

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 a quarterly 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 staffing issues.
 - (c) Note the continued success with regards to the Green Flag Award.
 - (d) Note the updated position with regards to the recycling of metals scheme.
 - (e) Note the Consultation on review of Cremation Guidance PGN (5/12)

Background

- 4 Update reports relating to performance and other operational matters are presented to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee on a quarterly basis.

Performance Update - Number of Cremations

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

	2022/23	2023/24	Change
September	103	110	+ 7
October	103	118	+ 15
November	118	114	- 4
December	106	100	- 6
TOTAL	430	442	+ 12

- 6 In summary there were 442 cremations undertaken during the 2023/24 period, compared to 430 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 12 cremations for this period.

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

Gateshead	111
Durham	240
Outside Area	91
Total	442

Memorials

- 7 The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in period 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2023 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year.

	(Sept – Dec)	2022/23	(Sept – Dec)	2023/24
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	0	0	3	1,296
Small Plaques	21	5,796	15	4,308
Leaf Plaques	13	1,300	24	2,400
Renewals	3	522	2	360
Total	37	7,618	44	8,364

- 8 The number and value of memorials sold 44 / £8,364 compares to 37 / £7,618 in the same period in 2022/23, which is an increase of 7 memorials sold and a small increase of £ 746 year on year.

Staffing

- 9 For members information, one of our casual relief crematorium attendants has now left the Authority and the remaining relief is now covering a 10-month

appointment for one of our crematorium attendants who has been appointed as a bereavement officer. Therefore, we will need to advertise for 2 more casual reliefs.

Green Flag Application

- 10 Members may recall from the September 2023 meeting that Mountset Crematorium was successful in retaining its Green Flag Award for the twelfth year running.
- 11 An application will be submitted for the 2024 Award and progress will be reported back to future meetings. A management plan to maintain the required standards will be updated and any required works will be covered by existing budgets.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

- 12 Collections in the 2nd round of Metals nominations for 2023/24 have resulted in another round of nominations being made available therefore we have nominated 2 charities Marie Curie and Coping with Cancer North East. A bacs payment of £7,000 will be made to each Charity.

Consultation on review of Cremation Guidance PGN (5/12)

- 13 For members information the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs has carried out a consultation on proposed new guidance that will replace the existing crematoria guidance PG5/2 (12).
- 14 I have responded to the consultation, however if some of this proposed new guidance is implemented then there will be additional costs involved for the service. From 1st January 2027, all cremators will need to be fitted with appropriate fuel and electricity metering. The fitting of Nitrogen oxide (NOx) equipment may be required in the future. Also increased costs with regards to emission testing will be required, as well as the removal of the CAMEO scheme.
- 15 Once we have confirmation of these changes and additional costs then this will be factored into future budget setting.

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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