

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

27 September 2023

Performance and Operational Report



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with an update relating to performance and other operational matters.

Executive summary

- 2 This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with an update of performance and operational matters at the crematorium.

Recommendation(s)

- 3 It is recommended that Members of the Central Durham Joint Committee:
 - a. Note the current performance of the crematorium.
 - b. Note the current position with regards to the staffing.
 - c. Note the updated position with regards to the Green Flag scheme and consider whether to continue with applying for the award.
 - d. Note and agree the content of the Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 3, which will be factored into budget planning in 2024/25 and beyond.

Background

- 4 This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with an update of performance and operational matters at the crematorium since the last meeting of the Joint Committee.

Performance Update - Number of Cremations

- 5 The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 June 2023 to 31 August 2023 inclusive, with comparative data in the same period last year:

	2022/23	2023/24	Change
June	192 + 1*	205 + 2*	+13 + 1*
July	206 + 2*	174 + 2*	- 32 + 0*
August	198 + 1*	209 + 1*	+11 + 0*
TOTAL	596 + 4*	588 + 5*	- 8 + 1*

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

- 6 The full profile of where families came from can be seen in Appendix 2. In summary 166 came from Durham, 21 came from Spennymoor and 401 from other areas. There have been 5 NVF cremations undertaken for the period covered by this report compared to 4 in the comparable period last year. There were 8 less cremations undertaken in the period June to August 2023 compared to the same period last year.

Memorials

- 7 The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period June to August 2023 compared to the same period the previous year.

	Jun-Aug 2022/23	Jun-Aug 2023/24
	Number	Number
Vase Blocks	6	3
Large Plaques	12	20
Small Plaques	1	1
Niche	2	0
Renewal	41	29
Memorial leaves	14	16
Total	76	69

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
Vase Blocks	4,044	2,004
Large Plaques	5,154	8,760
Small Plaques	276	273
Niche	2,491	0
Renewal	7,919	4,834
Memorial leaves	1,400	1,600
Total	21,284	17,471

- 8 The number and value of memorials sold 69 / £17,471 compares to 76 / £21,284 in the same period last year, which is a decrease of 7 memorials sold and a decrease of £3,813 year on year.

Operational Matters

Staffing

- 9 As members may recollect, we recently appointed 2 relief members of staff to assist in the operational areas of the crematorium. I can now confirm that they have undertaken all training and have recently passed their cremator operator test.

Cremators

10. For members information we recently had a service carried out in June 2023. On the inspection it was identified that there was an issue with the brickwork within the cremator as well as an issue with the charging door, also we were experiencing issues with regards to poor emission monitoring due to loose brickwork which was identified on the service.
11. A decision was therefore made to shut down this cremator due to Health and safety concerns from ourselves until a full reline could be undertaken. The reline is booked in for the middle of September.
12. This was not included in this year's budget as it had been factored into our 2024/25 SAMP. A sum of £68,900 is required for this work and this can be met from reserves.

Green Flag Application

13. The Green Flag Award recognises good quality parks and green spaces, and a sign to visitors that sites are well maintained and well managed with excellent facilities. Once again, this year Durham Crematorium was successful in obtaining a Green Flag Award for the twelfth year running, which is a great achievement.
14. This award is testimony to the dedication of the staff working at the Crematorium and comes on top of the award of Gold Star Status in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Accreditation.
15. Durham County Council has decided to withdraw from entering the green flag awards for cemeteries in future years.
16. By way of background Durham County Council and the Joint Committees have built up a good reputation for green flag Crematoria. Feedback from judging is valuable as to how we are performing and any improvements we can make.

17. Winning a green flag visibly demonstrates well managed cemeteries/crematoria, setting the benchmark standard for the management of outdoor space across the UK.
18. Holding a Green Flag visibly demonstrates to the local community that a clear improvement has been made to a site.
19. Upgrading a site to achieve Green Flag status can, for example, bring about improvements to health and education, reduce crime and improve the general cleanliness of an area, whilst at the same time providing a boost to its profile.
20. Therefore, I am seeking view from members if they wish us to continue with the green flag award for Durham Crematorium.

Service Asset Management Plan

21. The Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was presented to Members on 29th September 2022 and has been reviewed and updated to provide further direction and highlight future budget pressures for the Joint Committee. The SAMP is attached at Appendix 3 and will need to be refined in line with any future decisions taken by Members.
22. The Service Asset Management Plan is split into four priorities of maintenance need and includes all the completed and planned crematorium improvement works.

Priority 1 essential works for 2024/25 have been estimated to the sum of £1,648,130. These will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for next year. These works include:

- Re-decoration works.
- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth.
- Carry out installation of resin pathway around top memorial garden.
- Purchase and install resomation system/building.
- Replace carpets.
- Commission study for roof and gutter replacement where necessary.
- Carry out improvements to chapel area.
- Remove redundant radiators in chapel area.

Priority 2 works, which will need to feature in 2025/26 budget plans have been estimated to the sum of £123,000 and the works are set out below:

- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth.

- Carry out installation of resin pathway around turning circle.
- Carry out re-lining of 1 cremator.
- Carry out replacement of chapel lights.

Priority 3 works, which would fall beyond the next two years, have been estimated to the sum of £123,000 and the works are set out below:

- Re-decoration works x 1
- Carry out re-lining of 1 cremator.
- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth.

Longer term works have been costed to the sum of £401,400 and some of the works include:

- Re-decoration works x 3
- Carry out re-lining of 3 cremators x 2 Year 2028,2029
- Carry out re-lining of hearths x 9

Contact: Graham Harrison

Tel: 03000 265606

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

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total Jun- Aug
DURHAM	57	55	54	166
BARNARD CASTLE			1	1
BILLINGHAM	1			1
BISHOP AUCKLAND	5	7	4	16
BISHOP MIDDLEHAM		1	1	2
BLACKHALL	3	1	3	7
BIRTLEY	1		2	3
CHESTER LE STREET	13	10	7	30
CHILTON		2		2
CONSETT	1		1	2
CROOK	5	5	2	12
DARLINGTON			1	1
EASINGTON	4	4	10	18
EAST RAINTON			1	1
ESH	1			1
ESH WINNING	2	3	3	8
FENCEHOUSES		1	1	2
FERRYHILL	4	2	4	10
FISHBURN	1			1
GATESHEAD	2			2
GREAT LUMLEY	2	3	5	10
HARTLEPOOL		1	1	2
HASWELL		1	4	5
HETTON LE HOLE	3	2	8	13
HORDEN	4	4	4	12
HOUGHTON	11	7	3	21
HOWDEN	1			1
KIMBLESWORTH			1	1
LANCHESTER		1	2	3
LANGLEY PARK	5	2	3	10
MURTON	6	3	8	17
NEW BRANCEPETH	1	1	1	3
NEWCASTLE	1	1	1	3
NEWTON AYCLIFFE	4	4	3	11
NORTHUMBERLAND		2	1	3
OUSTON	2		2	4
PELTON	2			2
PETERLEE	15	14	12	41
SACRISTON	5	4	1	10
SEAHAM	11	6	14	31

SEDGEFIELD	2		4	6
SHILDON	1			1
SHOTTON	2	6	4	12
SOUTH HETTON	2	1	3	6
SPENNYMOOR	8	6	7	21
STANHOPE		2		2
STATION TOWN			1	1
STOCKTON			1	1
SUNDERLAND	1	2	1	4
SOUTHERN ENGLAND	1		1	2
THORNLEY		1	3	4
TRIMDON	4	2	3	9
WASHINGTON	2		1	3
WEST CORNFORTH	2	1	2	5
WHEATLEY HILL	3	3	2	8
WILLINGTON	2	2	4	8
WINGATE	2		3	5
YORKSHIRE		1		1
Total	205	174	209	588