

Mountsett 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 Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with an update relating to performance and other operational matters.

Executive summary

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

Recommendation(s)

- 3 It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett 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 2, which will be factored into budget planning in 2024/25 and beyond.

Background

- 4 This report provides Members of the Mountsett 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	114	122	+ 8
July	119	110	- 9
August	121	116	- 5
TOTAL	354	348	- 6

- 6 In summary there were 348 cremations undertaken during the period 1 June 2023 to 31 August 2023, compared to 354 in the comparable period last year. There were 6 less cremations undertaken in the period June to August 2023 compared to the same period last year.

- 7 The profile of where families came from can be seen below:

Gateshead	96
Durham	187
Outside Area	65
Total	348

Memorials

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

	Jun – Aug	2022/23	Jun – Aug	2023/24
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	3	1,260	4	1,716
Small Plaques	16	4,416	17	4,896
Leaves	7	700	15	1,500
Renewals	2	348	3	450
Total	28	6,724	39	8,562

- 9 The number and value of memorials sold 39 / £8,562 compares to 28 / £6,724 in the same period last year, which is an increase of 11 memorials sold and an increase of income of £1,838 year on year.

Operational Matters

Staffing

10. 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 and are now fully qualified in every aspect of crematorium operations.

Green Flag Application

11. 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 Mountsett Crematorium was successful in obtaining a Green Flag Award for the twelfth year running, which is a great achievement.
12. 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.
13. Durham County Council has decided to withdraw from entering the green flag awards for cemeteries in future years.
14. 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.
15. Winning a green flag visibly demonstrates well managed cemeteries/crematoria, setting the benchmark standard for the management of outdoor space across the UK.
16. Holding a Green Flag visibly demonstrates to the local community that a clear improvement has been made to a site.
17. 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.
18. Therefore, I am seeking view from members if they wish us to continue with the Green Flag award for Mountsett Crematorium.

Service Asset Management Plan

- 19 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 2 and will need to be refined in line with any future decisions taken by Members.
- 18 The Service Asset Management Plan is split into four priorities of maintenance need and includes all of the completed and planned crematorium improvement works.

Priority 1 essential works for 2024/25 have been estimated to the sum of £93,345. These will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for next year. These works include:

- Re-decoration works
- Supply and installation of memorial tree
- Installation of 3 additional small memorial towers
- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth
- Replacement of carpets where required
- To replace exterior flags to chapel entrance with resin pathway
- To carry out removal of yew hedge and replace with birds mouth fencing.

Priority 2 works, which will need to feature in 2025/26 budget plans have been estimated to the sum of £9,900 and the works are set out below:

- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth
- Installation of 3 small memorial towers

Priority 3 works, which would fall beyond the next two years, have been estimated to the sum of £215,600 and the works are set out below:

- Re-decoration works
- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth
- Installation of 3 additional small memorial towers
- Re-line cremators

Longer term works have been costed to the sum of £1,160,800 and some of the works include:

- Carry out re-lining of 2 hearths x 7 occasions.

- Installation of resomator
- Re-decoration Works x 7
- Carry out replacement of cooler cassettes
- Carry out re-lining of 2 cremators x 1 occasion.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

As outlined in the report.

Finance

As identified in the report.

Consultation

None, however, Officers of Gateshead Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comment/raise any detailed questions on the content of the report in advance of circulation to members of the Mountsett Crematorium.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications.

Human Rights

There are no implications.

Climate Change

There are no implications.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

Accommodation

There are no implications.

Risk

There are no implications.

Procurement

There are no implications.

Appendix 2: Service Asset Management Plan
