

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Chamber, Spennymoor Town Hall, Spennymoor** on **Wednesday 17 June 2009** at **5.30 pm**

PRESENT

COUNCILLOR J Marr in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Chaplow, N Foster, R Rodgers, A Thomson, F Walker and C Woods

Officers Present:

Stuart Crowe	Corporate Director – Resources, Durham County Council
Ian Hault	Neighbourhood Services, Durham County Council
Alan José	Superintendent and Registrar, Durham Crematorium
Sharon Spence	Democratic Services Manager, Durham County Council
Pauline Wilson	Clerk to Spennymoor Town Council

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors M Plews, M Williams and J Wood.

A1 Minutes of the meeting held 29 March 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2009 were confirmed by the Joint Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee

In the absence of the Clerk to the Joint Committee, the Durham County Council's Democratic Services Manager, Sharon Spence, presented a Report outlining proposed arrangements relating to the Clerk and Treasurer to the Joint Committee post Local Government Reorganisation in County Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

- (a) That the Durham County Council's Democratic Services Manager, Sharon Spence, be appointed as Clerk to the Joint Committee.
- (b) That the Durham County Council's Corporate Director – Resources, Stuart Crowe, continue as Treasurer to the Joint Committee.

A3 Report of the Superintendent and Registrar

The Superintendent and Registrar, Alan José, presented a Report giving Members information relating to the current position of the Crematorium. Members were also asked to note the various background documents, as requested by Members at a recent visit to the Crematorium (for copies see file of Minutes).

The main points related to statute and regulations that applied to crematoria, specifically those in connection to emission of mercury. Members were asked to note that a Feasibility Study was carried out in May 2005 to determine how the Durham Crematorium could be adapted to comply with new legislation and develop capacity, anticipating future demands. The Superintendent and Registrar explained that due to Local Government Reorganisation, further progress had been halted until the new Joint Committee could meet to review the options available. It was also noted that the location of the Crematorium was in a “green belt” and there would be additional planning considerations, accordingly. Members were informed that the Crematorium must be able to operate during any period of remodelling or refurbishment.

Members were reminded that the Joint Committee, at a previous meeting (Minute No. 2165, 25 July 2007), had agreed to fit mercury abatement equipment prior to 31 December 2012 and join the Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation (CAMEO) scheme in accordance with the requirements of the AQ1 (05) Regulations.

The Clerk to Spennymoor Town Council, Pauline Wilson asked what position other Crematoria in the region were at in relation to mercury abatement. The Superintendent and Registrar noted that neighbouring Crematoria were all at different points with several being in the process of obtaining abatement equipment. It was also noted that the new, privately operated, Wear Valley Crematorium at Coundon was already compliant with emissions regulations.

Councillor Neil Foster asked whether there was a “quick win” solution to mercury abatement that would allow for refitting or remodelling at a later date. The Superintendent and Registrar explained that if new cremators were not installed or abatement equipment fitted to existing cremators, then the only other option would be to pay into the CAMEO scheme relating to burden share of emissions. However, Members were asked to note that it was a condition imposed by the Regulator for the continued operation of the Crematorium that the Crematorium must fit abatement equipment or install compliant cremators eventually. The Joint Committee was reminded that whilst the current cremators had been relined, they were approaching the end of their lifecycle.

Members noted that there was one Company that undertook the majority of the contracts to install new cremators and fit mercury abatement equipment. Councillor Foster then asked whether this would have a negative impact upon meeting deadlines associated with regulations, i.e. with a single company there may be capacity issues. The Superintendent and Registrar noted that this could have an effect, but that there were a few newer companies coming into the market, with one in particular from Germany having a good reputation. The Superintendent and

Registrar noted that this company now had UK based service engineers, which would be an important factor in future considerations.

Ian Hault from Neighbourhood Services, Durham County Council asked whether the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Regulator reported regularly updating Crematoria Operators on issues relating to statute, regulations and implementation. The Superintendent and Registrar explained that this was indeed the case for example at industry conferences, such as an upcoming conference to be held on 3/4 July 2009.

Members asked the Superintendent and Registrar to include in a future Report, to be considered at a future meeting the deadline dates and costs associated with various levels of works that must be undertaken. Members also asked for similar information relating to those works that would be desirable in order to update the Crematorium. The Clerk to Spennymoor Town Council asked when such Reports would be available as the Town Council would need to consider issues prior to a point at which they would go to the Joint Committee for approval. The Superintendent and Registrar noted that a more detailed Report would be submitted to the next meeting in July, with the aim to have a comprehensive Report including costs to be submitted to the Joint Committee in October for a decision. The Treasurer to the Joint Committee, Stuart Crowe, reassured Members and explained that both he and the Clerk to the Joint Committee would work with the Superintendent and Registrar in this regard.

Councillor Jean Chaplow noted that space was at a premium at the Crematorium, in particular rooms for staff, Clergy, the Book of Remembrance and indeed large numbers of mourners at funeral services. The Superintendent and Registrar agreed, and noted that this was the rationale behind proposals contained within the Feasibility Study.

The Joint Committee was reminded that the Crematorium would celebrate 50 years of service in August 2010 and that in order to continue to provide the highest quality service in the future, important decisions would need to be made at the earliest opportunity.

Councillor Carol Woods asked whether there would be an event to celebrate the 50 year anniversary. The Superintendent and Registrar noted that he would conduct some further research and report back to the Joint Committee as regards an appropriate service or event, with the possibility of a marquee and a commemorative booklet.

It was noted that Professor Hillary Grainger of London University of the Arts (an architectural historian) would be speaking at the Ninth Annual Conference of Death, Dying and Disposal being held at Durham University in September 2009 and some of her research work may prove useful in producing such a booklet.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Report be noted.
- (b) That the Superintendent and Registrar in consultation with the Clerk and the Treasurer, prepare a comprehensive Report for the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

A4 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.