

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

At a **Annual Meeting of Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Thursday 29 June 2023** at **2.00 pm**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, D Brown, J Cosslett, S Quinn, K Robson, M Stead, C Varty and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council:

Town Councillors N Foster, C Maddison and D Ranyard

1 Membership of the Joint Committee

Resolved:

That the membership of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee be noted:

Durham County Council: R Adcock-Forster, J Blakey, D Brown, J Chaplow, J Cosslett, S Quinn, K Robson, A Simpson, M Stead, C Varty and M Wilson

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

2 Appointment of Chair

Nominations were sought for the Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

County Councillor S Quinn was proposed for the position of Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. No further proposals were made.

Resolved:

That County Councillor S Quinn be appointed Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

COUNCILLOR S Quinn in the Chair

3 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair sought nominations for Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

Town 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 Town Councillor N Foster be appointed Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Blakey and J Chaplow.

5 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

6 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8 Changes to the Constitution/Terms of Reference

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

The Clerk 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 in Appendix 2 of the report.

Resolved:

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

9 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

The Joint Committee considered a Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which provided details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2022 to March 2023 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement be noted;
- (ii) That the Chair and Treasurer approve and sign the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement as part of the consideration of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

10 Revenue Outturn and Joint Committees Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which sought approval of the Joint Committees Annual Return for Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee for the financial year ended 31 March 2023. The report also included details of the final outturn position against the approved budgets for 2022/23 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the revenue outturn position as at 31 March 2023, including the year end position with regards to the reserves and balances of the Joint Committee be noted;
- (ii) That the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be approved;
- (iii) That the Accounting Statements 2022/23 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be approved;
- (iv) That the Chair, Clerk and Treasurer sign the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

11 **Quarterly Performance and Operational Report - 1 April to 31 May 2023**

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

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar reported that there were 375 cremations undertaken during the period 1 April to 31 May 2023, the same number compared to the comparable period last year. It was noted that 111 families were from Durham, 17 from Spennymoor and 247 families were from other areas.

The number and value of memorial plaques sold were 41 / £10,347 compared to 45 / £12,451 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 4 memorials sold and £2,104 in terms of income generated.

It was reported that 2 relief members of staff had been appointed to assist in the operational areas of the crematorium and were currently undertaking training in all aspects of the roles within the crematorium.

As in previous years, arrangements would be made for representation at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition which was being held at Kenilworth from the 18-20 September 2023. It was proposed that the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chair attend the conference to represent the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Durham Crematorium has been part of the Durham Heritage Open Weekend for several years and has agreed to participate this year which would be held from 14-17 September 2023.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar referred to the current terms and conditions with regards artificial flowers and advised that he had been approached by members of the public to review the terms and conditions with a view to allowing plastic/silk flowers to be placed in rose bowls etc beneath the plaques/niche units. Therefore, Members were asked to review this and decide if they were willing to allow plastic/silk flowers or to uphold the current terms and conditions.

Members discussed the issue of artificial flowers and the effect it would have on jobs and the possibility of leading to other items which would obstruct ground maintenance. It was highlighted that artificial flowers deteriorate and there was no way of recycling, whereas real flowers were recycled into compost. Following the discussion, it was agreed that the current policy remains unchanged.

Responding to a query regarding staffing, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed that relief staffing was included in staffing budget that had been set and added that following the completion of training, the relief staff would cover annual leave and sickness absence as and when required.

Resolved:

- (i) That the current performance of the crematorium be noted;
- (ii) That the staffing update at the crematorium be noted.
- (iii) That attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2023 be noted;
- (iv) That dates for the Heritage Open Weekend be noted;
- (v) That the distribution of recycling income and subsequent charity nominations be noted;
- (vi) That the terms and conditions in relation to artificial flowers remain unchanged.

12 Forward Plan 2023/24

The Joint Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which set out a suggested forward plan of meetings of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming year 2023/24 (for copy see file of minutes).

It was noted that the Annual meeting venues alternate between Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council and the Annual Meeting in June 2024 would be held at Spennymoor Town Council.

It was suggested that a future meeting be held at the crematorium for new Members to have the opportunity to view the facilities.

Resolved:

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

13 Any Other Business

Crematorium Conference

Town Councillor N Foster provided the Joint Committee with an update following his attendance at the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain conference.