Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

29 January 2020

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:

(i) Note the current performance of the crematorium.
(ii) Note the current situation with regards to the relief crematorium attendant's position.
(iii) Agree to create a full time Technical Assistant post.
(iv) Note the continued success with regards to the Green Flag Award.
(v) Note the situation with regards to Heritage open Weekend.
(vi) Note the updated position with regards to the recycling of metals scheme.
(vii) Agree to the friends of the Woodland Burial site being nominated in the next round of recycling of metals scheme.
(viii) Agree to St Cuthbert's Hospice providing a Christmas tree again in 2020.
(ix) Note the current situation with regards to the improvements to the roadway.
(x) Note the current situation with regards to the electricity disruption and discuss which option they wish officers to pursue.

Performance Update - Number of Cremations

4 The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 September to 31 December 2019 inclusive, with comparative data in the same period last year:

	2018/19	**2019/20**	**Change**
September	181 + 2*	173 + 2*	- 8 + 0*
October	195 + 3*	213 + 2*	+ 18 - 1*
November	207 + 2*	204 + 0*	- 3 - 2*
December	173 + 2*	207 + 1*	+ 34 - 1*
TOTAL	**756 + 9***	**797 + 5***	**+ 41 - 4***

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

5 The full profile of where families came from can be seen in Appendix 2. In summary 250 came from Durham, 46 came from Spennymoor and 501 from other areas. There have been 5 NVF cremations undertaken for the period covered by this report compared to 9 in the comparable period last year. There were 41 more cremations undertaken in the period September to December 2019 compared to the same period last year.

6 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.

7 Between 1 April 2019 and 31 December 2019, we have carried out the following number of direct cremations:

0 Direct cremations - Attended (No service)
9 Direct cremations - Unattended (No service)

Memorials

8 The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period September to December 2019 compared to the same period the previous year.

	Sept-Dec	**2018/19**	**Sept-Dec**	**2019/20**
	Number	**£**	**Number**	**£**
Vase Blocks	4	2,454	6	4,006
Large Plaques	18	7,446	11	4,652
Small Plaques	6	1,566	1	261
Niche	4	5,016	2	2,644
Renewal	24	3,982	35	5,322
Total	**56**	**20,464**	**55**	**16,885**

9 The number and value of memorials sold 55 / £16,885 compares to 56 / £20,464 in the same period last year, which is a year on year decrease of 1 memorial sold and a decrease of £3,579 in terms of revenue generated.

Operational Matters

Staffing

10 Members agreed at the September 2019 meeting to advertise once again for the relief Crematorium Attendant posts.

11 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.

12 Members may recall that the Business Administration Apprentice began her employment on 10 September 2018 on a two-year fixed term contract, which is due to come to an end on 31 August 2020. The postholder has proven to be a valuable asset to the crematorium and is considered to be integral to the existing operation.

13 There are two options for Members to consider when the fixed term contact 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 £9,113.

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

14 It is proposed that members approve the creation of 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 £5,316 has been factored into the 2020/21 revenue budget.

Green Flag Award

15 Members will recall from the September 2019 meeting that the Central Durham Crematorium was successful in retaining its Green Flag award for the eighth year running.

16 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.

Heritage Open Weekend

17 Members may be aware that the Durham heritage open weekend has been running for several years and Durham Crematorium has been part of this event.

18 We have been asked to participate in September 2020 so once again we will be opening our doors for the general public to have guided tours to see what goes on behind the scenes.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

19 The recycling of metals scheme has again produced a 2nd round of surplus nationally in 2019.

20 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 If U Care Share Foundation.

21 Arrangements were made for the cheque to be presented to If U Care Share Foundation by the Committee Chair and a photograph of the presentation, along with a letter of thanks is attached at Appendix 3.

22 We have been asked if a future nomination for the Woodland Burial site be put forward for the Friends of the Woodland Burial site who act as a coordinating group between the bereaved, funeral directors and the Council, offering a 24hr helpline, 365 days a year, including a Friends website, dealing with enquiries and offering advice to support the bereaved. They provide the use of the lodge for services, meetings, refreshments and on-site toilet facilities with disabled access. They endeavour to assist the bereaved, and anyone who is interested in volunteering, to become involved in the conservation, protection and development of the site.

Christmas Tree

23 For the ninth year running it was agreed that St. Cuthbert's Hospice could provide a Christmas tree and baubles with a facility for visitors to write a personal message and place it on the Christmas tree with a bauble. This proved to be very popular again with visitors and a number of messages were placed on the tree with a substantial amount of money being donated to St. Cuthbert's Hospice.

24 St. Cuthbert's Hospice has requested that they be allowed to continue to provide a Christmas tree again in 2020. The Hospice supplies the tree and decorations at no cost to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

25 No other requests have been received from any organisation to place a Christmas tree at the Crematorium.

Improvements to Roadway

26 Members may recall that the 2019/20 Capital Programme included carrying out alterations to the existing roadway in order to allow two-way traffic to enter and exit the Crematorium safely and to alleviate the current pinch point. This work will hopefully be completed by the end of March 2020.

Electricity Disruption

27 Some Members may be aware that on Friday 17 January the Crematorium suffered an electrical disruption due to a cable being severed from the new housing development opposite the Crematorium. The electricity was down for several hours and a back-up generator was delivered by the electricity company, which was still on-site at the time of writing the report. It is envisaged that this will be only a short-term measure.

28 Members may be aware that a study with regards to the self-generation of electricity at the Crematorium was undertaken a number of years ago, however this was not progressed. Members need to be aware of the impact of this disruption and to discuss options to help mitigate the risk of further disruption in the future.

29 Option 1 - Investigate the electricity self-generation scheme again and bring costs and implications back to a future meeting.
Option 2 - Investigate the possibility of acquiring a backup generator and advise members of the cost.

Contact: Graham Harrison Tel: 03000 265 606

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.

Climate Change

There are no climate change issues associated with this report.

Appendix 2: Breakdown of Figures

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total Sep-Dec
Durham	55	64	66	65	**250**
Barnard Castle				1	**1**
Birtley		1	1		**2**
Bishop Auckland	3	4	2	9	**18**
Bishop Middleham		1			**1**
Blackhall	2	6	2	3	**13**
Chester Le Street	10	16	11	12	**49**
Chilton	2	1	2	1	**6**
Consett	2	2	2	1	**7**
Crook	4	5	7	8	**24**
Darlington				1	**1**
Easington	3	4	1	7	**15**
East Rainton	1	1		1	**3**
Esh Winning	2	2	1	1	**6**
Fencehouses	2	1			**3**
Ferryhill	6	7	6	5	**24**
Fishburn	1	4	2	1	**8**
Gateshead	1		2	4	**7**
Great Lumley	1		1	2	**4**
Hartlepool	2	1	1	1	**5**
Haswell			1		**1**
Hetton Le Hole	4	6	4	5	**19**
Hexham				1	**1**
Horden	5	4	8	1	**18**
Houghton	3	2	7	3	**15**
Howden Le Wear		1			**1**
Kimblesworth	1		2		**3**
Lanchester	1			1	**2**
Langley Park	2				**2**
Morpeth	1				**1**
Murton	2	4	2	5	**13**
New Brancepeth		1	1		**2**
Newcastle		1		1	**2**
Newton Aycliffe	1	7	4	3	**15**
Ouston		1	1		**2**
Pelton	1		1	2	**4**
Peterlee	8	12	13	9	**42**
Sacriston	3		2	3	**8**

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total Sep-Dec
Scotland		1			**1**
Seaham	7	6	9	8	**30**
Sedgefield	1	4		3	**8**
Shildon	1		1		**2**
Shotton	7	5	1	5	**18**
South Hetton	1		1	1	**3**
Spennymoor	10	16	11	9	**46**
Stanley	1		1		**2**
Station Town	1	3		1	**5**
Stockton			1	1	**2**
Sunderland		3	1	1	**5**
Sunnybrow				1	**1**
Southern England			1	1	**2**
Thornley	2			1	**3**
Tow Law	1				**1**
Trimdon	1	4	8	5	**18**
Washington	3	1	1	1	**6**
West Auckland	2			1	**3**
West Cornforth		1	3	2	**6**
Wheatley Hill	1	2	3	2	**8**
Willington	4	3	2	5	**14**
Wingate	1	4	5		**10**
Wynard			1		**1**
Yorkshire/Lancashire		1	1	2	**4**
Total	**173**	**213**	**204**	**207**	**797**

Appendix 3: Re-cycling of metals cheque presentation

Cllr Neil Forster, chair of Durham Crematorium Joint Committee presenting a cheque for £8,000 to Dominic McDonough for If U Care Share Foundation.

IF U CARE
SHARE
FOUNDATION

DURHAM CREMATORIUM
RECEIVED
- 6 NOV 2019

Graham Harrison,
Central Durham Crematorium JC,
Durham Crematorium,
South Road,
Durham.
DH1 3TQ.

5th November 2019.

Dear Graham,

I am writing to thank you for your recent donation to If U Care Share Foundation of £8,000.00.

Donations are always gratefully received and we are so very, very grateful to you and everyone who supports us.

The money donated from the ICCM Recycling of Metals Scheme will make a difference, as well as trying to prevent another person going through the pain of losing a loved one to suicide.

If U Care Share Foundation has three main objectives: Prevention, Intervention & support of those families affected by suicide. The money you have kindly donated will help to make a difference and achieve our objectives.

Once again thanks so much for your donation.

Kind Regards,

Allison Younger
If U Care Share Foundation