

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 14 March 2018

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors Clark (Chair), R Jeavons, Edwards, Jones, Simmonds and Taylor

In Attendance: Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation), Joanne Hazlewood, Paul Dundon and Karen Crawley

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors: D Davies (NCC), K Williams (MBC) and N Daniels (BG)
Officers/representatives: Karl Donovan (Norse) and S Tom (Association of Funeral Directors)

2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 24 January 2018 were submitted.

The Chair Councillor S Evans and Councillor P Edwards were not marked as present.

The Chair noted that the declaration of interest was incorrect and that his partner's father worked for the funeral home.

4 Matters Arising

Item 4 Funeral Director's Report: The Nation Association of Funeral Directors representative S Tom discussed additional services and facilities during services, this included a slide show for relatives. The Superintendent Registrar obtained a cost estimate which was approximately £12.5K although it was expected to be closer to £15K. There would also be a charge per slide show of £35 by the suppliers, which would take a long time for the Crematorium to recoup.

After discussing the options the majority of councillors present considered that the equipment should be purchased as it would be a future proof investment which could prove popular in years to come.

The Superintendent Registrar also advised that the voile curtains were too thin and would be blown about in the wind tunnel due to the design of the room.

Item 5 Manager's Report: With reference to the on line booking facilities, there was a service redesign with Streetscene which meant that it was possible to integrate the on line system with the council's new software, with this in mind, there was a slight delay until all systems were in place.

The Honorary Secretary also mentioned that Newport City Council was also looking to replace the current Customer Relation Management system (CRM). If Newport City Council therefore used the software provided by the Shared Resources Service (SRS), customers could use a streamlined software that linked in with all the councils, therefore it was worth delaying the purchase of any equipment.

5 **Facilities Management**

A presentative of Newport Norse, N Porretta updated the committee on the following items:

There had been a number of notable completed works by Newport Norse since the last committee meeting:

- Removal of the spoil heap and a reconfiguration of the area to allow for an expansion of the Garden of Remembrance.
- Concrete bases were laid to allow for further sanctums in the memorial garden area.
- Most elevations of the main building were-rendered and decorated as required.

Outstanding works included:

- Re-rendering and decoration of the flower viewing area adjacent to the chapel.
- Renewal of two gates to the rear courtyard.

The Superintendent Registrar advised that there was a delay with the rendering because they were very busy.

6 **Manager's Report**

Due to the heavy snowfall recently, there were a lot of hits on the website. Memorial sales declined however, due to the bad weather. The Crematorium remained fully staffed with one staff on leave also coming in to help. There was a five day delay however due to postponed funerals. The Superintendent Registrar also thanked the gritting team at Torfaen who were excellent and Arthur Peake & Sons also helped out with transport.

Cremations had increased significantly in February compared to January's low figures. This was above the 10 year average for February and March was also showing strong figures and running at capacity for the month. The recent opening of the Llangstone Crematorium meant that the waiting time for cremations had diminished, which was better for customers.

The Crematorium had recently had three funeral cancellations. This was because some funeral directors were booking the services with both Cwmbran and Langstone Crematoriums for the same funeral. There were not however cancelling the Cwmbran booking but were going ahead with the Langstone booking, whichs resulted in an immediate loss of revenue.

With this in mind it was advised that a cancellation fee should be imposed after 24 hours of a booking.

After lengthy discussion regarding when a fee should be imposed and at what cost, it was unanimously agreed that a fine be set with immediate effect.

Agreed:

That a cancellation fee of £300 be imposed on clients that do not cancel within 24 hours of booking. This however would be used with an element of discretion, due to some client's circumstances.

7 **Date of Next Meeting**

13 June 2018 at 2pm in Committee Room 4.