Agenda</u> (Pages 3 - 4)
2	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>
4	<u>Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2016</u> (Pages 5 - 8)
5	<u>Gwent Crematorium Draft Accounts 2015/16</u> (Pages 9 - 12)
6	<u>Facilities Management (Oral Update)</u>
7	<u>Funeral Director's Report</u> To consider any issues raised by the Funeral Director.
8	<u>Manager's Report</u> (Pages 13 - 14)
9	<u>Date of Next Meeting</u> Wednesday 14 September 2016 at 2pm in Committee Room 4.

NB: Would members and officers please take any paper copies of the agenda with them after the meeting and please not leave unattended.

This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda

Cyd-bwyllgor Amlosgi Gwent Fwyaf

Dyddiad: 15 Mehefin 2016

Amser: 2.00pm

Lleoliad: Ystafell Bwyllgor 4, Y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Casnewydd

At: Holl Aelodau Cyd-bwyllgor Amlosgi Gwent Fwyaf

Eitem Effeithir Arnynt

Wardiau yr

Rhan 1

- 1 Ymddiheuriadau
- 2 Datgan Buddiannau
- 3 Cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 20 Ionawr 2016
- 4 Cyfrifon Drafft Amlogfa Gwent 2015/16
- 5 Rheoli Cyfleusterau (Y Diweddaraf ar Lafar)
- 6 Adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Angladdau
Ystyried unrhyw faterion a godwyd gan y Cyfarwyddwyr Angladdau lleol
- 7 Adroddiad y Rheolwr
- 8 Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf
Cynhelir y cyfarfod nesaf ar 14 Medi 2016, yn Ystafell Bwyllgor 4.

Contact:
Tel: 01633 656656
E-mail:
Date of Issue: 10 June 2015

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 20 January 2016

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Simmonds, Brookes, P Huntley and Williams

In Attendance: G Price (Honorary Secretary), J Hazlewood (Assistant Accountant), P Dundon (Superintendent Registrar), K Donovan (Newport Norse) and A Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors V Delahaye, Dally, White and Taylor

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Dally & White (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council), Delahaye (Newport City Council) and Taylor (Caerphilly County Borough Council)

2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 September 2015

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record.

4 Review of Fees and Review Estimates 2016/17 and Appendices A&B

The Committee gave consideration to the report by the Assistant Accountant. The report outlined the draft revenue estimates for 2016/17, which were detailed in Appendix A, and proposed fee increases. The fees were based on Gwent's nearest competitors, where lowest and highest fees were taken into account. The fees for Gwent during the period 2015/2016 were the second lowest.

It was proposed that due to the financial challenges that local government was currently facing that an increase of be 10% recommended for consideration by the Committee. This would raise the fee to £ 651.00 and give an additional estimated income of £164,079.

The estimates were also discussed as outlined in Appendix A. It was recommended that the Committee consider a distribution of £750,000 be made prior to the financial year end, retaining a sufficient level of reserves to cover any emergency works. It was noted that the mercury abatement loan was still outstanding, this was an interest based loan with annual capital costs of £110,000, which Newport funds out of the Crematorium income.

Councillor Brookes requested confirmation of the distribution sum for Torfaen County Borough Council. The Honorary Secretary clarified that the distribution was proportionate to each council population, in this case £159,000.

Councillor Williams was of the opinion that 10% was a considerable increase and suggested that 5% would be more agreeable additional charge.

Councillor Huntley referred to a similar discussion last year, where a 3-4% increase was considered but the Committee eventually agreed a higher increase of 10%.

Recommended:

- That the estimated fees for 2016/17 be approved.
- That the crematorium fees be increased to 10%.
- That a distribution of £750,000 be made prior to the financial year.

5 Budget Monitoring and Forecasting 2015/16 and Appendix A

The Committee considered the report for the budget monitoring and forecasting for 2015/16. The Assistant Accountant briefly outlined that the reports were distributed monthly and highlighted variances between budget and actuals.

There was originally a planned surplus of £740,695, however after a review the position at the end of December was a forecasted surplus of £855,373. There was an estimated addition of £114,678 due to two staff vacancies for gardener and Deputy Manager.

The Chair asked if the vacant posts were due to be filled. The Superintendent Register advised that the post of gardener was to be filled and the Interim Head of Streetscene was proposing to restructure the staffing within the Crematorium office. It was hoped that the Deputy Manager's post would be deleted from the structure and replaced with two senior administrative posts and one lower graded administrative post, which would make an estimated saving of £5,000. Employee costs for next year were also based on the current structure.

The Chair enquired as to whether this would be a committee decision. The Honorary Secretary advised that this was an operational decision, however, as a matter of courtesy it would be brought to committee at some point in the future for information.

In response to Councillor Huntley's query, the post of gardener would be filled as early as possible,

Recommended:

That the committee noted the report.

6 Facilities Management (Oral Update)

The representative of Newport Norse briefly informed those present that there were plans to decorate the chapel and that there was no further issues to report. The Chair did mention that at a recent visit to the Crematorium he noticed that an area of wall near the pulpit was in a state of disrepair. The Superintendent informed the Chair that this was due to recent water ingress, which had been addressed but had caused a damp mark. Unfortunately as this was a busy period there wasn't an opportunity to make good the area without interrupting the service requirements. This however would be rectified during a quiet period.

7 Funeral Director's Report

In the absence of the Funeral Director, there was nothing to report.

8 Manager's Report

The Superintendent Registrar went through the report and discussed the figures for the period. With regard to the memorial sales, there was a downward slide in December with

sales, this would usually pick up in February/March. It was noted that Cremation figures during September-December were of the fewest recorded since 1989.

Further to the Motion Proposal at Torfaen County Borough Council, which was discussed at September's meeting, it was decided that the Superintendent Registrar would compile a report on the statistics of staffing availability and time slots and be presented to January's meeting.

The Superintendent Registrar outlined the report giving a brief background of the history of the crematorium. The Gwent Crematorium was the busiest chapel and crematorium in Wales. Over the last 20 years, average cremations were 2743 with the highest figure being 2944.

Causes of delay in service time availability and cultural changes were highlighted as well as the current situation and ways of mitigating against delays.

Arising from the report, options were discussed. Consideration of opening on a Saturday was discussed however it was highlighted that staffing costs on a Saturday would be £384. Additionally, the utility costs of opening the building on a Saturday, would run into £100s. Wellbeing of staff at the crematorium was also a consideration.

Councillor Williams agreed that the wellbeing of staff working on a Saturday would probably be affected. The Superintendent Registrar wanted to state however that in emergencies there were no problems with staff working during out of hours.

As requested at the previous meeting, the Superintendent Register had advised that time slots have been published to the Crematorium website for members of the public to view.

Councillor Brookes referred to earlier bookings in the day and asked were there any improvements between this year and last. Generally, there was no problem with service provision. Members of the public were taking advantage of the earlier slots and there was more take up from last year. The diary bookings had increased and there was 10 days out of 20 when there wasn't a funeral at 9am.

Councillor Williams sought clarification on 11am bookings. These were currently being booked from now until the early part of February. This meant that availability tended to be earlier now. There was an increase in popularity with back to front bookings where the cremation carried out earlier in the day with a service booked for later that same day.

Councillor Brookes thanked the Superintendent Registrar for his report and said that considering it was raised by Torfaen County Borough Council he was impressed at the speed of the resolution.

Finally, The Superintendent Registrar was looking into entering the Crematorium in to the green flag scheme which would give a benchmarking profile to work to as well as provide good publicity. There was a cost however it was low cost therefore there would not be an issue.

Recommended:

- That the report be noted and that no further action should be taken to change the opening hours and cremation times.
- A copy of the report be forwarded to Torfaen as a completed action for their information.
- That the Committee fully supported the application for a green flag status for the crematorium.

It noted that all meetings would take place on a Wednesday at 2pm in Committee Room 4:

16 March
15 June
14 September
7 December

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified

REPORT TO : GREATER GWENT CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE : 15 JUNE 2016

PURPOSE : GWENT CREMATORIUM DRAFT ACCOUNTS 2015-16

1. Introduction

The accounting statements are now submitted to Wales Audit Office, in the form of an annual return. Draft Crematorium Accounts for 2015/16 have been completed, in line with the statutory deadline of 30 June 2016. They are now subject to audit and a final version of the accounts will be presented to the Committee for signature on the 14 September 2016. The accounts show the financial position of the Crematorium as at 31 March 2016. The current surplus for the year is £917,543 prior to the distribution of £750,000 leaving a retained surplus of £167,543.

2. Draft Accounts 2015/16

The following key statements are attached at Appendix A:

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account** – showing the income and costs in year of providing the Crematorium Services
- **Balance Sheet** – showing the assets and liabilities held by the Committee as at 31 March 2016

3. Accumulated Balances

The Balance Sheet shows that the accumulated surplus being carried forward into 2016/17 is £1,881,082. It is felt that part of this surplus should be retained to cover the funding of any emergency works.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that :-

- a) That the Draft Accounts for 2015/16 be approved subject to audit.

Mr Meirion Rushworth
Honorary Treasurer

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Report and Accounts 2015/16

Greater Gwent Cremation Committee

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

31-Mar-15			31-Mar-16		
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£	£	£	£	£	£
863,851	(1,726,750)	(862,898)	797,399	(1,721,942)	(924,543)
-	-	-	-	-	-
863,851	(1,726,750)	(862,898)	797,399	(1,721,942)	(924,543)
753,000		753,000	757,000	-	757,000
1,616,851	(1,726,750)	(109,898)	1,554,399	(1,721,942)	(167,543)
		(Surplus)/deficit on revaluation of Property Plant and Equipment Assets			-
		105,000 Actuarial (gains)/losses on pensions assets/liabilities (Note 3)			39,000
		105,000 Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			39,000
		(4,898) Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(128,543)

Balance Sheet

Report and Accounts 2015/16

Greater Gwent Cremation Committee

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Committee. The net assets of the Committee (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Committee. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Committee may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use. The second category of reserves is those that the Committee is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

31-Mar-15 £		Notes	31-Mar-16 £
2,362,586	Property, Plant and Equipment	6	2,260,226
2,362,586	Long Term Assets		2,260,226
273	Inventories		367
153,437	Short Term Debtors	7	-
890,140	Cash and Cash Equivalents	5	1,342,900
1,043,850	Current Assets		1,343,267
(14,447)	Short Term Creditors	8	(17,961)
(14,447)	Current Liabilities		(17,961)
(744,248)	Long Term Creditors	9	(744,248)
(203,000)	Other Long Term Liabilities	3	(268,000)
(947,248)	Long Term Liabilities		(1,012,248)
2,444,741	Net Assets		2,573,284
(1,638,339)	Usable Reserves	11	(1,881,082)
(806,403)	Unusable Reserves	12	(692,202)
(2,444,741)	Total Reserves		(2,573,284)

This page is intentionally left blank

Manager's Report

Gardener

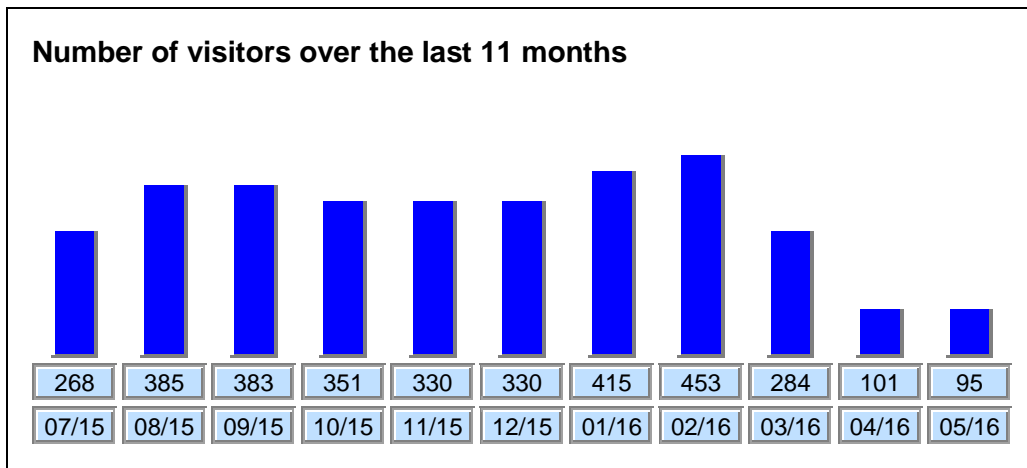
Following the retirement of one of our gardeners in November 2015, we have been fortunate to take on a new, highly qualified and experienced member of staff as his replacement. JN was formerly the acting Head Gardener at the historically significant Belle Vue Park in Newport.

Green Flag

The crematorium was assessed for a Green Flag Award on 3rd June. The results are pending. The award recognises the very best in parks and open spaces. The crematorium has received significant administrative and technical support from the Green Services section of Newport City Council's Streetscene and City Services in entering for the award.

Statistics

Book of Remembrance Online



The overall number of different users who have viewed the online Book of Remembrance is 16120 at the time of writing.

There has been a very significant drop in the number of page views since March 2016. I suspect that there may be a reporting error from the web hosts, but this needs further investigation.

MEMORIAL SALES

MONTH	VASE BLOCKS	SANCTUM 12	LEASE RENEWALS
March 2016	3	4	20
April 2016	2	2	3
May 2016	4	1	2

CREMATIONS

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Jan	240	262	278	220*	254	278	254	283	298	279	263
Feb	243	262	254	200*	268	256	226	262	227	239	225
Mar	277	287	241	267	279	249	235	253	218	250	241
Apr	268	245	222	268	237	193	229	222	246	227	227
May	266	230	234	274	270	232	198	204	236	224	226
Jun		241	239	218	193*	232	235	206	201	224	202
Jul		237	257	211	175*	204	208	205	206	247	202
Aug		187	206	183	168*	241	198	191	223	220	215
Sep		232	204	194	158*	221	218	204	210	211	211
Oct		225	243	234	186*	233	232	225	251	241	210
Nov		249	222	226	176*	220	219	212	200	225	217
Dec		266	248	200	182*	234	227	238	234	207	186
TOTAL	1294	2913	2848	2695	2546*	2793	2679	2705	2750	2794	2625

**Figures marked with an asterisk are at times with reduced service provision due to the installation of mercury abatement plant.*

Cremation figures for Jan – May are 6 lower than for the same period last year.

Keeping the crematorium website updated with details of service availability seems to have paid off, with considerably higher take-up of early morning cremation times having a positive impact on the lead-in time for funeral bookings.