

# Minutes



## Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

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Date: 12 June 2019

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors Evans, D Davies, R Jeavons (Chair), Williams and Taylor

In Attendance: Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation), Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance), Paul Dundon, Superintendent Registrar, Joanne Hazelwood (Finance Business Partner Systems), Joanne Gossage (City Services Manager), Meryl James, Governance Newport, Karen Sansom, Newport, Laura Campbell, Finance, Newport, Dave Stephenson, Newport Norse

Apologies: Councillors Jones, Simmonds and Tom

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### 1 Appointment of Chairman

In accordance with the rota of Authority nomination for Chairman, it was formally moved and seconded and duly resolved that Councillor Roger Jeavons, Newport City Council be appointed as Chairman for 2019/20.

### 2 Appointment of Deputy Chairman

In accordance with the rota of authority nomination for Deputy Chairman, it was formally moved and seconded and duly resolved that Councillor John Taylor, Caerphilly be appointed as Deputy Chairman for 2019/20.

### 3 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Deb Davies, Lee Parsons, Richard Clark, Stephen Tom, AFD.

### 4 Declarations of Interest

None received.

### 5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1. The Minutes of the meeting of 12 December 2018 were accepted as a true record.

### 6 Draft Accounts Report 2018/19

1. J Hazelwood presented the report on the revenue budget out-turn for 18/19, which showed a further surplus of £123,786 after the agreed distribution. There was an expected overspend in relation to repairs and maintenance for the premises and the

cremators. However, this had been offset by a reduction in other expenditure and an unexpected increase in income during the last quarter, which had resulted in the net loss of income being reduced to 9% compared with an average of 19% loss in the previous quarters. Although the outturn was positive, there was concern that the budgeted distribution was now very close to the annual surplus. Therefore, to provide some contingency for further budget pressures, it was recommended that reserves should be maintained at £1.2 million and, in future, any distribution is made in two tranches.

S Evans, Torfaen said a lot of maintenance tends to be reactive not planned. PD explained this is due to failures. M Rushworth stated we don't have a maintenance figure at present therefore it is difficult to predict. MW recommended to the Committee to retain a reserve of 80 – 20 split. The Committee agreed.

**Agreed:**

- That the Committee note the out-turn position, subject to audit and the variances for the year.
- That the Committee note the level of the accumulated reserves. Additionally, the Committee agreed that the reserves of £1.2 million should be retained for reasons outlined in the report.
- That the Committee note the areas of the budget pressures and the actions currently in place to manage these.

That the payment of the budget surplus be distributed in two tranches from 2019/20 with a small balance of 20% retained for payment at or after the year end closure, subject to the availability of surpluses to pay the budgeted amount.

## **7 Facilities Management**

D Stephenson reported that the flowerbed area is now approximately 90% finished and hoping to complete in the next 4 weeks. The garage roof has been completed and the doors to the lodge have been replaced.

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

Nothing to report

## **9 Manager's Report**

Cremation figures for the last two months have been unusually quiet. Cllr Meredith asked if the figures could be presented in a graph form in future. P Dundon said yes it would not a problem.

Maintenance works are taking place to replace the external flues from the cremators and to renew the lagging on the flues. This is major work, which necessitates taking two cremators at a time out of use. The work has been planned at a time which should create minimal disruption to services. The works are scheduled to be complete by 28<sup>th</sup> June until that date the crematorium will be operating on reduced capacity.

The Superintendent Registrar received a complaint from a crematorium user regarding opening hours over the Easter Bank Holiday, he and some of his family from Birmingham had turned up to see the book of Remembrance. Unfortunately, he didn't check the opening times before travelling and unfortunately the Crematorium was closed. If the complainant had phoned prior to their visit they would have accommodated him and his family. He was

rather angry and felt it should open over bank holidays. The Superintendent Registrar reported that no changes have been made to opening hours since 1992.

It was agreed by the Committee that a draft response would be sent to the Chair before sending to the complainant.

10 **Date of Next Meeting - 11th September 2019 at 2pm in Committee Room 4**

The next meeting will take place on the 11th September 2019 at 2pm in Committee room 4.