

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 13 June 2018

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors P Edwards (BGCBC) (in the Chair), R Jeavons (NCC), B Jones (MBC), J Taylor (CCBC) and M Edwards (BGC)

Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation), Joanne Hazlewood, Paul Dundon, Joanne Gossage (Green Services Manager) and Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance)

In Attendance: S Tom, Association of Funeral Directors

Apologies: Councillors Evans, D Davies, Williams and Simmonds

1 Appointment of Chair

In accordance with the rota of Authority nomination for Chairman, the position was moved and seconded to Councillor P Edwards (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council) for 2018/19.

Agreed

That Councillor P Edwards (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council) be appointed as Chairman for 2018/19.

2 Appointment of Deputy Chair

In accordance with the rota of Authority nomination for Deputy Chairman, the position was moved and seconded to Councillor R Jeavons (Newport City Council) for 2018/19.

Agreed

That Councillor R Jeavons (Newport City Council) be appointed as Deputy Chair for 2018/19.

3 Apologies for Absence

As above.

4 Declarations of Interest

None received.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 14 January 2018 were submitted.

Item 5 Facilities Management

Correction to the Minutes: only one elevation was re-rendered.

Item 6 Manager's Report

It was proposed and agreed at the meeting that the 24 hours-notice regarding the £300 fine be extended to 48 hours.

Agreed:

That the hours of notice be extended from 24 hours to 48 hours.

That the Minutes were accepted subject to the above.

6 Final Draft Accounts 2017/18 - Report to follow

J Hazlewood distributed the Annual Return for 2017/18. It was requested that the Annual Return be approved by the Committee and once confirmation by Internal Audit had been completed, would be brought back to September's meeting for signing off.

The Finance Business Partner – Systems went through the balances and the use of accumulated surplus. A breakdown of the balances for each of the five authorities were provided to the committee members.

Finally, it was recommended that a reserve be set by the committee with regard to the accumulated surplus. After brief discussion it was agreed that the reserve remain as £1M.

The Committee had no further questions regarding the draft accounts.

Agreed:

That the annual return be approved subject to Audit.

That there would be a distribution of each council's share of the balances of £1.4 Million, leaving a reserve of £1 Million.

7 Facilities Management - Verbal Update

The Norse representative informed the Committee that minor works was being planned for the exterior of the lodge along with the garage next to the lodge.

8 Funeral Director's Report

The representative for the National Association of Funeral Directors raised concern over several issues:

- The 48 hours extension had been agreed under item 4 which was a satisfactory result.
- There was a charge of £80 by the Gwent Crematorium to return those ashes to the Crematorium which were to be interred in to the garden of remembrance. This gave cause for concern regarding the cost implications on families with financial issues. It was explained that the fee was as a result of a decision made by the Cremation Committee last year, however this was to reflect the administering task involved in this process. There was also a discussion regarding keepsake containers.
- Several light bulbs were not working at the front of the chapel this had occurred over the past three to four months. There was a cost issue regarding the call out fees for maintenance and it was felt that it would be more cost effective to call out Norse to address a collection of minor works rather than deal with one fault at a time. The discussion would be fed back to Norse and raised at the next meeting. It was however noted and the light bulbs would be replaced immediately.

- It was also felt that overall, that there were areas of the Crematorium in need of repair. The Superintendent Registrar would meet with Norse and discuss the aesthetic maintenance of the Crematorium.

Finally it was suggested that a stake holder meeting should take place twice a year to address any issues that might be raised, such as the aforementioned.

9 **Manager's Report**

The Superintendent Registrar put the Crematorium forward for Wales in Bloom under the public buildings category. The Committee would be informed as to the outcome in due course.

It was noted that the monthly figures still appeared to show that there was a fall in bookings; this would be in relation to the recent opening of the new Crematorium in Llanwern. This did however mean that there was no issue with time slots.

There was an ongoing scheduled maintenance of the cremators, which were being completely re-bricked. No disruption to the services were anticipated, whilst work was being undertaken.

The results for the Green Flag award under the ground maintenance category were also due in the summer.

There had been a lot of compliments by customers on the bedding in the grounds.

Letter from the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities

The Committee was shown a letter to Chief Executive of Newport City Council regarding a proposed visit by federation members on 4 July 2018. Members of the Federation executive committee would pay a visit to the Crematorium and a written report of the findings would be sent to the Chief Executive. The Federation requested that a senior member of the committee attend, it was therefore suggested that the Chair or Deputy Chair attend when the visit took place.

Agreed:

That Councillor P Edwards the newly elected chair would attend.

10 **Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12 September 2018**