

**Central Durham Crematorium
Joint Committee**

27 September 2019

**Quarterly Performance and
Operational Report**



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

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

Executive summary

- 2 This report provides Members of the Central Durham 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 Central Durham 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 Crematorium's involvement in Durham's Heritage Open Days programme.
 - e. Note the potential to introduce Resomation cremations in the future.
 - f. Note and approve the content of the Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 3, which will be factored into budget planning in 2020/21 and beyond.

Background

- 4 This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with a quarterly update of performance and operational matters at the crematorium.

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 period last year:

	2018/19	2019/20	Change
June	183 + 0*	164 + 2*	-19 + 2*
July	173 + 2*	186 + 1*	+13 – 1*
August	186 + 1*	166 + 2*	-20 + 1*
TOTAL	542 + 3*	516 + 5*	-26 + 2*

* = Non-Viable Foetus (NVF) ** = Stillborns (STs) *** = Body parts

- 6 The full profile of where families came from can be seen in Appendix 2. In summary 165 came from Durham, 23 came from Spennymoor and 328 from outside of the area. There have been 5 NVF cremations undertaken for the period covered by this report compared to 3 in the comparable period last year, which is an increase of 2 NVF and a decrease of 26 Cremations. Funeral directors have experienced similar trends.

Memorials

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

	June – Aug 2018/19		June – Aug 2019/20	
	Number	£	Number	£
Vase Blocks	4	2,642	4	2,346
Large Plaques	13	5,466	13	5,436
Small Plaques	1	261	2	522
Niche	1	178	1	1,215
Renewal	19	2,598	21	3,657
Total	38	11,145	41	13,176

- 8 In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 41 / £13,176 compares to 38 / £11,145 in the same period last year. This shows an increase of 3 / £2,031 year on year.

Operational Matters

Green Flag Award

- 9 The Green Flag Award recognises good quality parks and green spaces and is a sign to visitors that sites are well maintained and managed with excellent facilities. Central Durham Crematorium once again made a joint bid with South Road Cemetery and was 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 South Road Cemetery) and is in addition to the award of Gold Star Status by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

Staffing

- 11 Members agreed at the April 2019 meeting to advertise for the Relief Crematorium Attendant posts and this was carried out both internally at Durham and Spennymoor Councils and externally.
- 12 There were three 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.

Heritage Open Weekend

- 14 Members may recall that Durham Crematorium has been part of Durham's 'Heritage Open Days' programme for several years now.
- 15 Once again we opened our doors to the general public for behind the scenes guided tours between 19 and 22 September 2019 and an update will be provided to Members at the meeting.

Resomation

- 16 Water cremation is the new, greener alternative to flame cremation and burial and it is considered an opportune time to inform Members of this emerging cremation option, which gives people an environmentally friendly option that offers a natural process using water and chemicals instead of flames.

- 17 This natural approach to cremation uses water and chemicals instead of flames to reduce the body to ashes and offers people the choice of a gentler, more environmentally-friendly end of life solution.
- 18 Families across North America are already choosing this natural process for their departed loved ones.
- 19 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.
- 20 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
- 21 This method of cremation is new to the industry and trials have been undertaken in England with a water authority, however the results are still to be announced. This is essential for the industry because crematoriums will need to submit permits to their Water Authority for approval before resomation can be introduced. A more detailed report will be presented to Members once more information is available and initial discussions with the our water authority have been undertaken.

Service Asset Management Plan

- 22 The last Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was presented to Members on 26 September 2018 and has now been updated to provide further direction and highlight future investment requirements for the Joint Committee. The SAMP is attached at Appendix 3 and will need to be refined in line with any future decisions taken by Members.

- 23 The Service Asset Management Plan is split into four priorities of maintenance need and includes all of the completed and planned crematorium improvement works.
- 24 Priority 1 essential works for 2020/21 have been estimated to the sum of £233,170. These will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for next year. Some of the works include:
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 1
 - Carry out Re-lining of cremators x 3
 - Carry out enlarging of cremator 1
 - Carry out the replacement of grass with block paving
 - To provide new surfacing to memorial garden.
 - To remove existing turning circle.
 - To provide and install new liner for water fountain.
 - To provide and install new viewing screens.
 - To provide and install new catafalque
 - To replace the chapel dome.
 - To provide and install security viewing camera.
 - To purchase and install 2 memorial trees.

Priority 2 works, which will need to feature in 2021/22 budget plans have been estimated to total £46,890. Some of the works include:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out a replacement for ride on grass cutter
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 1

Priority 3 works, which would fall beyond the next two years, have been costed to the sum of £3,450 and the works include:

- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 1

Longer term works have now been costed to the sum of £137,090 and some of the works include:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of cremators x 3, Year 2024
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 3, Year 2024

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report

Finance

As identified in the report with regards to the position of the Income.

Consultation

Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were consulted on the contents of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no Equality and Diversity implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no Human Rights implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications associated with this report.

Risk

As identified in the report.

Procurement

There are no procurement issues associated with this report.

Appendix 2: Breakdown of Figures

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total Jun-Aug
Durham	54	64	47	165
Barnard Castle	1			1
Billingham	1		1	2
Bishop Auckland	2	4	2	8
Blackhall		2	3	5
Binchester		1		1
Burnhope		1	1	2
Chester Le Street	13	10	11	34
Chilton	1	1		2
Consett			1	1
Crook	3	5	3	11
Darlington	1	1		2
Easington	4	7	2	13
Esh Winning	1	2	3	6
Fencehouses	1		1	2
Ferryhill	6	5	5	16
Fishburn		1		1
Gateshead	1		1	2
Great Lumley	2		1	3
Hartlepool	2	1	2	5
Haswell	1		1	2
Hetton Le Hole	2	4	1	7
Horden	2	2	2	6
Houghton	4	3	7	14
Hunwick	1			1
Kimblesworth		1		1
Lanchester		1	1	2
Langley Park		1	2	3
Middlesborough		1		1
Murton	5	2	4	11
Nettlesworth		1		1
New Brancepeth			1	1
Newcastle	1	2		3
Newton Aycliffe	4	3	3	10
Ouston			2	2
Peterlee	14	18	13	45
Sacrison	4	2	6	12
Scotland	2			2

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total Jun-Aug
Seaham	7	10	7	24
Sedgefield	2	2	2	6
Sildon		1		1
Shotton	4	1	3	8
South Hetton		1	1	2
Spennymoor	8	11	4	23
Stanhope		1	1	2
Stanley		1		1
Station Town			1	1
Stockton	1	1	2	4
Sunderland	1		4	5
Sunnybrow	1			1
Southern England	1	1	1	3
Thornley	1	1		2
Tow Law	1	1	1	3
Trimdon	1	1	3	5
Washington		1	1	2
West Auckland			1	1
West Cornforth		1	2	3
Wheatley Hill	2			2
Willington		2	2	4
Wingate	1	2	3	6
Yorkshire		1		1
Total	164	186	166	516