

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 18 March 2015

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Taylor (Caerphilly County Borough Council) (Chairman), N Davies (Torfaen County Borough Council), N George (Caerphilly County Borough Council) , P Huntley and V Delahaye (Newport City Council).

In Attendance: G Price (Honorary Secretary), J Hazlewood (Assistant Accountant), P Dundon (Manager), K Donovan (Newport Norse) and R Bailey (Democratic Administrator)

Apologies: Councillors Dally, White and Jones

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Dally and White (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council), Councillor Jones (Monmouthshire County Council) and Mr S Tom (National Association of Funeral Directors)

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of Meeting held on 21 January 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2015 were taken as read and confirmed

4 Facilities Management (Oral Update)

Mr K Donovan, Design and Contracts Manager , Newport Norse reported on work to be undertaken on the canopies and that re-rendering work to the Arches had been programmed for the next financial year at a date/time to be agreed with the Crematorium Manager

5 Funeral Directors Report

Apologies had been submitted by Mr Tom, National Association of Funeral Directors representative who had indicated that no points had been raised for consideration by this Committee

6 Managers Report

Consideration was given to the Managers report providing statistical information on the number of visitors on the Book of Remembrance online , memorial sales and cremation statistics. It was noted that cremation numbers had remained very high with the Crematorium operating at full capacity this month.

The Committee were informed of the recent sale of high quality jewellery items and paperweights from "Ashes into Glass". A display cabinet had been installed and mail shots were being made as appropriate. This new initiative had proved popular alongside the other memorial options available at the Crematorium.

Reference was made to the recent resignation of Miriam Deacon, Deputy Manager as a result of taking up a position as Secretary to the Cremation Society of Great Britain and Ireland based in Maidstone, Kent. The Chairman proposed and was endorsed by the Joint Committee that a letter of appreciation be forwarded to Mrs Deacon for her service and endeavours to the Crematorium and this Committee over the last ten years.

The Manager referred to the fact that, as a result of her resignation, this also applied to her position as Newport's representative on the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities. The proposal that the Manager continue in that role as a representative of Newport and this Joint Committee was endorsed.

In response to a query as to the replacement of the Deputy Manager post, it was noted that a business case would have to be made by the Interim Head of Streetscene and if found essential with provision in the budget the post could be filled. However, it was noted that a restructuring of that Service area was presently underway. The Joint Committee, conscious of the demand on the service at the present time, asked that this issue be resolved as soon as possible.

Councillor Davies advised that the increasing length of time to hold a cremation service was being raised within Torfaen County Borough Council following receipt of complaints. Members enquired on a number of options to remedy the problem but it was noted there was little leeway in this respect.

Attention was drawn to the appended Fees Price List with Cremation Fees being increased by 10% but it was agreed that the fees for memorial items and jewellery be regularised at 5% for the forthcoming financial year.

Resolved

That the report be noted and aforementioned actions approved

7 Schedule of Meetings 2015/16

Consideration was given to suggested meetings for the forthcoming year, these being 17th June, 23rd September, 25th November 2015, 20th January and 16th March 2016. All meetings to commence at 2.00pm.

Councillor Davies requested a change of day to accommodate his attendance at this Joint Committee for Council business reasons. In discussing the proposal it was recognised that the same applied to other Partner Authorities and it was agreed to endorse the above dates. Councillor Davies abstained in the resulting vote.

The Chairman referred to the fact that Torfaen County Borough Council still had an outstanding vacancy on the Committee and that this be brought to their attention. Similarly, it was noted that Bleanau Gwent representatives were experiencing difficulties in attending and it was agreed that they be reminded that a substitute Member could attend if there was an issue in this respect.

Resolved

That the above schedule of meetings be agreed.

