

**29 April 2019**

**Performance and Operational Report - Position to 31 March 2019**

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**Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

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

**Executive summary**

2. This report provides Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with a quarterly update of performance and operational matters at the crematorium.

**Recommendation(s)**

3. It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett Joint Committee:
  - a. Note the current performance of the crematorium.
  - b. Note the current situation with regards to the crematorium attendant's post.
  - c. Note the attendance at the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities.
  - d. Note the distribution of recycling income to the respective charity.
  - e. Note the updated position with regard to the website development.
  - f. Note the continuation of the current supplier with regards to the Book of Remembrance.

## Background

- Update reports relating to performance and other operational matters are presented to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee on a quarterly basis.

## Performance Update - Number of Cremations

- The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>Change</b>
January	144	132	- 12
February	143	112	- 31
March	133	105	- 28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>- 71</b>

- There were 349 cremations undertaken during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019, compared to 420 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 71 year on year. This reduction is the result of two long term sickness absences since February and the impact of the cremator compliance testing works. A separate update report has been prepared in relation to the cremators. The profile of where families came from can be seen below:

Gateshead	80
Durham	190
Outside Area	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>

- The total number of cremations in 2018/19 was 1,330 compared with 1,396 in 2017/18, a decrease of 66 year on year.
- The 2018/19 budget was set at a prudent assumption of 1,300 cremations during the year. The actual number of cremations undertaken was therefore 30 more than the budget position. This is reflected in an over achievement of cremation fee income of £18,048 in year, which is included in the budgetary control report.
- The table below shows the comparative figures for the previous nine financial years:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cremations</b>
2010/11	1,188
2011/12	1,258
2012/13	1,404

Year	Cremations
2013/14	1,191
2014/15	1,320
2015/16	1,300
2016/17	1,439
2017/18	1,396
<b>2018/19</b>	<b>1,330</b>
<b>9 Year Average</b>	<b>1,314</b>

## Memorials

10. The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period January to March 2019 compared to the same period the previous year.

	Jan – March 2017/18		Jan – March 2018/19	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	1	402	4	1,608
Small Plaques	3	783	11	2,871
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,185</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4,479</b>

11. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 15 / £4,479 compares to 4 / £1,185 in the same period last year, a year on year increase of 11 / £3,294.
12. The table below identifies the total number and value of memorials sold during 2018/19 compared to 2017/18:

	2017/18 Total		2018/19 Total	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	22	9,168	16	6,612
Small Plaques	23	6,243	71	19,341
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>15,411</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>25,953</b>

## Operational Matters

### Staffing

13. Members may recall that it was agreed at the January meeting to recruit to a new Crematorium Attendant post. There was only one applicant who has recently been interviewed and appointed to the position.
14. Members may also be aware that we have previously had a small number of relief cremator operators who could be called upon to assist with holiday cover and also in the event of a pandemic plan. Unfortunately one of our relief operators has indicated that they do not

wish to provide cover anymore and another relief operator is currently covering a vacant position at Durham Crematorium.

15. It is therefore proposed that we advertise for some additional relief cremator operators who could work between both Mountsett and Central Durham crematoriums in order to provide business continuity for the service.

### **Cremation & Burial Conference & Exhibition 2019**

16. As in previous years, the necessary arrangements will be made for representation at the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain, which is to be held at Hilton Ageas Bowl, Southampton from Monday 1 to Wednesday 3 July 2019.

### **Recycling of Metals Scheme**

17. The Crematorium has received a cheque relating to the recycling of metals from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £7,000 for Winston's Wish Charity.
18. Arrangements were made for the cheque to be sent to the charity due to the location of their offices and a letter of thanks has been received, which is attached in Appendix 2.
19. Additional funds from the recycling of metal scheme in 2018 has resulted in the first scheduled round of nominations commencing immediately to distribute these funds and the Great North Air Ambulance charity has been nominated.

### **Dedicated Website Development**

20. Members may recall that it was agreed to look into the production of a dedicated website for the crematorium.
21. The website has now been built and needs to be populated with information and photographs by the Bereavement Services Manager. It is envisaged that the site will go live in June 2019 and Members will be informed of the launch.

### **Audit Recommendations Book of Remembrance**

22. Members may recall that internal audit previously recommended that a procurement exercise be undertaken to supply entries into the Book of Remembrance in order to ensure value for money whilst maintaining its quality. The procurement exercise has now been completed and the

original company were successful in retaining this work at a slightly cheaper price.

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**Contact: Graham Harrison,**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

As outlined in the report.

### **Finance**

As identified in the report.

### **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.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

There are no implications.

### **Human Rights**

There are no implications.

### **Crime and Disorder**

There are no implications.

### **Staffing**

As identified in the report.

### **Accommodation**

There are no implications.

### **Risk**

There is an ongoing risk with regards to the functioning of the new cremators. This is covered in a separate update report

### **Procurement**

There are no implications.

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## Appendix 2: Recycling of Metals Letter of Thanks

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Giving hope to grieving children

Graham Harrison  
Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar  
Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee  
Ewehurst Road  
Dipton  
Stanley  
County Durham  
DH9 9JP

15 March 2019

*Dear Graham and the team at Mountsett Crematorium,*

I am writing on behalf of Winston's Wish to thank you so much for supporting bereaved children with your amazing donation of £7000 from the Recycling of Metals Scheme.

Winston's Wish has been supporting grieving children and their families for over 25 years, helping them to come to terms with their grief and to develop the tools needed to rebuild their futures. Thanks to your gift and the support of all the families who make this scheme possible, this year we will be able to help even more children and young people, who have also lost someone dear to them.

Your gift could fund a year of bereavement support for six families, including one-to-one, family and group work. Group support gives families the chance to spend time with our clinical practitioners as well as other parents and children who have faced similar experiences. This is what one parent said about their experience of a weekend group:

*"Both Tiffy and I have made friends for life, and will live life better for this critical part of our journey. Winston's Wish has far exceeded what I dared hope for with Tiffany. I know that there's a long way to go, but the weekend was the perfect catalyst, and the gates into Tiffy's heart, soul, emotions and memory are open now. I know we need to tread carefully, but I feel I have 'my girl' back... and that is an absolutely marvellous feeling, so great I almost feel I could fly! Life isn't suddenly cured of its worries and fears and sadness, but it's better."*

I have enclosed a copy of our latest impact report and some information for you and the families you meet. I look forward to being in touch again soon and will continue to provide updates of our progress and achievements - if you would rather not receive these, please let me know. In the meantime, if you would like any additional information about our work or any other materials to support your work at the crematorium, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you once again for your support, we truly appreciate it and feel very proud and privileged to have Mountsett Crematorium as a supporter of our work.

With very best wishes

*Corinne*

Corinne Phillips (was Mason)  
In Memory Team  
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