

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL  
SPENNYMOOR TOWN COUNCIL**

**CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

**AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the CENTRAL DURHAM  
CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held at the COUNTY HALL on 15  
JULY 2009 at 5.30 pm.**

**PRESENT**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Chaplow, N Foster, J Marr, M Plews, R Rodgers, D Stoker,  
A Thomson, J Wood and C Woods

**Officers Present:**

Phillip Curran	Finance Manager, Neighbourhood Services, Durham County Council
Alan José	Superintendent and Registrar, Durham Crematorium
Sharon Spence	Clerk to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Walker and M  
Williams.

Clerk to open the meeting – Chair Vacant

**A1 Appointment of the Chair for the ensuing year**

The Clerk to the Joint Committee, Sharon Spence, opened the meeting and asked for any nominations for Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. Councillor Foster proposed Councillor Marr for the position of Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor Rodgers seconded the proposal. No further proposals were made. Members thanked Councillor Marr for acting as interim Chair during the period of transition to Unitary Local Government in County Durham.

**Resolved:**

That by unanimous agreement, Councillor Marr be appointed Chair for the ensuing year.

**COUNCILLOR J Marr** in the Chair

## **A2 Appointment of the Vice-Chair for the ensuing year**

The Chair asked for any nominations for Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. Councillor J Wood proposed Councillor Plews for the position of Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor Rodgers seconded the proposal. The Chair asked whether there were any further nominations. Councillor Thomson proposed Councillor C Woods for the position of Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor Stoker seconded the proposal. Accordingly, the Chair asked for a vote to be taken.

### **Resolved:**

That by a vote of 5 to 3, Councillor Plews be appointed Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

## **A3 Minutes of the Meeting held 17 June 2009**

Subject to an amendment to the first sentence of the eighth paragraph of Minute A3 from 17 June 2009 (as set out below with the amendment underlined), the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2009 were confirmed by the Joint Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

*“Members asked the Superintendent and Registrar to include in a future Report, to be considered at the next meeting, the deadline dates and costs associated with various levels of works that must be undertaken.”*

The Chair noted that it was usual protocol for the Chair to have sight of the draft minutes prior to them being circulated and that if that has been the case in this instance this error may have been avoided.

## **A4 Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee**

The Clerk to the Joint Committee presented a brief Report setting out proposed dates for the future meetings, as requested by Members at the last meeting. It was noted the options for dates were proposed to accommodate busy diaries of Chief Officers. The Chair accepted that this may be the case, but that the necessity of meetings being held on a Wednesday was in order to fit around existing Member commitments. Accordingly, the Chair believed that meetings should continue to be held on Wednesdays, as set out in the Report.

### **Resolved:**

That the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee be held on the following dates and locations for the ensuing year, with all meeting beginning at 5.30 pm.

Wednesday 28 October 2009	-	County Hall, Durham
Wednesday 20 January 2010	-	County Hall, Durham
Wednesday 21 April 2010	-	County Hall, Durham
Wednesday 21 July 2010	-	Spennymoor Town Hall

## **A5 Report of the Superintendent and Registrar**

The Superintendent and Registrar, Alan José, presented a Report relating to the following issues associated with the Crematorium.

### **Cremations**

The Superintendent and Registrar reported the number of cremations for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 June 2009 inclusive. These were 518 (+ 11 NVF), a decrease of 122 (+ 1 NVF) on the same period in the previous year. The total of 518 (+ 11 NVF) included 329 from outside the area, with the remaining total being 189 for the area.

### **Memorial Gardens**

The Superintendent and Registrar reported that during the period 1 April 2009 to 30 June 2009, the following Vase Blocks and Memorial Plaques had been sold:

Vase Blocks	3
Large Plaques	7
Small Plaques	<u>6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

### **Financial Information (Net of VAT)**

Vase Blocks	1,070.00
Large Plaques	1,692.29
Small Plaques	<u>1,170.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,932.29</b>

### **Influenza Pandemic – Planning**

The Superintendent and Registrar asked Members to note that a comprehensive Report giving details of the cremation and burial capacity of the County had been forwarded to the Civil Contingencies Unit.

The Superintendent and Registrar informed Members that the four additionally trained Cremator Operators would undertake one day a month on-site experience beginning from August.

In addition, the Superintendent and Registrar made Members aware that he had spoken to Ian Hoult from the Durham County Council's Neighbourhood Services Directorate as regards additional volunteer Cremator Operator coverage for the County and the possibility for further volunteers to be trained, specifically for the Mountsett Crematorium.

### **Other Matters**

The Chair asked why the agenda papers did not contain a Report from the Superintendent and Registrar outlining the options that the Joint Committee could take in relation to works to the Crematorium, specifically those of replacement of cremators, mercury abatement and potential expansion of the facility.

The Chair noted that there was an urgency in moving forward quickly in relation to these matters as he recalled at a meeting relating to Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation (CAMEO), there would be a requirement to pay a contribution to burden share if no abatement had been put in place by 31 December 2012. For the Durham Crematorium, this could be approximately £100,000 per annum. The Superintendent and Registrar agreed that this would be approximately the amount, based upon a figure of £50 per cremation as from 31 December 2012.

Councillor Stoker asked whether the error within the minutes of the previous meeting could have lead to Officers believing that the report outlining options was not in fact required for this meeting, but for the meeting to be held in October. The Democratic Support Assistant apologised for any ambiguity in the minutes from the previous meeting. The Superintendent and Registrar noted that the Members had requested two Reports, one Report from the Superintendent and Registrar outlining options available to the Joint Committee to be made available to Members at this meeting, and a second more comprehensive Joint Report from the Superintendent and Registrar and the Treasurer to follow at the October meeting. The second Joint Report would set out details of the financial implications for various options and timescales for implementing such options as the Joint Committee may wish to pursue. Members were asked to note that the Superintendent and Registrar had in fact prepared an outline report for Members as requested, but he was requested not to present it to Members in its current form prior to input from the appropriate Finance Officers from the Durham County Council.

The Chair understood that whilst it may have been necessary for the Superintendent and Registrar's Report to have been held back in order to ensure all details were correct, he noted that he should have been made aware in advance of the meeting and an explanation should have been provided for Members. The Clerk apologised to the Members and added that she would speak to the Officers involved as regards the reasons for the Report being held back.

Members proposed an additional meeting may be required prior to the October meeting in order to receive the Superintendent and Registrar's Report. The Clerk would liaise with the Superintendent and Registrar, Treasurer and the Chair as regards a date should this be the wish of the Joint Committee.

**Resolved:**

- (a) That the Report be noted.
- (b) That an additional meeting be called, with a date to be determined and circulated to Members.

**A6 Such Other Business**

No additional items of business were raised.

**A7 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved:**

That under Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 A to the said Act.

**B8 Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee**

Mr Philip Curran, Finance Manager, Neighbourhood Services, Durham County Council presented, on behalf of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee, a Report giving details of the Draft Statement of Accounts 2008/09 and the Audited Statement of Accounts 2007/08.

The Finance Manager asked Members to note that the Treasurer had commented that the figures as set out within the reports were very good and the level of reserves enabled a degree of flexibility in how the Joint Committee may wish to move forward with any proposed works to the Crematorium.

Councillor Foster indicated that after the Durham County Council Outturn Reports had been considered at Durham County Council Cabinet, a clearer picture as regards how best to move forward may appear. Councillor Foster also asked that future Annual Governance Statements make reference to the new Unitary Durham County Council and not the former City of Durham District Council.

Councillor Woods noted that there may be issues as regards a potential need to revisit the division of profit from the Crematorium if the cost of the works required to update the facility are not going to be shared along a similar ratio to existing profit sharing arrangements. The Chair agreed that this was an important matter and that the Clerk should speak to the appropriate Officers and report back to the Joint Committee at the October meeting.

**Resolved:**

- (a) That the Draft Statement of Accounts for 2008/09 be approved.
- (b) That the audited Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 be noted.
- (c) That the Clerk, or the Treasurer as appropriate, report back to the Joint Committee at its October meeting as regards any potential alterations to profit sharing arrangements.

**B9 Such Other Business**

Councillor Rodgers noted that the Council Chamber at County Hall was not the best location for meetings of the Joint Committee, due to poor acoustics when the microphone system was not in use. The Clerk advised Members that unfortunately, the Council Chamber was the only room available for this particular meeting, but noted that subsequent meetings would be held in the smaller Committee rooms at County Hall which would hopefully negate any similar problems.

The Chair asked Members to note that the next scheduled meeting of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee, would be held at the County Hall, Durham, 28 October 2009 at 5.30 pm. and that details of any additional meeting would be circulated to Members as soon as practicable.