

Minutes



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 14 June 2017

Time: 2.00 pm

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

G Price (Honorary Secretary), J Hazelwood (Finance Business Partner), D Palmer (Audit Manager LLL/EE), P Dundon (Superintendent Registrar) and S Tom (Association of Funeral Directors) and A Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors S Evans, D Davies and J Taylor

1 Nomination of new Chair for 2017-18

It was the turn of Torfaen County Borough Council to Chair the Committee for 2017-2018. Torfaen CBC had only had their appointments announced at Cabinet meeting on 13 June, therefore Councillor Clark kindly agreed to substitute Councillor S Evans well in advance of the appointments. However as two councillors per Council were required to attend the Committee, Councillor R Clark agreed to becoming the second member and in addition to this, the Chair of the Committee.

Resolved:

That Councillor Clark take the Chair for 2017-2018.

2 Apologies for Absence

K Crawley (Deputy Manager) and A Wathan (Chief Internal Auditor)

3 Declarations of Interest

None received.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 17 March 2017 were accepted as a true record.

5 Induction Presentation

P Dundon gave the committee an interesting and informative presentation highlighting the history of the Crematorium, staff and general statistics.

Committee members were welcome to visit the Crematorium for a tour of the premises if they so wished.

G Price continued the presentation on the formation of the joint committee in 1996 following re-organisation, with information about the legal framework the host authority, finance, governance and withdrawal or dissolution from the committee.

Local discharge from Welsh Government allowed executive members and non-executive members to sit on the committee.

The committee took place in Newport because the accounts were held at with Newport City Council and therefore staff from the Crematorium were employed on Newport's terms & conditions and salary.

6 Final Audit Report 2016-2017

D Palmer gave an overview of the Internal Audit report, which was part of the 2016/17 Audit Plan agreed by the Head of Service, Head of Finance and the Audit Committee on 26 May 2016. The objective of the audit was to examine and evaluate the financial and administrative controls operating at the Gwent Crematorium.

The report showed that overall, the Crematorium was adequately controlled as was the day to day managing of the Crematorium.

Resolved:

That the Internal Audit Report was noted by the Committee.

7 Final Accounts Report 2016-2017

J Hazlewood outlined the Final Accounts Report for 2016-17 and was looking for approval of the draft annual return. An additional sheet containing comments from the Head of Finance was distributed to those present.

Both figures that were shown on the report were correct but because one of the figures was excluded in the year end, they appeared different.

The current surplus was £1.2M and the balance sheet carried over was £2.2M. The Head of Finance had signed the annual return and both Finance and Audit were looking at the actual format of the return.

Councillor K Williams asked J Hazlewood for a copy of the notes of the accounts balance sheet. This would be emailed to the councillor when the meeting had concluded.

Resolved:

That the Final Accounts Report for 2016-17 was approved by the committee and signed by the Chair.

8 Funeral Director's Report

S Tom announced there was nothing to report today but was happy for the committee to ask questions.

Councillor K Williams asked did Funeral Directors block book funerals. This was the case but was stopped several years ago.

9 Manager's Report

P Dundon gave an overview of the statistics which included website views, memorial sales and cremations. Cremations were already showing an increase and looking to be greater

than 2016. Recent storms had caused a tree to fell, fortunately once the tree was removed and on closer inspection there was no damage to the memorial vaults.

Councillor B Jones asked why there was a drop in numbers in April 2017. This would have been due to the Bank Holidays over the Easter period.

Councillor K Williams mentioned concerns relayed to himself about timings and delays in crematorium services and if hours could be extended to deal with the back log. P Dundon advised that working Saturdays was not popular with both Crematorium staff and funeral directors alike. Staff coverage during anti-social hours would also be high.

A second Chapel was mentioned by the Chair which would be ideal but this would double the need to extra facilities, additionally, the Crematorium was land locked by the nearby golf club and farm.

10 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on 13 September at 2pm in Committee Room 4.

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