

**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 current situation with regards to the relief crematorium attendant's position.
  - (d) Agree to create a full time Technical Assistant post.
  - (e) Note the updated position with regards to the recycling of metals scheme
  - (f) Note the completion of the crematorium website.

## 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 September 2019 to 31 December 2019 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>Change</b>
September	93	116	+ 23
October	121	125	+ 4
November	116	116	0
December	97	117	+ 20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>+ 47</b>

- 6 In summary there were 474 cremations undertaken during the period, compared to 427 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 47 year on year.

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

Gateshead	115
Durham	264
Outside Area	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>

- 7 Members may recall that in April 2019 two new charges were introduced for cheaper cremation options, being a Direct Cremation - Attended (No service) costing £590 and a Direct Cremation - Unattended (No service) costing £450.
- 8 Between 1 April 2019 and 31 December 2019, we have carried out the following number of direct cremations:
- 0 Direct cremations - Attended (No service)  
19 Direct cremations - Unattended (No service)

## Memorials

- 9 The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in period 1 September 2019 to 31 December 2019 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year.

	(Sept – Dec)	2018/19	(Sept – Dec)	2019/20
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	8	3,360	5	2,100
Small Plaques	51	14,076	16	4,416
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>17,436</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6,516</b>

- 10 The number and value of memorials 21 / £6,516 compares to 59 / £17,436 in the same period in 2018/19, a decrease of 38 / £10,920 year on year. This decrease is down to the introduction of the small memorial towers around the grounds which become very popular when they were first installed last year.

### Green Flag Application

- 11 Members may recall from the September 2019 meeting that Mountsett Crematorium was successful in retaining its Green Flag Award for the eighth year running.
- 12 An application will be submitted for the 2020 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.

### Staffing

- 13 Members agreed at the September 2019 meeting to advertise once again for the relief Crematorium Attendant posts.
- 14 There were 4 applicants shortlisted and following interviews on 19 December 2019 we have employed two relief Crematorium Attendants. One attendant will provide cover at Mountsett Crematorium and the second attendant will cover both Mountsett and Durham Crematoriums.
- 15 Members may also recall that the Business Administration Apprentice began her employment on 3 September 2018 on a two-year fixed term contract, which is due to come to an end on 2 September 2020. The postholder has proven to be a valuable asset to the crematorium and is now considered integral to the existing operation.
- 16 There are two options for Members to consider when the fixed term contract ends:
- Create a full time Technical Assistant post from September 2020 and freeze the Apprentice post. The cost of a Technical Assistant would be £26,397, which would result in additional full year costs being incurred of £10,260.

- Replace the Business Administration Apprentice when the current post holder completes her apprenticeship in September 2020.

17 It is proposed that we create a full time Technical Assistant post once the apprenticeship contract comes to an end, in order to ensure business continuity for the longer-term benefit of the crematorium. The increased costs in 2020/21 (from September 2020 to March 2021) of £5,985 has been factored into the 2020/21 budget.

## **Recycling of Metals Scheme**

- 18 As Members may recollect at the last meeting extra funds from collections in 2018 had resulted in a 2nd round of nominations being made available; therefore, we nominated The Royal British Legion.
- 19 The Crematorium recently received a cheque from the recycling of metals from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £8,000 for The Royal British Legion charity.
- 20 Arrangements were made for the cheque to be presented to The Royal British Legion by the Committee Vice Chair and a photograph of the presentation is attached at Appendix 2.

## **Website**

- 21 Members may recall that an agreement was made to produce a website specific to the Crematorium and this has involved a lot of work from various departments to complete. The website went live on 16 December 2019 and can be accessed at [www.mountsetcrem.co.uk](http://www.mountsetcrem.co.uk)
- 22 The website includes an online version of the Book of Remembrance and we have already received positive feedback from members of the public.
- 23 Future developments of the website include publicising the daily Order of Services and Members will be kept informed when these developments go live.

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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

### **Climate Change**

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 D Bradford along with Andrew Gales and Ken Bailey from The Royal British Legion attending the cheque presentation.