

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Council Chamber, Spennymoor Town Council** on **Wednesday 25 June 2014** at **2.00 pm**

#### **Present:**

##### **Durham County Council:**

Councillors D Bell, J Chaplow, P Conway, K Corrigan, M Plews, D Stoker and K Thompson

##### **Spennymoor Town Council:**

Town Councillors JV Graham and GD O'Hehir

#### **1 Appointment of the Chairman**

The Clerk to the Joint Committee, Laura Renaudon, asked for nominations for Chairman to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year noting that the terms of reference required this to be the outgoing Vice Chairman.

Accordingly, Councillor J Chaplow proposed Councillor M Plews for the position of Chairman to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor P Conway seconded the proposal. No further proposals were made.

#### **Resolved:**

That by unanimous agreement, Councillor M Plews be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

**COUNCILLOR M Plews** in the Chair

#### **2 Appointment of the Vice-Chairman**

The Chairman asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year noting that, as per the terms of reference, this should be a Member from Spennymoor Town Council. Councillor G O'Hehir proposed Councillor J Graham for the position of Vice-Chairman to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor J Chaplow seconded the proposal. No further proposals were made.

#### **Resolved:**

That by unanimous agreement, Councillor J Graham be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

### **3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bonner, J Buckham, N Foster, B Moir and M Simmons (Durham County Council) and Councillor I Harrington (Spennymoor Town Council).

### **4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed and initialled by the Chairman.

### **5 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.

### **6 Review of the Terms of Reference**

The Clerk to the Joint Committee referred Members to the report within the agenda papers outlining the Terms of Reference for the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

Members were reminded that following audit reviews it was recommended that the Joint Committee undertake an annual review of the Terms of Reference and update as necessary. It was explained that there were no proposed changes to the Terms of Reference at this time.

#### **Resolved:**

That the Members of the Joint Committee note the Review of the Terms of Reference and reaffirm these.

### **7 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement**

The Joint Committee considered a Joint Report of the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services and Corporate Director Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which provided details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2013 to March 2014.

The Head of Finance – Financial Services, Paul Darby reminded Members that the AGS was prepared in line with CIPFA and SOLACE guidance and formed part of the Statement of Accounts and Small Bodies Return for the Joint Committee. Councillors were reminded that the AGS set out the governance framework for the Joint Committee and was informed by the views of Internal Audit, which were set out in the report to the Joint Committee in April. There were no significant governance issues or matters worthy of disclosing in the AGS.

**Resolved:**

That the Annual Governance Statement be approved for consideration within the Statement of Accounts and Annual Return and that the Chair be authorised to sign the Statement.

**8 Revenue Outturn, Small Bodies Return and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014**

The Joint Committee considered a Joint Report of the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services and Corporate Director Resources which sought approval of the Small Bodies Return and supporting Statement of Accounts for Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee for the financial year ended 31 March 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Finance – Financial Services referred Members to the financial outturn position for 2013/14, advising that the final outturn position was slightly improved in comparison with the provisional outturn position. Details of significant variances were contained within the report and duly noted. The report also included details of the improved position and why this had occurred and updated position in terms of reserves and balances held.

With reference to the Annual Return and Statement of Accounts it was reported that the documents had been prepared in line with CIPFA guidance and approval was sought for the signing off of both documents.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the April 2013 to March 2014 Income and Expenditure within the Revenue Financial Monitoring Report and subsequent year balance of reserves, be noted.
- (ii) That the Small Bodies Annual Return and Statement of Accounts 2013/14 be approved.
- (iii) That the Small Bodies Annual Return and Statement of Accounts 2013/14 be signed by the Chairman of the Joint Committee.

**9 Quarterly Performance and Operational Report**

The Bereavement Services Manager, Graham Harrison asked Members to note the performance figures from 1 April 2014 to 31 May 2014 and the comparison to the same period for 2013, highlighting that there was a net decrease of 23 cremations year on year. It was noted there was a total of 370 for the three month period with the April to May profile breakdown showing 120 from Durham, 20 from Spennymoor and 230 from outside of the area. Members noted that the total number of cremations for 2013/14 was 2,227, estimates had been made on a prudent basis for the 2014/15 budget of 2,200 cremations.

Members were reminded of the introduction of a reduced charge for early services, and noted this had been received well by Funeral Directors.

The Bereavement Services Manager explained that a survey of Funeral Directors had been undertaken and they confirmed that numbers varied week on week, however, the Funeral Directors reiterated that they valued the facility and staff at Durham Crematorium. It was added that a small number of Funeral Directors in close proximity to Coundon Crematorium had noted the additional fuel costs in travelling to Durham Crematorium for services was a deciding factor in considering which facility to use.

Members were asked to note that the number of memorials sold had increased in comparison to the same period the previous year, with sales being £367.96 more than the comparable period last year.

The Joint Committee noted that the usual arrangements as regards attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Learning Convention and Exhibition 2014, held 29 September to 1 October 2014, had been made for the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chairman.

Councillors noted that the Recycling of Metals Scheme had generated a sum of £4,412 for Macmillan Cancer Support. The Bereavement Services Manager noted Members could provide further nominations as regards charities that could benefit from the scheme. A schedule of potential beneficiaries was included in the report.

The Joint Committee noted that following discussions with the DCC publicity team content for a draft brochure had been prepared. The Bereavement Services Manager noted that the draft brochure would be presented to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for review and sign-off, with a final version to be brought to the next meeting of the Joint Committee for information.

The Bereavement Services Manager confirmed the schedule as regards Phase I and II works was now agreed and reminded Members there was no requirement for a planning application for these works. Members noted that Phase III works could begin in April 2015, subject to a decision by the Joint Committee at its meeting in January 2015, and any necessary planning permission being obtained.

The Chairman asked Members for nominations for charities to benefit from the Recycling of Metals Scheme. Councillors proposed St Cuthbert's Hospice and Macmillan Cancer Support, with the Bereavement Services Manager noting the two could be accommodated with one for the September/October tranche, one for the April tranche.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the current performance of the Crematorium be noted.
- (ii) That the current performance with regards to the sale of Memorials be noted.
- (iii) That the attendance of the Chairman and the Bereavement Services Manager at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Learning Convention and Exhibition 2014 be approved.
- (iv) That the current tranche of money from the recycling of metals scheme to Macmillan Cancer Support be noted, with Members nominating further charities for future disbursements: St. Cuthbert's Hospice and Macmillan Cancer Support.
- (v) That the timetable for the redevelopment works be noted for Phase I and II.

## **10 Forward Plan 2014/15**

The Joint Committee considered a Report of the Corporate Director Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which set out proposals in respect of the Forward Plan of meetings of the Joint Committee for the municipal year 2014/15.

The Head of Finance – Financial Services advised that the list of business to be conducted by the Joint Committee was not exhaustive and further items of business may be considered throughout the course of the year, adding that the meeting in January 2015 will consider options in respect of Phase III of Crematorium Improvement Works.

### **Resolved:**

That the proposed schedule of meetings as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.