

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

31 January 2019

Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with an update relating to performance and other operational matters.

Performance Update - Number of Cremations

2. The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 September 2018 to 31 December 2018 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	2017/18	2018/19	Change
September	102	93	- 9
October	120	121	+ 1
November	105	116	+ 11
December	96	97	+ 1
TOTAL	423	427	+ 4

3. In summary there were 427 cremations undertaken during 1 September 2018 to 31 December 2018, compared to 423 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 4 year on year.

4. The profile of where families came from can be seen below:

Gateshead	116
Durham	218
Outside Area	93
Total	427

Memorials

5. The table below outlines the number and value (exc. VAT) of the memorials sold in the period September 2018 to December 2018 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	(Sept-December) 2017/18		(Sept-December) 2018/19	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	9	3,780	8	3,360
Small Plaques	6	1,656	51	14,076
Total	15	5,436	59	17,436

6. In overall terms the number and value of memorials 59 / £17,436 compares to 15 / £5,436 in same period 2017/18, an increase of 44 / £12,000 year on year. This increase is down to the introduction of the small memorial towers around the grounds which have become very popular.

Operational Matters

7. Members may recall that a trainee crematorium operative took up his post on 13 June 2016 and since then he has become an important part of the team. He has recently passed the cremating exams and is fully qualified.
8. The member of staff has requested that his pay grade be increased from grade four to a grade five, to bring him in line with the other crematorium staff, who are qualified as a crematorium attendants.
9. Advice has been sought from Human Resources and to facilitate this request Members of the committee would need to approve the creation of a new crematorium attendant post. The new post would need to be advertised in the usual way and the trainee would be able to apply alongside other applicants.
10. If supported, this would equate to an increase in the salary budget of £576 per year, assuming the trainee was successful in securing the position and the trainee post was subsequently deleted from the establishment.

Green Flag Application

11. Members may recall from the September 2018 meeting that Mountsett Crematorium was successful in retaining its Green Flag Award for the seventh year running.
12. An application will be submitted for the 2019 Award and progress will be reported back to future meetings. A management plan to maintain the required standards will be updated and any required works will be covered by existing budgets.

Dedicated Website Development

13. Members may recall that it was agreed to look into the production of a dedicated website for the crematorium.
14. Discussions have been ongoing with our Digital and Customer Services team and it was hoped that this would be up and running before the end of March 2019, however the digital team are unable to have it ready by then and it is envisaged that it will now be ready by the end of June / early July 2019.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

15. Members may recall from the September 2018 meeting that Crematorium received a cheque for the recycling of metals from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £5,000 for IF U CARE SHARE charity.
16. Arrangements were made for the cheque to be presented to IF U CARE SHARE by the Committee Chair and Vice Chair on 30 October and a photograph of the presentation is attached at Appendix 2.
17. A further round of nominations has been received and Winston's Wish Charity have been selected for the next available distribution of funds. This nomination has been submitted and I am currently awaiting a response.

Audit Recommendation – Supplier for Book of Remembrance Entries

18. The Internal Audit report earlier this year found that all entries into the Book of Remembrance are completed by one supplier due to the specialism of the work required. It was recommended that a procurement exercise be explored with the Procurement Team in order to ensure value for money whilst maintaining the quality of the Book of Remembrance.
19. The tender documents have been drawn up by the Procurement Team and will soon be advertised on the procurement portal.

Audit Recommendation - Document Retention

20. The Internal Audit report also found that documents were being retained for the required 15 years in paper form, however this requires a large amount of storage space. There is currently no scanning undertaken, but should this commence then the hard copies would only need to be retained for a year prior to disposal.

21. The Procurement Team commenced an exercise to look at the possibility of scanning all documentation, which would then be attached to BACAS and Members are provided with the following four options to consider.

Option 1 - Supplier One Scanning Facility

The Supplier One scanning facility has produced a varying quote which depends on the quality and condition of the original documents. The following tables will show costs for both the least expensive scenario to the most expensive scenario. The costs provided will include the transport and logistics of the records, secure scanning, storage and destruction and also an encrypted storage device for the converted records.

Quality and Condition of Documents	No. of Documents	Cost per Document	Total Cost
Good (Best Case)	413,820	£0.030	£12,415
Poor (Worst Case)	413,820	£0.050	£20,691

The figures are based on 18,810 records of 22 sheets per record.

Option 2 - Supplier Two Scanning Facility

The Supplier Two scanning facility is based in the region and has been used by other services within Durham County Council to complete scanning projects. The costs provided include the transport and logistics of the records, secure scanning, storage and destruction and also the hardware in the form of an encrypted storage device for the converted records. Please note these figures are based on the quality of the original document and prices may differ if quality is better/worse than expected.

Number of Documents	413,820
Cost Per Document	£0.040
Total Cost	£16,553

The figures are based on 18,810 records of 22 sheets per record.

Once the initial scan is complete bulk yearly scanning thereafter would incur an inflation related cost element per document. Supplier Two propose this to be an increase of £0.0025 per document per year and the annual cost per year based on 1,300 records below.

- 2019/20 – 28,600 documents x £0.0425 = £1,215
- 2020/21 – 28,600 documents x £0.0450 = £1,287
- 2021/22 – 28,600 documents x £0.0475 = £1,358
- 2022/23 – 28,600 documents x £1.0500 = £1,430

Option 3 - Supplier One Secure Storage

Supplier One are an Electronic Document Storage, Management and Shredding Company based in the region.

Advantages of using the Supplier One secure storage facility include:

- Secure barcoded scanning of each box from collection, during transit and into storage.
- Correct storage conditions for paper e.g. correct temperature, pest control
- Next day retrieval option. The retrieval cost stands at £10 per drop off and an 80p handling fee per box, collection is free to send boxes back into storage.

The one off initial costs to store all of the historic files are as follows:

Description	Cost
48 Boxes required, costing £19.40 per 10 boxes	£97.00
One off collection fee	£12.50
Handling fee, costing £0.80 per box	£38.40
Total one-off cost	£147.90

Subsequent Years – working of the basis that each year a year's worth of storage will be out of retention and therefore destroyed and the current year will be entering storage, the following shows costs of destroying 'out of retention' box records onsite at the Supplier One facility and shows the storage of remaining boxes plus that of the new boxes entering storage. These figures are based on the approximate number of boxes each year and therefore the figures are likely to differ slightly based on exact yearly records. For the purpose of this exercise the amount of boxes out of retention and the amount of boxes newly entering will be based on the approximate average per year so it will show no change in the amount of boxes in storage based on a 'one in – one out' approach.

Description	Cost
Storage per box per year, costing £2.35 per box	£112.80
Box destruction, costing £3.20 per box	£12.80
Handling fee costing £0.80 per box	£3.20
Total Annual cost	£128.80

Option 4 – Secure Storage for Past Records and Scan Records Going Forward

Documents for the previous 15 years could be moved to the secure storage facility mentioned in Option 3 and forms relating to 2018/19 onwards could be scanned on an annual basis at the end of each financial year. The costs relating to this option are as follows:

Description	Cost
One off cost for secure storage	£148
Annual storage costs	£129
Annual scanning costs (28,600 documents x £0.030)	£858
Total Annual Cost	£1,135

Recommended Option

Due to the significant costs associated with scanning all of the documents relating to the last 15 years it is recommended that Members approve Option 4, which will move the previous records into secure storage and scan records on an annual basis from 2018/19.

Internal Audit have confirmed that this is an acceptable solution. The cost of £1,135 will be factored into the 2019/20 budget.

Recommendations and Reasons

22. It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett Joint Committee:

- Note the current performance of the crematorium.
- Agree to the proposed creation a crematorium attendant post and the advertising of this position.
- Note the continued success with regards to the Green Flag Award.
- Note the updated position with regards to the development of the dedicated website.
- Note the updated position with regards to the recycling of metals scheme.
- Note the updated position with regards to the Book of Remembrance tender.
- Note the options available for the document retention and approve Option 4.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

As identified in the report.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

Risk

There are no implications

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications

Accommodation

There are no implications

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications

Human Rights

There are no implications

Consultation

None, however, Officers of Gateshead Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comment/raise any detailed questions on the content of the report in advance of circulation to members of the Mountsett Crematorium.

Procurement

There are no implications

Disability Issues

There are no implications

Legal Implications

As outlined in the report.

Appendix 2: Recycling of Metals Cheque Presentation



Cllr O Temple and Cllr D Bradford along with Dominic McDonough from IF U Care Share attending the cheque presentation.