

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and
Scrutiny Committee
23 February 2024

Bereavement Services

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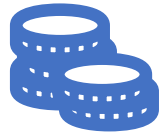
What will we cover?

- Statutory Duties
- Changing Demand
- Crematoria
- Cemeteries
- Future Cemetery Space
- Climate Change
- Benchmarking
- Future plans

Statutory Requirements

- Burial authorities are authorised, but not required, to provide burial grounds if they have available land. The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 regulates depth of burial, the need for grave and burial records and their storage, and the management of memorials (including their removal). The Order also empowers a burial authority to manage, regulate and control cemeteries, to lay out, repair and provide access to the cemetery, apply for part of the cemetery to be consecrated or set apart for some denominations, to provide chapels or mortuaries, to set certain fees and charges, and to maintain graves.
- This is covered under the provision of section 46 (i) of the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, “where the County Council of Durham must, cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the Council that no suitable arrangements have been or are being made otherwise than by the Authority”.

Links to the Council Plan



Our Economy



Our
Environment



Our People

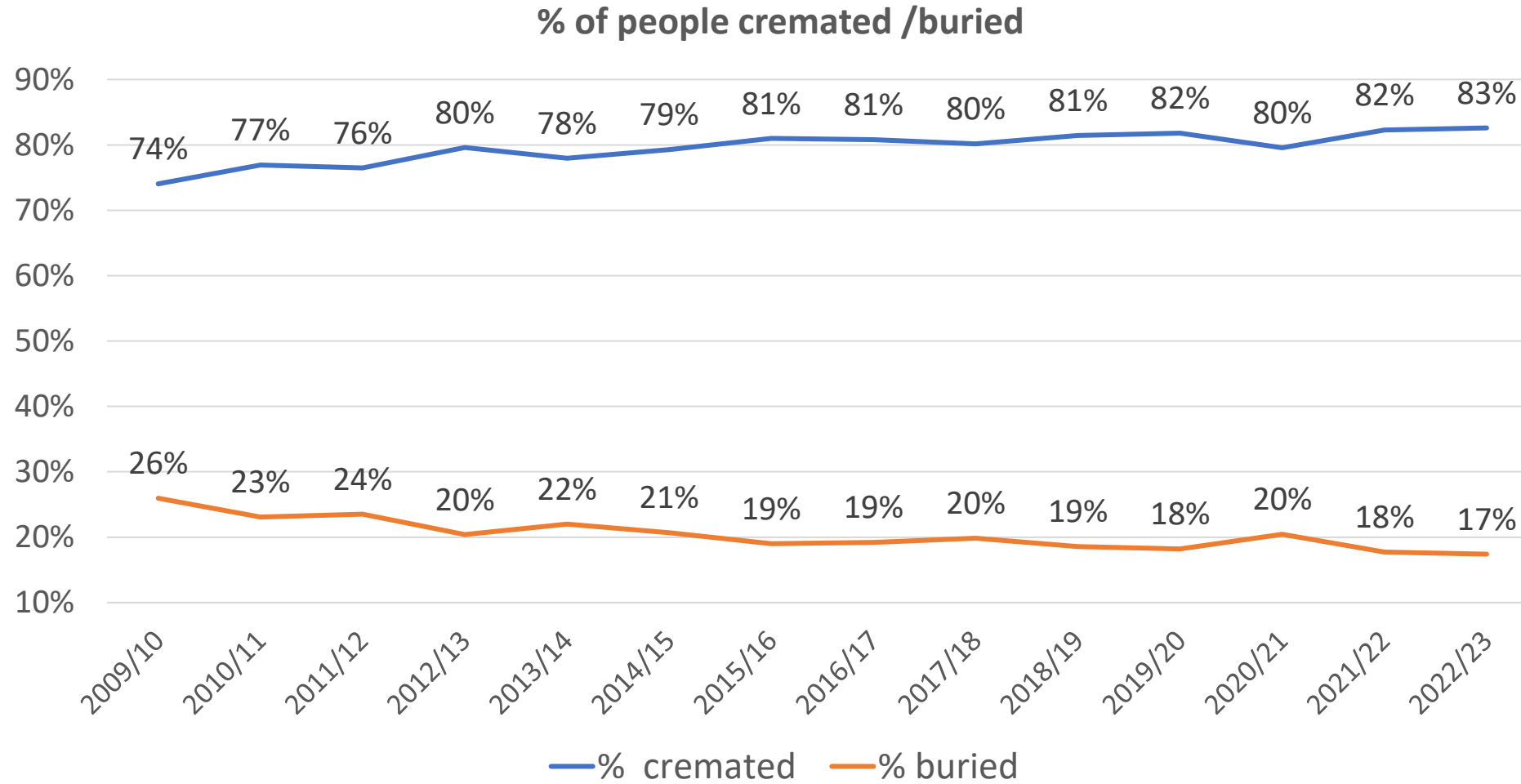


Our
Communities



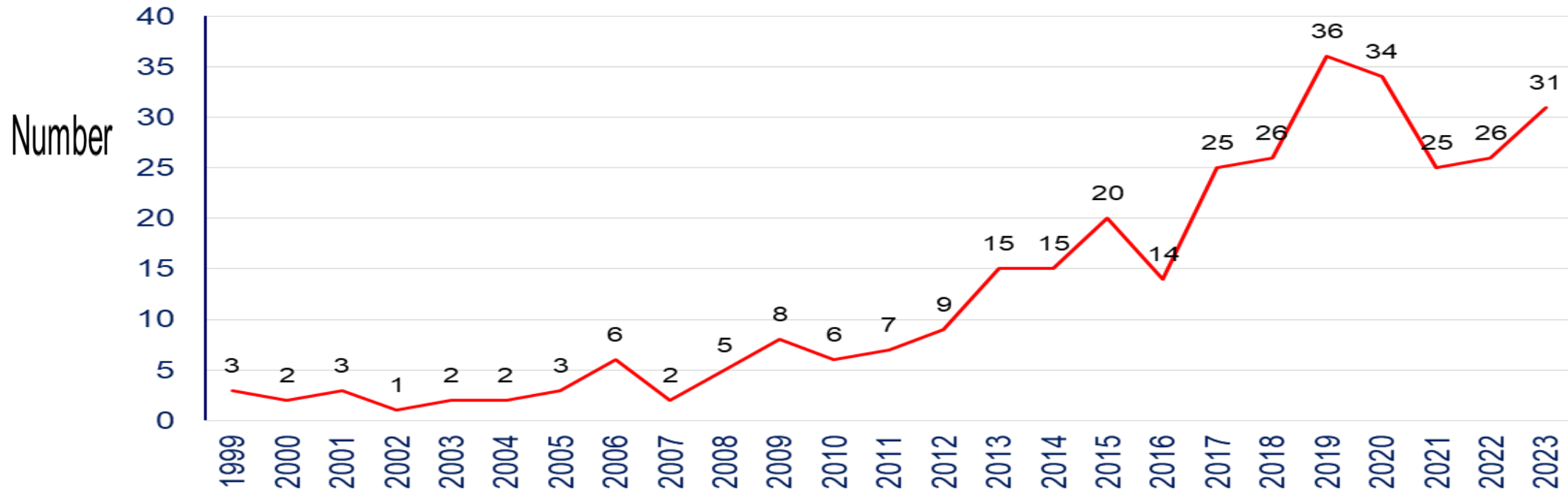
Our Council

Changing Customer Demand



Public Health Funerals

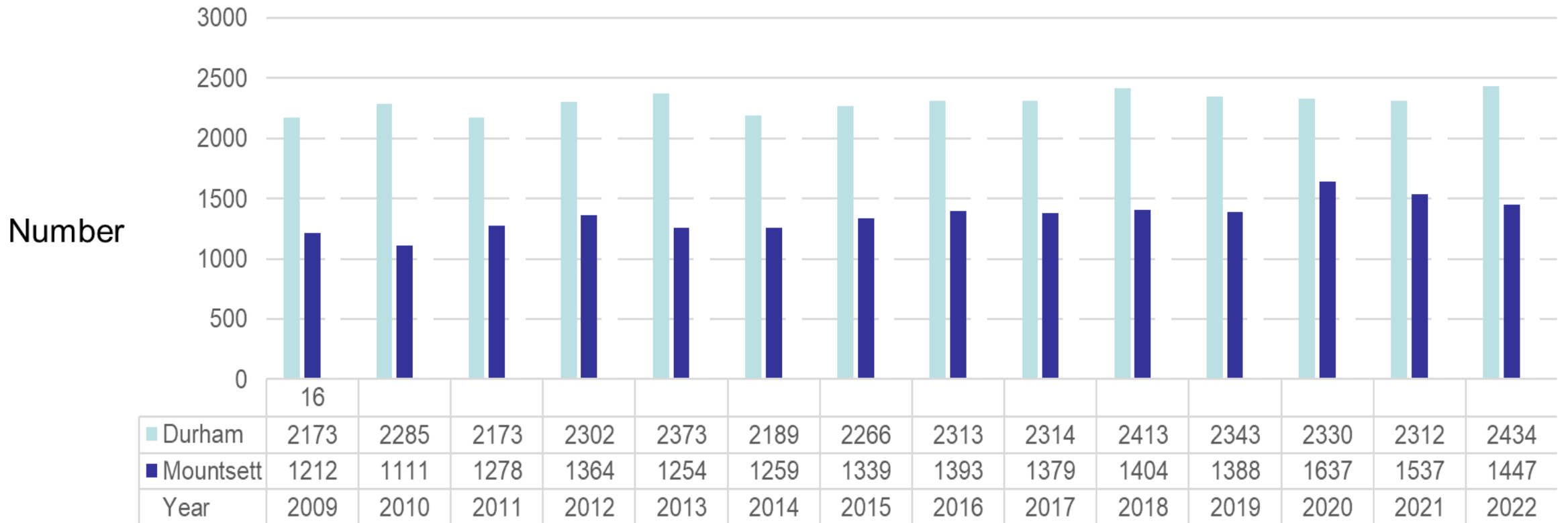
Statutory Duty - A local authority **must** make arrangements for the funerals of people who die or are found dead in their area where no other arrangements are being made.



Crematoria

- Who provides – DCC, Mountsett & Durham (joint ventures) & private (Coundon)
- Provision – Wesley music system, organ, webcasting of services, recordings, books of remembrances, memorials, recycling of metals
- Investment & development
 - Increased parking, separate book of remembrance building, energy improvements, chapel and office improvements. Solar panels and electric charging points. (+£8.6 million since 2009, +3.8million planned)
 - Mercury Abatement compliance
- Awards – Charter for the Bereaved, Green flag, A.P.S.E.
- Key issues – sensitivity, regulation, funeral poverty & Covid

Cremation numbers



Durham Crematorium



Mountsett Crematorium



Re-cycling of metals

- Metals remaining after cremation
- Ortho Metals B. V.
- Proceeds are returned to the crematoria by OrthoMetals.
- So far £340,761 (since 2009) given to local death related charities by both crematoriums.



Benchmarking

- Key points
 - Delivers a surplus
 - £30 price rise agreed for 2024/5
 - Well below regional average
 - Direct Crem option
 - Early slots discounted
 - Mid year price rise to be considered

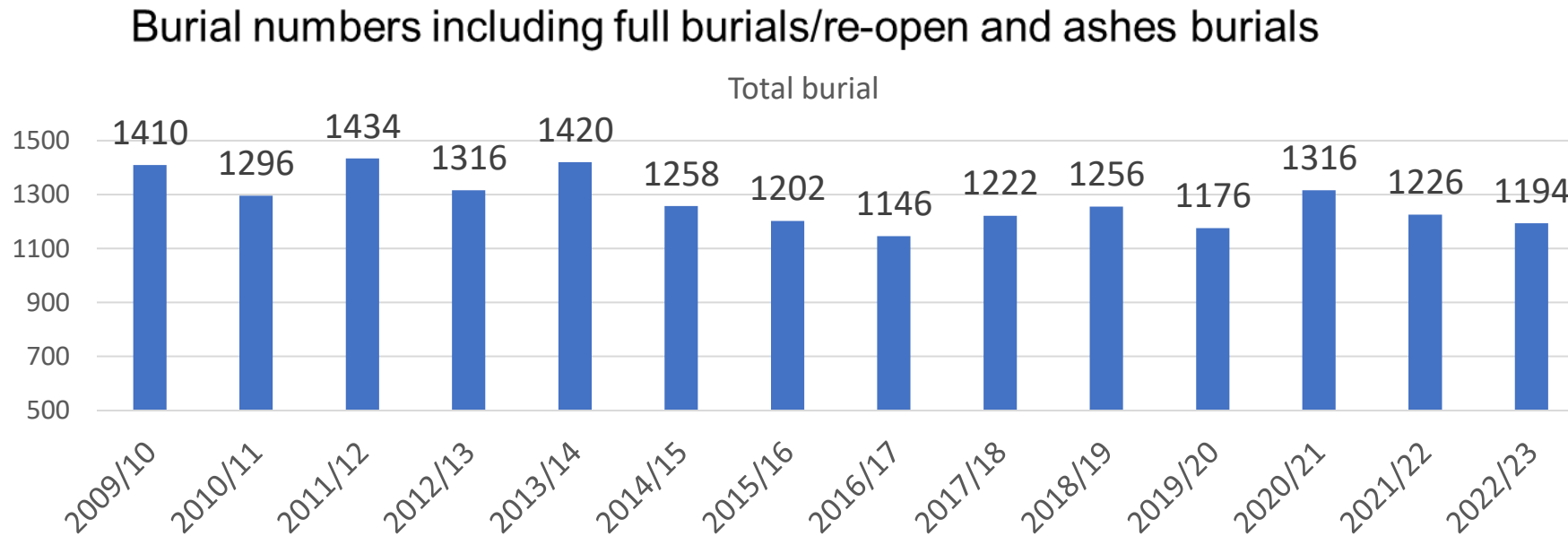
Crematorium	Cremation Fee
Gateshead	£793.50
Durham	£810
Stockton	£865
South Tyneside	£888
Hartlepool	£890
North Tyneside	£897
Middlesbrough	£902
Average	£903
Northumberland	£920
Sunderland	£924
Newcastle	£939
Darlington	£982
Coundon	£1030

Cemeteries

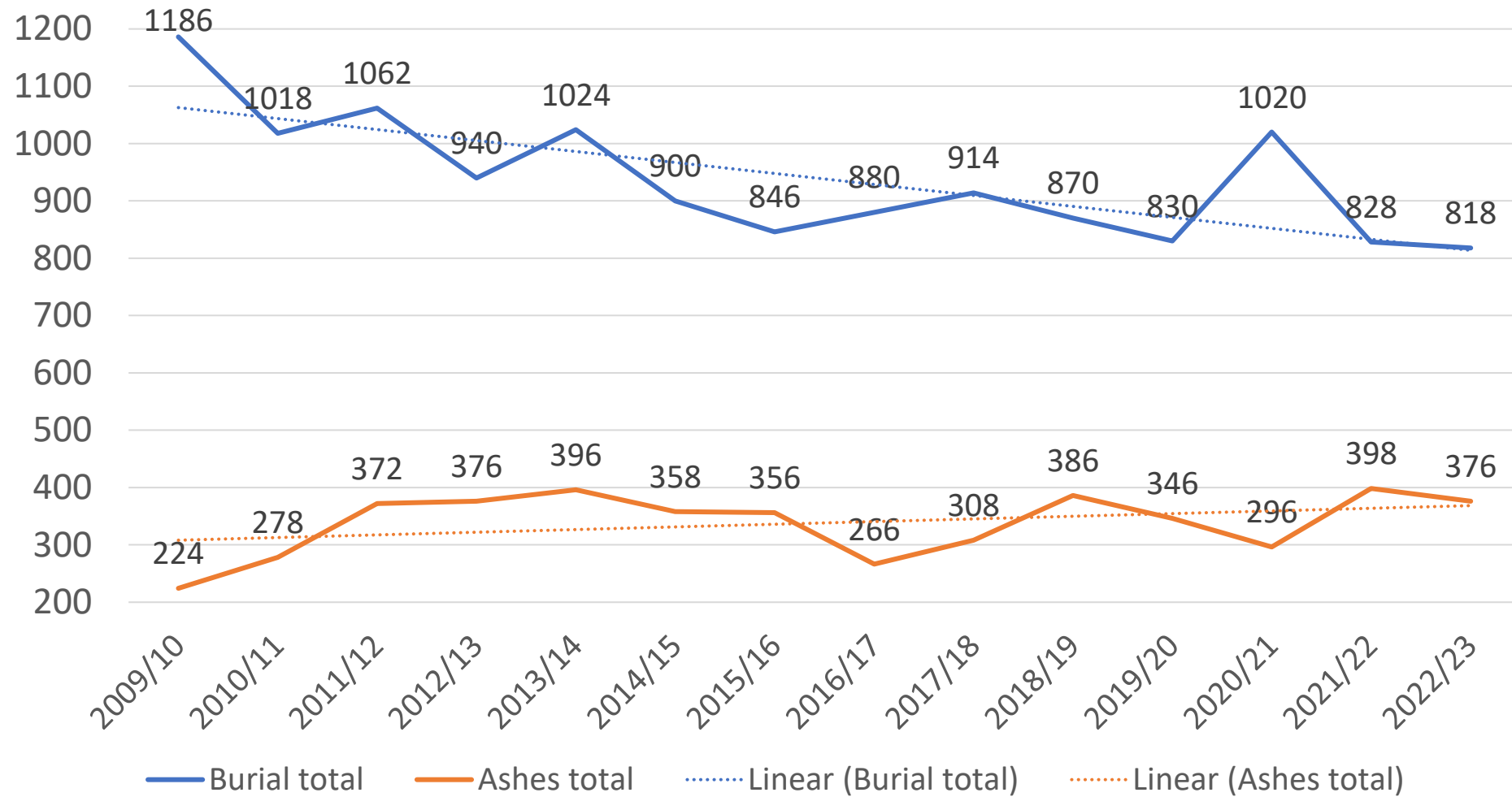


Cemeteries

- Who provides – DCC, Parish & Faith
- Settings – Cemeteries, closed church yards & woodland site
- Provision – Burials, maintenance, headstone inspections
- Key issues – sensitivity, burial space, funeral poverty, regulation & Covid



Cemeteries – Full burial and Ashes



Burial Space

- Each cemeteries has a fixed amount of space
- Parish/ Town Capacity – 5000+
- DCC capacity – 15k or 23 years
- Limited scope to expand
- Most cemeteries have an alternative within 4 miles

Burial Space - Options

Do not expand our cemeteries

Expand at key locations

Consider travel times

Different approach for interred ashes

Work ongoing

- Available capacity
- Criteria for potential expansion

Cemeteries Benchmarking

Authority	Full burial Fee	Ashes Burial fee	Exclusive rights full plot	Exclusive rights half plot
Gateshead	£959	£276	£1155	£482
Durham	£920	£250	£1020	£485
Stockton	£735	£170	£970	£225
South Tyneside	£962	£256	£1110	£256
Hartlepool	£1025	£227	£1439	£896
North Tyneside	£994	£254	£875	£437
Middlesbrough	£790	£178	£1230	£260
Average	£963	£253	£1112	£516
Northumberland	£1079	£318	£1139	£421
Sunderland	£1269	£326	£1269	£1119
Newcastle	£1014	£307	£1153	£591
Darlington	£990	£220	£1010	£505

Key points

- Below regional average
- Inflationary rise (6/7%) for 2024/5

Climate Change

	Funeral	Care of body	Service	After funeral	Total
Gas Cremation	0.16	0.31	0.4	0.15	1.01
Burial	0.22	0.31	0.4	0.15	1.07
Woodland	0.19	0.31	0.4	0.15	1.04

Tonnes of CO2

Climate Change – Alternatives to Gas Cremation

- Developing technologies
 - Electric Cremation
 - 1/5th emissions
 - Resomation (water cremation)
 - 1/5th emissions
 - Not regulated yet
 - Natural Organic Reduction
 - Not regulated



Key Issues

- Sensitivity of the service
- Regulation
- Future Burial Provision
- Cremation alternatives
- Carbon

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