

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 19 January 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Taylor (Chair), J Hughes, Councillor R Jeavons, K Williams and J Simmonds

Steve Tom, Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation), Paul Dundon, Karen Sansom and Joanne Gossage (Green Services Manager)

1 Apologies for Absence

None received.

2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 29 September 2021

The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

4 Restated Annual Return 2020-21 and Audit Wales Closing Letter

The Committee Considered the above report presented by the Head of Finance in relation to the minor joint committees in Wales Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2021.

Section 12 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 required local government bodies in Wales (including joint committees) to make up their accounts each year to 31 March and to have those accounts audited by the Auditor General for Wales.

The Committee must approve the Annual Return before the accounts and supporting documents were made available for public inspection under section 30 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

The audited and certified returns were sent back to the body for publication and display of the accounting statements, Annual Governance Statement and the Auditor General for Wales' certificate and report.

Agreed:

That the Restated Annual Return 2020-21 and Audit Wales Closing letter were approved and noted respectively.

5 Review of Budget Performance 2021-22 and Budget Proposals for 2022-23

The Committee considered the budget performance for 2021-22 and the budget proposals for 2022-23, including the information outlined in the following appendices:

Appendix 1 Detailed Monitoring Position 21-22

Appendix 2 Fees for consultation 2022-23

Going forward, changes in accounting approach would be made to absorb future ad hoc repairs. Further discussions regarding work with officers and Norse were required. If the reserves weren't used, this would go into a second reserve fund. If the provision was too high, the committee could decide to re distribute the surplus.

Appendix 3 Draft budget proposals 2022-23

Modelled 4% increase in fees proposed to retain fees at current level.

Appendix 4 Distribution summary

The Finance Business Partner went through the preferred options outlined in the report.

Agreed:

- The Committee noted for 2021-22, the revised forecast activity, and approved the budgeted distribution of £950k, and use of reserves to meet that level of payment as needed
- The Committee agreed for 2022-23, to retain cremation fees at 2021-22 levels
- Approved the budget proposals for 2022-23, and the current indicative dividend payment recommended of £450K, subject to review in year, based on financial performance.

6 **Manager's Report**

The Superintendent Register presented the Manager's Report to the Committee, and highlighted the sales and cremation figures for the period.

With a total of two crematoriums within the five borough area, Gwent Crematorium was now competing for bookings.

The website was receiving a high volume of views, regarding Covid restrictions in that were in place.

In relation to Covid, Councillor Williams asked if the death count was increasing. The Superintendent Registrar advised that it was, S Tom agreed with this statement.

Agreed:

That the Committee noted the Manager's Report.