

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 28 June 2021 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Durham County Council

Councillors A Batey, V Andrews, B Bainbridge, C Hampson, A Hanson, P Heaviside, J Nicholson (substitute for J Charlton), K Rooney and M Walton

Gateshead Council:

Councillors D Bradford (Vice-Chair)

1 Membership of the Joint Committee

Resolved: That the Membership of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee for the ensuing year be noted.

2 Apologies for Absence, if any

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Charlton (Durham County Council) and Councillors K Dodds, D Burnett, L Green and S Green (Gateshead Council).

3 Substitute Members, if any

Councillor J Nicholson substitute for Councillor J Charlton (Durham County Council)

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Appointment of Chair

Councillor C Hampson nominated Councillor A Batey for the position of Chair to the Joint Committee. The nomination was seconded by Councillor A Hanson.

There being no further nominations, it was **unanimously resolved:**

That Councillor A Batey be elected as Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

Councillor A Batey in the Chair

6 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair sought nominations for Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. Councillor A Batey nominated Councillor D Bradford for the position of Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee. The nomination was Seconded by Councillor C Hampson.

There being no further nominations, it was **unanimously resolved:**

That Councillor D Bradford (Gateshead Council) be appointed Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

7 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8 Changes to Constitution/Terms of Reference

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Clerk which provided details of a review of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee's Constitution, in accordance with the Annual Governance Statement requirements (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Solicitor advised that the review had not highlighted any requirements for change to the current constitution and therefore reaffirmed continuation of the existing Constitution and governance arrangements set out within.

Resolved:

That the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be reapproved following a review being completed in accordance with Annual Governance Statement requirements.

9 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement

The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Corporate Director Resources (Interim) and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which set out details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2020 to March 2021 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The advised that the AGS was presented for approval as part of the consideration of the Joint Committee's Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2021.

Resolved:

- i) That the content of the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement be noted.
- ii) The Chair and Treasurer approve and sign the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement as part of the consideration of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2021

10 Revenue Outturn and Joint Committees Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2021

The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) which sought approval of the Joint Committees Annual Return (attached at Appendix 3) for Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee for the financial year ended 31 March 2021. The report further included details of the final outturn position against the approved budgets for 2020/21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was noted that there was an amendment to the recommendation of the report at paragraph 9 to remove the words Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee and replace with Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee.

Resolved:

That the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee:

- (i) Note the revenue outturn position as at 31 March 2021, including the year end position with regards to the reserves and balances of the Joint Committee.
- (ii) Approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 (attached at Appendix 3).
- (iii) Approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 (attached at Appendix 3).
- (iv) The Chair, Clerk and Treasurer sign the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 (attached at Appendix 3).

11 Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar which provided Members with an update relating to performance and other operational matters (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Bereavement Services Manager reported that there were 223 cremations undertaken during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 May 2021, compared to 428 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 205 for the period. He explained that there has been a significant increase in cremations over the last 18 months due to Covid 19, however numbers in the current year were significantly lower than pre-Covid levels.

In respect of the sale of memorial plaques the number and value of memorials sold of 18 / £4,014, compares to 5 / £1,305 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 13 memorials sold (£2,709).

Moving on to the installation of the 2 new cremators with mercury abatement equipment to replace the existing cremators, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar explained that whilst work continued, the temporary cremator, which had been invaluable during Covid 19 was the main operational cremator.

He explained that following the removal of one of the existing cremators, work on the construction of the replacement cremator began on Tuesday 1 June and the project was currently on schedule as per the timetable contained in the report. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved:

That the current performance of the crematorium be noted.

12 Forward Plan 2021/22:

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) which set out a suggested forward plan of meetings of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming year.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and forward plan of meetings be noted.