

Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with the quarterly 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 attendance at the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain.
 - c. Note the distribution of recycling income to the respective charities.

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 January 2025 to 31 March 2025 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	2023/24	2024/25	Change
January	122	116	- 6
February	115	150	+ 35
March	110	138	+ 28

TOTAL	347	404	+ 57
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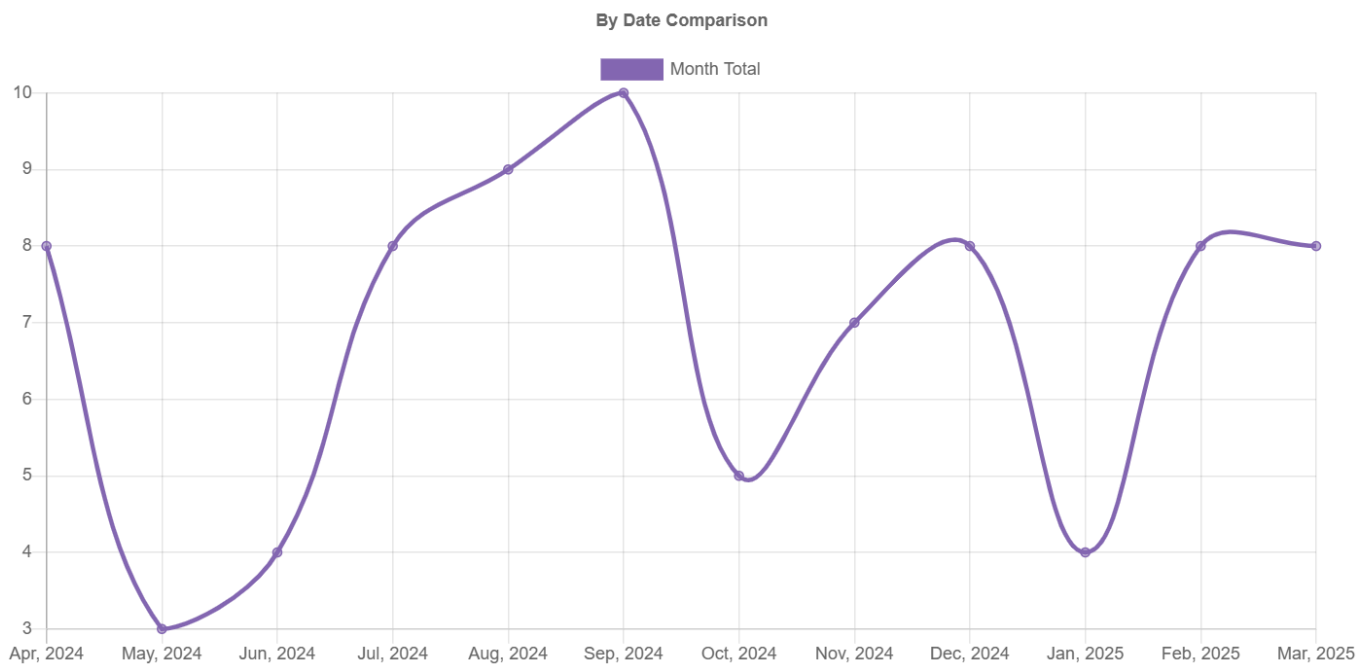
6. There were 404 cremations undertaken during the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025, compared to 347 in the same period last year, an increase of 57. The profile of where families came from can be seen below:

Gateshead	116
Durham	199
Outside Area	89
Total	404

7. The total number of cremations in 2024/25 was 1,345 compared with 1,370 in 2023/24, a decrease of 25.
8. The 2024/25 budget was set at a prudent assumption of 1,350 cremations during the year. The actual number of cremations undertaken was therefore 5 less than the budget position. This is reflected in an under achievement of cremation fee income of £38,540 in year, which is included in the budgetary control report. As mentioned in paragraph 10, there were 82 unattended direct cremations in 2024/25 and these generate lower fee income than other cremations.
9. The table below shows the comparative figures for the previous eleven financial years:

Year	Cremations
2013/14	1,191
2014/15	1,320
2015/16	1,296
2016/17	1,439
2017/18	1,396
2018/19	1,331
2019/20	1,399
2020/21	1,758
2021/22	1,463
2022/23	1,445
2023/24	1,370
2024/25	1,345
12 Year Average	1,396

10. For Members information, the table overleaf provides details of the number of direct cremations, which are included in the totals above, for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, with comparative data for the same period last year:



	2023/24	2024/25	Change
Direct Cremation – Attended	0	0	0
Direct Cremation - Unattended	62	82	+ 20
TOTAL	62	82	+ 20

Memorials

11. The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period January to March 2025 compared to the same period the previous year.

	Jan – March 2023/24		Jan – March 2024/25	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	5	2,160	1	432
Small Plaques	8	2,304	11	3,168
Memorial leaves	7	700	17	1,700
Renewals	3	540	2	270
Total	23	5,704	31	5,570

12. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 31 / £5,570 compares to 23 / £5,704 in the same period last year, a decrease of 8 memorials and a small increase in income of £134.00.

13. The table below identifies the total number and value of memorials sold during 2022/23 compared to 2023/24:

	2023/24 Total		2024/25 Total	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	15	6,750	6	2,592
Small Plaques	54	15,294	56	15,948
Memorial leaves	51	5,100	43	4,300

Renewals	13	2,250	13	1,980
Total	133	29,394	118	24,820

Cremation & Burial Conference & Exhibition 2025

15. The Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain is to be held at the Hilton, Utilita Bowl, Southampton from Monday 23rd to Wednesday 25th June 2025. As in previous years, the necessary arrangements will be made for representation at the conference by the Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

16. Members were advised at the previous meeting that we had nominated Willowburn Hospice and Northeast Air Ambulance, (Appendix 3 shows the Cheque presentation of £6,250 to each charity made by the Chair of the Joint Committee).

Contact: Graham Harrison,

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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.

Climate Change

There are no implications.

Human Rights

There are no implications.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

Accommodation

There are no implications.

Risk

There is an ongoing risk with regards to the functioning of the new cremators.

Procurement

There are no implications.

Appendix 2:Breakdown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total Jan- Mar
County Durham				
ANNFIELD PLAIN	5	3	2	10
BEAMISH			1	1
BLACKHILL/BRIDGEHILL	3	4	3	10
BURNOPFIELD		5	6	11
CASTLESIDE	1			1
CATCHGATE	2	2	4	8
CHESTER LE STREET	2	2	1	5
CONSETT	11	9	16	36
CRAGHEAD		3		3
CROOK			1	1
DELVES LANE	3	9	2	14
DIPTON		3	4	7
DURHAM		1	1	2
EBCHESTER	3		1	4
ESH WINNING			1	1
GREENCROFT			1	1
LANCHESTER	1	4	6	11
LOW WESTWOOD		1	2	3
LEADGATE	2	3	4	9
MEDOMSLEY			2	2
MOORSIDE	2	1	1	4
NEW KYO		1		1
PETERLEE			1	1
SHIELD ROW		1		1
SHOTLEY BRIDGE			2	2
SOUTH MOOR	1	2	2	5
STANLEY	18	27	15	60
TANFIELD LEA	1			1
TANTOBIE	1	1		2
PELTON / WEST PELTON	1			1
WASHINGTON	1		1	2
Gateshead				
BENSHAM			1	1
BIRTLEY	1	1	1	3
BLACKHALL MILL		1		1
BLAYDON	2	1	4	7
CHOPWELL	1	2	1	4
CRAWCROOK	6	4	4	14
DUNSTON	1	2	2	5
GATESHEAD		3	5	8
GREENSIDE	2			2
HAMSTERLEY COLLIERY			1	1
HIGH SPEN	2	2		4
LOBLEY HILL	2		3	5

ROWLANDS GILL	3	4	5	12
RYTON	5	5	3	13
SUNNYSIDE		1	1	2
SWALWELL	3			3
WINLATON	4	9	6	19
WINLATON MILL	1		1	2
WHICKHAM	4	9	4	17
Other				
BLYTH			1	1
BURNLEY	1			1
CHESTER	1			1
CORBRIDGE	3	3	1	7
GOSFORTH		1		1
HERTFORDSHIRE			1	1
HEXHAM	2	6		8
LEEDS	1			1
MICKLEY			2	2
NEWCASTLE	1	1		2
OVINGHAM	1	1	1	3
PONTELAND		2	3	5
PRESTON	1			1
PRUDHOE	6	6	4	16
RIDING MILL		1		1
SOUTH SHIELDS			1	1
STOCKSFIELD	4	2	1	7
WYLAM		1	1	2
Total	116	150	138	404

Appendix 3:Cheque Presentation.



Cheque Presentation to Northeast Air Ambulance's Vicky Fisher