

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 11 September 2019

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor R Jeavons (Chair), S Evans, J Simmonds, J Taylor and S Tom

In Attendance: Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance), Joanne Hazlewood and Paul Dundon (Superintendent Registrar) Karl Donovan (Norse)

Apologies: Gareth Price (Head of Law and Regulation) and Karen Samson

1 Declarations of Interest

None

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record

3 Amendments to the Annual Accounts Return

J Hazelwood addressed the Committee regarding the amendment to the Independent Examination of the 2018/19 Annual Return letter from the Wales Audit Office, advising the Committee that the table on page 9 had amendments in box 8 and 10. The Chair and M Rushworth signed for re-approval.

4 Budget Monitoring Report

When Newport put forward an MTRP proposal, and the subsequent fee increase of 12.5% from April 2019, it was expected that cremation numbers would remain the same, and we would achieve additional income levels of £200k, making the total distribution £950k, however due to decreased cremations, the additional income looks unachievable, and therefore it's been suggested that the distribution for this financial year, remains at the level of £750k. The Head of Finance has suggested that we need to have a plan to improve the service we provide, and we will review the financial position at the end of the year, when we have a better understanding of income levels.

The Chair addressed the condition of the Crematorium, asking the Committee for their feedback on modernising and updating the building, as the new Crematorium in Langstone is still modern and fresh, as would the new Crematorium in Pontllanfraith once built next year. The Committee felt that it was important to strive to keep up with the competitors, agreeing that the interactive facilities the other Crematoriums have are important for Gwent to achieve as the Committee felt that without the interactive facilities business could be lost to other Crematoriums in the area.

The Chair asked K Donovan of Norse to compile a report for the next meeting outlining potential areas for updates and improvements, M Rushworth asked if we could also get similar feedback from Funeral Directors.

5 Facilities Management

K Donovan reported that the flowerbed area has now been completed.

The Chair, Councillor R Jeavons requested that K Donovan and P Dundon meet and work together on input for the report.

6 Funeral Director's Report

Nothing to report

7 Stake Holder Meetings

S Toms has requested that a bi-annual Stakeholder meeting take place to include Funeral Directors and Clergy. This meeting would act as a steering group to discuss issues.

8 Manager's Report

STATISTICS

WEBSITE

In the past 28 days to date, there have been approximately 12000 views of the Crematorium web pages.

MEMORIAL SALES

MONTH	VASE BLOCKS	SANCTUM 12	LEASE RENEWALS
Jun 2019	2	3	2
Jul 2019	2	1	-
Aug 2019	4	1	1

The renewal of leases for memorial vaults will start to become due in the next couple of months, which will have a positive effect on revenue.

CREMATIONS

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Jan	233	246	268	240	262	278	220*	254	278	254	283	298	279
Feb	211	254	258	243	262	254	200*	268	256	226	262	227	239
Mar	204	230	299	277	287	241	267	279	249	235	253	218	250
Apr	178	237	229	268	245	222	268	237	193	229	222	246	227
May	195	219	266	266	230	234	274	270	232	198	204	236	224
Jun	150	164	260	264	241	239	218	193*	232	235	206	201	224
Jul	212	186	219	211	237	257	211	175*	204	208	205	206	247
Aug	165	176	236	244	187	206	183	168*	241	198	191	223	220
Sep		173	228	228	232	204	194	158*	221	218	204	210	211
Oct		193	240	224	225	243	234	186*	233	232	225	251	241
Nov		190	251	239	249	222	226	176*	220	219	212	200	225
Dec		166	191	244	266	248	200	182*	234	227	238	234	207
	1548	2434	2945	2948	2913	2848	2695	2546*	2793	2679	2705	2750	2794

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

The cremation totals for the first 5 months of the calendar year are 164 lower than in 2018. Whilst there are clear revenue implications, the lead-in time for funerals is considerably lower, which has positive effects on the public perception of the service.

MAINTENANCE

The major works to replace the external flues from the cremators and to renew lagging on the flues were completed on schedule on 28th June. There was no disruption to any funeral service during that time by noise, etc.

CHARTER FOR THE BEREAVED

The crematorium has been awarded a gold award under the ICCM Charter for the Bereaved Accreditation Scheme. We have previously only achieved silver status, mainly because only 20 minute service times are offered, although our benchmarking score was only under the gold level by a couple of points. However, we are now getting recognition for our drive to stop using plastics in the cremation process.

WALES IN BLOOM

Following our success in being awarded a gold award and first prize in the Public Buildings category last year, we are awaiting this year's results in early September

Date of next meeting: 4th December 2019 at 2pm in Committee room 4.