

**24 June 2019**

**Mountsett Crematorium Performance and  
Operational Report**

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

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

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

**Executive summary**

- 2 This report provides Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with an 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 advertising for the relief crematorium attendants.
  - (c) Note the attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2019.
  - (d) Note the distribution of recycling income to the respective charity and the subsequent charity nomination.
  - (e) Note the current situation with regards to document retention.

## Background

- 4 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

5. The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 May 2019 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>Change</b>
April	114	101	-13
May	129	135	+6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>-7</b>

6. There were 236 cremations undertaken during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 May 2019, compared to 243 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 7. Members may recall that the number of deaths were exceptionally high in April 2018 in line with national trends, which explains the decrease in numbers for the period. Numbers of cremations undertaken in the first two months of 2019/20 are broadly in line with numbers experienced in previous years and there is nothing to suggest a down turn in overall use of the crematorium or that funeral directors are choosing other facilities.

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

Gateshead	52
Durham	131
Outside Area	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>

## Memorials

7. The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period April to May 2019 compared to the same period the previous year.

	<b>Apr - May 2018/19</b>		<b>Apr - May 2019/20</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>£</b>
Large Plaques	2	804	1	402
Small Plaques	6	1,566	8	2,088
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2,370</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,490</b>

8. There were 9 memorials sold in the period to 31 May, generating £2,490 of revenue income. This compares with 8 / £2,370 in the same period last year. There has been an increase of 1 / £120 compared to the same period last year

## Staffing

9. Members agreed at the April 2019 meeting to advertise for relief Crematorium Attendant posts. Adverts for these positions will be issued shortly, both internally and externally.

## Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2019

10. As in previous years, the necessary arrangements will be made for representation at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition which is to be held at Chesford Grange Hotel, near Kenilworth from 23rd to 25th September 2019. It is proposed that the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chair attend this conference as representatives of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee.

## Recycling of Metals Scheme

11. The Crematorium received a cheque relating to the recycling of metals scheme from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £8,000 for North East Air Ambulance and a photograph of the cheque presentation is attached at Appendix 2. Extra funds from collections in 2018 has resulted in a 2nd round of nominations being made available and the Royal British Legion have been nominated.

## Audit Recommendation - Document Retention

12. Members may recall that at the January Meeting an audit recommendation relating to document retention was discussed and Members approved the option to place past records in secure storage and scan records going forward, with costs shown in the table below:

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

13. Discussions with the successful company, Box It have taken place and unfortunately they were unable to accommodate the scanning of the records to the print quality we required, with some parts of the documents unreadable. The documents were also returned in the wrong order and we were informed that it would cost nearly double the price to store them in the order we required.
14. We have therefore held discussions with the NHS who can accommodate the scanning of our records and testing has returned good quality images of the documents in the order we require, however this will incur additional costs as shown below.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>
One off cost for secure storage	£148
Annual storage costs	£129
Annual scanning costs (28,600 documents x £0.063)	£1,802
Hard Disk drive	£173
Logistics	£44
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>£2,296</b>

15. Internal Audit have confirmed that this is an acceptable solution. The additional cost of £1,161 will be factored into the 2019/20 revenue outturn projections.

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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 are no implications

### **Procurement**

There are no implications

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## Appendix 2: Recycling of metals cheque presentation

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Cllr O Temple and Cllr D Bradford along with Laura Simpson from Great North Air Ambulance attending the cheque presentation.