

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

At the Annual General Meeting of **Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Council Chamber, Spennymoor Town Hall, Spennymoor** on **Wednesday 29 June 2016** at **2.00 pm**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors D Bell, J Chaplow, P Conway, K Corrigan, N Foster, B Kellett, M Plews, D Stoker and K Thompson

Spennymoor Town Council:

Town Councillors JV Graham and D Taylor

1 Membership of the Joint Committee

The Clerk to the Joint Committee, Laura Renaudon, noted changes to the Membership of the Joint Committee following the Annual Meetings of the two constituent Authorities. It was added that the only change was Councillor D Taylor, Town Mayor, as a new representative for Spennymoor Town Council, replacing Councillor P Lawton.

Resolved:

That the change in the Membership of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee be noted.

2 Appointment of the Chairman for the ensuing year

The Clerk to the Joint Committee 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 D Taylor proposed Councillor M Plews for the position of Chairman to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor JV Graham 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

3 Appointment of the Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year

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 J Chaplow proposed Councillor JV Graham for the position of Vice-Chairman to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year and Councillor N Foster seconded the proposal. No further proposals were made.

Resolved:

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

4 Appointment of Treasurer to the Joint Committee

The Clerk to the Joint Committee informed Members that the Corporate Director: Resources, Durham County Council and Treasurer to the Joint Committee, Don McLure had retired at the end of May 2016 and accordingly the Interim Corporate Director: Resources, Durham County Council, Paul Darby would fill the position of Treasurer to the Joint Committee on an interim basis.

Resolved:

That the Interim Corporate Director: Resources, Durham County Council acting as the Treasurer to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee on an interim basis be noted.

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bonner, B Moir, GD O'Hehir and M Simmons and Town Councillor GD O'Hehir.

6 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed and initialled by the Chairman.

7 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.

8 Annual Constitutional Review

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 reapprove the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

9 Annual Governance Statement 2015/16

The Joint Committee considered a Joint Report of the Interim Corporate Director: Neighbourhood Services and Interim Corporate Director: Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which provided details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2015 to March 2016.

The Principal Accountant, Ed Thompson reminded Members that the AGS was prepared in line with CIPFA and SOLACE guidance and formed part of the Annual 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 had been set out in the report to the Joint Committee in April, noting "substantial assurance". There were no significant governance issues or matters worthy of disclosing in the AGS.

Resolved:

That the Annual Governance Statement be approved for consideration as part of the Joint Committee's Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 and that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Statement.

10 Revenue Outturn & Joint Committees Return for the year ended 31 March 2016

The Joint Committee considered a Joint Report of the Interim Corporate Director: Neighbourhood Services and Interim Corporate Director: Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which sought approval of the Joint Committees Return, with the report also including details of the financial outturn position against approved budgets for 2015/16 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Principal Accountant referred Members to the financial outturn position for 2015/16, advising that the final outturn position was broadly in line with the provisional outturn position, with only a minor decrease in the overall net income for the year. Details of significant variances were contained within the report and duly noted. Members were reminded that in terms of capital works, the ongoing work as regards replacing the canopies had carried over into the next financial year. The report also included details of the updated position in terms of reserves and balances held and it was added that the Major Capital Works reserve was maintained in line with agreed policy.

With reference to the Joint Return, it was highlighted that this was a statutory return and once agreed and signed by the Chairman, Treasurer and Clerk it would be submitted to the Joint Committee's External Auditors accordingly. Members were also asked to note the balance sheet was attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

Councillor P Conway asked that as there had been a reduction in terms of business rates, had this then been factored into the budget setting. The Principal Accountant noted that the business rate charge in 2016/17 had reduced and therefore there would be scope to reduce the budget in 2017/18 and this would be reflected in the January 2017 budget report. Any further improvement works, which will be included in the Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) and considered at the next meeting of the Committee will also be reflected in the 2017/18 budget report.

Resolved:

- (i) That the revenue and capital outturn position as at 31 March 2016, including the year-end position with regards reserves and balances of the Joint Committee, together with the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2016 be noted.
- (ii) That the Governance Statement 2015/16 of the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 be approved.
- (iii) That the Accounting Statements 2015/16 of the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 be approved.
- (iv) That the Chairman, Treasurer and Clerk sign the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016.

11 Quarterly Performance and Operational Report

The Bereavement Services Manager, Graham Harrison asked Members to note the performance figures from 1 April 2016 to 31 May 2016 and the comparison to the same period for 2015, highlighting that there was a net increase of 28 cremations year on year. It was noted there was a total of 381 for the three month period with the April to May profile breakdown showing 131 from Durham, 12 from Spennymoor and 238 from outside of the area.

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 £2,593 more than the comparable period last year.

The Joint Committee were reminded of the vacant Cremator Operative post that had been advertised and that upon being unsuccessful in recruiting to this post Members had agreed at the April meeting to advertise for a Trainee Cremator Operative.

It was explained that following interviews an appointment had been made and the new member of staff had commenced on 13 June 2016 and was settling in very well.

The Joint Committee noted that the usual arrangements as regards attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Learning Convention and Exhibition, to be held 31 October to 2 November 2016 in Oxfordshire, had been made for the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chairman.

Councillors noted that the Recycling of Metals Scheme had generated a sum of £4,444 for the British Heart Foundation and that a cheque had been presented to the organisation by Councillors M Plews and JV Graham. Members noted a letter of thanks from the organisation and a photograph of the presentation were attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The Joint Committee noted that Phase 3 works on the canopies were progressing, with the old canopies having been removed, new posts installed ready to receive the new roof materials once delivered.

Resolved:

- (i) That the current performance of the Crematorium be noted.
- (ii) That the situation with regards to the Trainee Crematorium Operative 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 2016 be noted.
- (iv) That the distribution of recycling income to the respective charity be noted.
- (v) That the progress with regard to the Phase 3 Canopy Replacement Works be noted.

12 Forward Plan 2016/17

The Joint Committee considered a Report of the Interim 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 2016/17.

The Principal Accountant 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.

The Bereavement Services Manager suggested that it may be useful to hold the meeting on 28 September 2016 at Durham Crematorium in order to afford Members the opportunity visit the facility once all the improvement works had been completed, noting it would be at 5.30pm to avoid services.

Resolved:

That the proposed schedule of meetings as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved, subject to the 28 September 2016 being held at Durham Crematorium at 5.30pm.