

Agenda



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: Wednesday, 15 March 2017

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
a	<u>Agenda - CYM</u> (Pages 3 - 4)	
2	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
4	<u>Minutes of the Meeting Held on 7 December 2016</u> (Pages 5 - 8)	
5	<u>Gwent Crematorium Revenue Estimates/Fee Increase 2017-18</u> (Pages 9 - 14)	All Wards
6	<u>Facilities Management</u>	All Wards
7	<u>Funeral Director's Report</u>	All Wards
8	<u>Manager's Report</u> (Pages 15 - 16)	All Wards
9	<u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 2pm Wednesday 14 June, Committee Room 4.	

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Agenda

Cyd-bwyllgor Amlosgi Gwent Fwyaf

Dyddiad: 15 Chwefror 2017

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 7 Rhagfyr 2016
- 4 Amcangyfrifon Refeniw / cynnydd mewn ffioedd
- 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

2pm Dydd Mercher 14 Mehefin, Ystafell 4

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Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 7 December 2016

Time: 2.00 pm

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

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

1 Apologies for Absence

S Tom (Association of Funeral Directors) and K Crawley (Deputy Manager)

2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

3 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting of 15 June 2016 we accepted as a true record.

4 Gwent Crematorium Final Accounts 2015/16

J Hazelwood informed the Committee that although the Annual Return had been signed off at the meeting in June, the external auditors had made some minor adjustments.

The external auditors had advised that an internal audit be carried since the last one took place in 2011. P Dundon has advised that an internal audit had just been carried out.

It was also suggested that a separate bank account for Gwent Cremation be used rather than share the Newport City Council account. The Chair asked for the views of the Committee and discussion ensued but it was agreed that there had never been any issue and no risk was attached to ring fencing the Gwent Cremation monies within the Newport City Council account.

Resolved:

- That the changes to the Final Accounts be noted and signed off by the Chair.
- That the Gwent Cremation monies remain in the Newport City Council account.

5 Facilities Management

K Donovan, Newport Norse gave a brief overview on the works undertaken at the Crematorium.

Extra Sanctums had been requested and would be installed subject to weather conditions.

The front of the building was being refurbished with two thirds to be completed. Work to the chapel had also been completed including fixing the damp patch.

Some of the external lights were missing which was part of the new build, these were on order and would be installed once received.

6 **Funeral Directors Report**

Two questions were raised by Funeral Directors:

Tovey Bros Funeral Directors asked the Committee how would the Crematorium cope with the usual busy winter period and long waiting times. This issue had been discussed on numerous occasions and P Dundon had advised that the spaces were available, a diary schedule for the forthcoming month showed plenty of spaces for service bookings. This schedule was available on the website and made it evident to those wishing to book a service that there were no issues whatsoever with long waiting times. Booking preferences might be an issue as there were usually popular booking slots in the day, however alternative times were available.

Resolved:

That the Committee would respond to Tovey Bros query in the form of a letter.

R Llewellyn Hughes wrote to the Committee regarding parking within the grounds.

Resolved:

The Committee noted the letter.

7 **Manager's Report**

P Dundun gave an outline of the report to the Committee.

The website was receiving 4.5 to 5 thousand views, the main reason was for mapping information to find out where the Crematorium was located.

Memorial sales were unchanged, although there were lower purchases in December.

There were a further set of sanctum units installed which provided 48 vaults with an additional eight to be installed.

Cremation figures were higher than last year and there were a record number of cremations this year. June and August were also record highs with a higher uptake on early morning cremation times.

The Book of Remembrance usage figures were still unreliable as there was an issue with the latest Windows software which was being looked into.

Karen Crawley was recently appointed as Deputy Manager and had already worked at the Crematorium for 12 years and was therefore adequately experienced. A further internal appointment was made to replace Karen with a colleague from Cemeteries and so far had proven to be a valuable member of the team.

Cllr Huntley also mentioned that the recently appointed gardener was doing very well.

Finally, there was some good news regarding the Green Flag Award, the flag was raised on 9 August 2016 and members attended.

The Crematorium was also nominated for a Silver Award for the Charter of the Bereaved under the Good Funeral/Crematorium of the Year Category. This however was won by Cardiff although Gwent had a runner up prize and was awarded a certificate.

8 Meeting Dates for 2017

The following dates were agreed:

2pm Wednesday 15 March, Committee Room 4
2pm Wednesday 14 June, Committee Room 4
2pm Wednesday 13 September, Committee Room 4
2pm Wednesday 6 December, Committee room 4

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REPORT TO : GREATER GWENT CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE : 15 MARCH 2017

PURPOSE : REVIEW OF FEES AND REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR 2017/18

1. Introduction

This report is intended to:

1. outline the draft revenue estimates for 2017/18. These are included in detail at Appendix A.
2. propose Cremation fee increases commencing on the 1 April 2017. Details of our proposals are included at Appendix B.

2. Revenue estimates 2017/18

The draft estimates for 2017/18 outlined at Appendix A show a planned surplus of £709,287. Key factors to note are:

- Employee costs reflect a 1% increase which applies to the local government sector.
- The only inflationary increases applied are:
 - a) Energy costs 5%
 - b) Rates 2%
 - c) Refuse collection 8.2%
 - d) Insurances 2%

** No increase in cremation fees has been reflected in these figures, so further surpluses could be generated by an increase in fees.

3. Fee Increases 2017/18

Given the continuing financial challenges that local government is currently facing, we are recommending that the Committee considers increasing the Cremation fees to be more consistent with other Welsh authorities.

This will ensure that the Crematorium is on a firm financial footing going forward, and can continue to provide a reasonable distribution back to its member Authorities.

A number of options for fee increases are considered at Appendix B. Having considered the Cremation Society of Great Britain published statistics, we would recommend a fee increase of 3% at this time.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that :-

- a) the estimates for 2017/18 are approved,
- b) crematorium fees are increased by 3%, excluding memorial items
- c) the introduction of a £10 charge for copies of certificates is approved(cremation certificates and photocopies of registrar's disposal certificates)
- d) a distribution of £750,000 be made, prior to the financial year end, retaining a sufficient level of reserves to cover any emergency works.

Meirion Rushworth
Honorary Treasurer

GREATER GWENT CREMATION JOINT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES 2017/18

	Estimate 2015/16 £	Estimate 2016/17 £	Estimate 2017/18 £
Expenditure			
Employees	275,387	278,127	280,896
Premises	277,642	284,067	290,959
Transport	3,134	3,134	3,157
Supplies & Services	203,853	204,321	204,821
Mercury Abat.Capital Costs	110,000	110,000	110,000
Capital Financing	62,000	62,000	62,000
	<u>932,015</u>	<u>941,649</u>	<u>951,833</u>
Income	(1,599,120)	(1,599,120)	(1,599,120)
Operating (Surplus)/Deficit	<u>(667,105)</u>	<u>(657,471)</u>	<u>(647,287)</u>
Capital Charge Adjustment	(62,000)	(62,000)	(62,000)
(Surplus)/Deficit for year	<u><u>(729,105)</u></u>	<u><u>(719,471)</u></u>	<u><u>(709,287)</u></u>

APPENDIX B

REPORT TO : GREATER GWENT CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE : 15 MARCH 2017

PURPOSE : TO REVIEW THE CREMATION FEES FOR 2017/18

1. INTRODUCTION

The Joint Committee received a report on the review of fees for 2016/17, in January 2016, and decided to implement an increase of 10% from 01 April 2016.

It is now necessary to review fees for the coming year in light of our recent review of fees elsewhere in the country. It is proposed that any increase in fees as a result of this report will be actioned from 01 April 2017.

2. FEES in 2016/17

The table below shows the current cremation fee in Gwent, in relation to our geographically nearest competitors.

	Basic adult Cremation fee*	TOTAL Crematorium Charges**
CARDIFF	530.00	530.00
GWENT	651.00	651.00
HEREFORD	684.00	684.00
ABERDARE	655.00	655.00
BRIDGEND	623.00	644.00
BARRY	735.00	790.00
PONTYPRIDD	655.00	655.00
FOREST OF DEAN	785.00	785.00
GLOUCESTER	680.32	745.22

* cremation fee, plus medical referee's fee and environmental surcharge

** cremation fee plus medical referee's fee, environmental surcharge, use of chapel, music (recorded), and scattering/strewing of cremated remains

In 2015/16 Gwent was the 15th busiest crematorium out of 278 nationwide, and the busiest single chapel crematorium. It was the busiest in Wales, carrying out 12.86% of the 22,776 cremations in Wales.

Only 76 crematoria have lower cremation fees than Gwent. 201 are higher.

The 6 lowest fees nationwide are:

London (City of)	Local Authority	£380.00
Belfast	Local Authority	£364.00
South West Middlesex	Local Authority	£490.00
Greenock	Local Authority	£522.00
Cardiff	Local Authority	£530.00
West Hertfordshire	Local Authority	£540.00

and the 5 highest fees nationwide are:

Beckenham	Private	£956.00
Chichester	Private	£956.00
Crawley	Private	£956.00
Leatherhead	Private	£956.00
Nuneaton	Private	£956.00

3. FEES for 2017/18

The following table shows the impact of various increases in the fees, with the additional estimated income based on cremations of 2872

% increase	Revised Fee	Additional estimated income
3%	£671	£57,440
5%	£684	£94,776
10%	£716	£186,680
15%	£749	£281,456
20%	£781	£373,360

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Joint Committee considers:

- a) a 3% increase in cremation fees, excluding memorial items. This would ensure sufficient funding for the Committee to maintain its services going forward, and for a distribution to constituent authorities.
- b) the introduction of a £10 charge for copies of certificates (cremation certificates, and photocopies of registrar's disposal certificates)

Meirion Rushworth
Honorary Treasurer

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Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee - Manager's Report

STATISTICS

1. Website

In the past 30 days, there have been 6570 views of the crematorium website, with 684 users getting mapping information directly from the site.

2. Memorial Sales

MONTH	VASE BLOCKS	SANCTUM 12	LEASE RENEWALS
December 2016	5	0	0
January 2017	4	3	4
February 2017	6	3	10

3. Cremations

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Jan	268	240	262	278	220*	254	278	254	283	298	279	263
Feb	258	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		264	241	239	218	193*	232	235	206	201	224	202
Jul		211	237	257	211	175*	204	208	205	206	247	202
Aug		244	187	206	183	168*	241	198	191	223	220	215
Sep		228	232	204	194	158*	221	218	204	210	211	211
Oct		224	225	243	234	186*	233	232	225	251	241	210
Nov		239	249	222	226	176*	220	219	212	200	225	217
Dec		244	266	248	200	182*	234	227	238	234	207	186
TOTAL	526	2948	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.*

CHARTER FOR THE BEREAVED

We have been successful in securing our Silver Award from ICCM Charter for the Bereaved for the seventh consecutive year.

FUNERAL AVAILABILITY

Resilience has remained high throughout the Winter months .The longest forced gap between booking a funeral and a service time being available has been five working days.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

We have been very fortunate in having no storm/snow damage throughout the Winter.

A programme of refurbishment of the crematorium's benches has been completed ready for the Spring.

The appearance of the grounds is exceptional for the time of year, with the first of many thousands of bulbs coming into bloom.