

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

24 September 2019

Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report



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 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 continued success with regards to the Green Flag Award.
 - (c) Note the updated position with regards to the relief crematorium attendants.
 - (d) Note the potential to introduce Resomation cremations in the future.
 - (e) Note and approve the content of the Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 2, which will be factored into budget planning in 2020/21 and beyond.

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 June 2019 to 31 August 2019 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	2018/19	2019/20	Change
June	87	111	+ 24
July	122	109	- 13
August	105	106	+ 1
TOTAL	314	326	+ 12

6. There were 326 cremations undertaken during the period 1 June 2019 to 31 August 2019, compared to 314 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 12 year on year.

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

Gateshead	82
Durham	178
Outside Area	66
Total	326

Memorials

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

	June – August 2018/19		June – August 2019/20	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	2	840	3	1,260
Small Plaques	3	828	11	3,036
Total	5	1,668	14	4,296

8. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 14 / £4,296, compares to 5 / £1,668 in the same period last year, representing a year on year increase of 9 / £2,628. This increase is down to the introduction of the small memorial towers around the grounds which have become very popular.

Green Flag Application

9. The Green Flag Award recognises good quality parks and green spaces, and a sign to visitors that sites are well maintained and well managed with excellent facilities. Mountsett Crematorium was once again successful in retaining its Green Flag Award for the eighth year running, which is a great achievement.
10. This award is testimony to the dedication of the staff working at the Crematorium and is in addition to the award of Gold Star Status by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Accreditation.

Staffing

11. Members agreed at the April 2019 meeting to advertise for the Relief Crematorium Attendant posts and this was carried out both internally and externally.
12. There were 3 applicants shortlisted and interviews were held on the 2 September 2019. Unfortunately two of the applicants did not turn up for their interview, however the remaining applicant was successful in being appointed.
13. The remaining posts will be advertised once again in the coming weeks.

Resomation

14. Water cremation is the new, greener alternative to flame cremation and burial. Giving people an environmentally friendly option that offers a natural process using water instead of flames.
15. This natural approach to cremation uses water instead of flame to reduce the body to ashes and offers people the choice of a gentler, more environmentally-friendly end of life solution.
16. Families across North America are already choosing this natural process for their departed loved ones.
17. With a growing global population that is becoming increasingly aware of their environmental footprint more and more people are seeking greener alternatives, both in life and in death.
18. With no harmful emissions and wider environmental benefits, water cremation is considered a natural alternative to existing end of life solutions, giving people a new, modern option to consider when planning a funeral.

What are the benefits?

By offering water cremation to families in our community, we could:

- i. Provide a greener alternative to people at the end of life so they have an environmentally friendly choice;
 - ii. Be one of the first in the country to introduce this as a service;
 - iii. Be part of something that is modernising the funeral industry and changing the way people make a choice at the end of life
19. This method of cremation is new to the industry and a further report will be presented to Members once more information is available and initial discussions with the water authority have been undertaken.

Service Asset Management Plan

20. The Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was presented to Members on 27 September 2018 and has now been updated to provide further direction and highlight future budget pressures for the Joint Committee. The SAMP is attached at Appendix 2 and will need to be refined in line with any future decisions taken by Members.
21. The Service Asset Management Plan is split into four priorities of maintenance need and includes all of the completed and planned crematorium improvement works.

Priority 1 essential works for 2020/21 have been estimated to the sum of £143,320. These will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for next year. Some of the works include:

- Carry out energy improvement works
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 hearths x1
- Installation of memorial trees
- Installation of replacement tribute screens
- Installation of new bins

Priority 2 works, which will need to feature in 2021/22 budget plans have been estimated to total £88,000. Some of the works include:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 cremators x1

Priority 3 works, which would fall beyond the next two years, have been estimated to the sum of £8,500 and the works are set out below:

- Carry out Re-lining of 2 hearths x1

Longer term works have been costed to the sum of £96,500 and some of the works include:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 cremators
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 hearths

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Appendix 1: Implications

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