

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 29 June 2021** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Blakey, D Brown, J Chaplow, J Cosslett, S Quinn, K Robson, A Simpson, M Stead and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council:

Town Councillors N Foster, C Maddison and D Ranyard

1 Membership of the Joint Committee

The Clerk to the Joint Committee, S Grigor asked the Committee to note the changes to the membership for the Joint Committee:

Durham County Council: K Batey, J Blakey, D Brown, J Chaplow,
J Cosslett, K Fantarrow, O Gunn,
S Quinn, K Robson, A Simpson,
M Stead and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council: N Foster, C Maddison and D Ranyard

Resolved:

That the change in the membership of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee be noted.

2 Appointment of Chair

The Clerk to the Joint Committee asked for nominations for Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year noting that, wherever possible, the Chair and Vice-Chair alternated between the two constituent Authorities, with Spennymoor Town Council having held the Chair previously.

Accordingly, Councillor J Chaplow was proposed for the position of Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. No further proposals were made.

Resolved:

That by unanimous agreement, Councillor J Chaplow be appointed Chair for the ensuing year.

COUNCILLOR J Chaplow in the Chair

3 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair asked for nominations for Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year noting that this should be a Member from Spennymoor Town Council. Councillor N Foster was proposed for the position of Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. No further proposals were made.

Resolved:

That by unanimous agreement, Councillor N Foster be appointed Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from K Batey and K Fantarrow.

5 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

6 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

7 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.

8 Changes to Constitution/Terms of Reference

The Clerk to the Joint Committee referred Members to the report within the agenda papers outlining the Terms of Reference for the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

Members were reminded that following audit reviews it was recommended that the Joint Committee undertake an annual review of the Terms of Reference and update as necessary. It was explained that there were no proposed changes to the Constitution for the Joint Committee, which was set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

Resolved:

That the Members of the Joint Committee note the Review of the Terms of Reference and Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 to the report

9 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement

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

The Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, Philip Curran noted that the AGS was attached at Appendix 2 of the report and was required to be considered and approved in advance of the approval of the accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2021. He explained that the AGS demonstrated how the Joint Committee reviews the effectiveness of its system of internal control and therefore complied the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. It was added that there were seven assertions within the AGS relating to governance arrangements and the report set out how the Joint Committee had complied with each assertion, providing Members with assurance that governance arrangements were sound and operating effectively.

Resolved:

- (i) The content of the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement is 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 Central Durham 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).

Resolved:

That the Central Durham 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 Quarterly Performance and Operational Report

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar asked Members to note the performance figures from 1 April 2021 to 31 May 2021 and the comparison to the same period for 2020, highlighting that there was a net decrease of 451 cremations and an increase of 1 NVF cremations year on year. It was noted there was a total of 287 for the two-month period with the April to May profile breakdown, as fully set out at Appendix 2, showing 87 from Durham, 13 from Spennymoor and 192 from outside of the area. Members were reminded of the increase in cremations over the last 18 months as a result of the pandemic, however, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar noted the numbers in the current year were significantly lower than pre-COVID levels.

Members were asked to note that the number of memorials sold, 54, had increased by 27 in comparison to the same period the previous year, with income being £7,828 more than the comparable period last year.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar noted that, in respect of the Recycling of Metals Scheme, there had been two rounds of surplus nationally in 2020 and a cheque in the sum of £10,000 had been received from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management for St. Cuthbert's Hospice and another in the sum of £10,000 for Antenatal Results and Choices. He added that a further round of funding had been announced and the Chyrelle Addams Breast Cancer Trust had been nominated.

Resolved:

- (i) That the current performance of the Crematorium be noted.
- (ii) That the updated position as regards the recycling of metals scheme 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.

Councillor N Foster noted that traditionally one of the meetings of the Joint Committee would be held at Spennymoor and added it may also be advantageous for new Members for a visit to the Crematorium to be arranged. The Chair noted that could be arranged. Councillor M Stead noted it would be preferable to tie in with the next meeting of the Joint Committee. The Chair noted options would be looked at and reported back to Members. Councillor N Foster added that in the past that meetings and visits had been held later in the day, at 4.00 or 5.00pm to accommodate services. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar noted meetings and visits after the last service of the day were more practical.

Resolved:

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

13 Any Other Business

Councillor D Ranyard asked as regards any further developments in relation to works to widen the entrance to the crematorium site to allow two cars to pass. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar noted that work had not yet been carried out, with final drawings for the entrance gateway and as soon as that entered production works would start.

The Chair asked if there was any further information or progress in relation to 'water cremations' or resomation. The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar noted that the current situation was dealing with the impact of the pandemic, however, further information would be presented to the Joint Committee at a future meeting.