

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL
MOUNTSETT CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee** held at Mountsett Crematorium, Dipton on **Friday 15 June 2012 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor O Temple (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Durham County Council

Councillors A Bainbridge, J Hunter and J Nicholson

Gateshead Council:

Councillors P Ronan and D Davidson

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from (Durham County Council) Councillor(s) J Docherty, M Hodgson, O Johnson, B Stephens and J Wilson (Gateshead Council) Councillor(s) K Dodds, M Ord, J Hamilton and P Mole.

1 Membership of the Joint Committee

The Chair advised that membership of the committee was to be confirmed by Gateshead Council, with one current vacancy yet to be filled.

Resolved: that members note the position with regards to the Joint Committee's membership for 2012/13.

2 Appointment of Chair for the Ensuing year.

Nominations were sought for the Chair of the Joint Committee.

Resolved: that Councillor O Temple, be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.

3 Appointment of Vice-Chair for the Ensuing year.

Nominations were sought for the Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee.

Resolved: that Councillor K Dodds be elected as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any.

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th April 2012.

The Minutes of the meeting held 27th January 2012 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report.

The Joint Committee received a report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager which provided Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with an update relating to performance and other operational matters (for copy see file of minutes).

With regards to performance it was reported that there were 215 cremations undertaken during 1 April to 31 May 2012, compared to 192 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 23 (12%).

Moving on to provide an update in respect of Memorial plaques it was reported that during April to May the number of plaques sold was 4. This totalled £1,312.00. As this was a new service being provided by the Crematorium, there was no comparable data to report.

Moving on to operational matters, the Bereavement Services Manager reported on staffing and the current situation with regard to a period of long term illness.

Further details were provided in respect of progress against the Pre-Payment Cremation Bond, Green Flag application and Service Asset Management Plan.

With regards to the Green Flag application it was reported that winners were expected to be announced week commencing 16 July 2012.

Members were also updated in respect of the Asset Management Plan and advised that this would be considered in full at the next meeting of the Joint Committee in September 2012. Further details were provided in respect of the Fire Safety Audit which identified a number of works to the Crematorium. The financial impact of the works was c£11,000; which would be funded via the current Revenue and Repairs Maintenance Budget in 2012/13.

Resolved: that the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee note:-

- the current performance of the crematorium.
- the operational matters highlighted in the report, including the current situation with regards to the Superintendent and Registrar; the Pre-Payment Bond Scheme; the Green Flag Application; and the Service Asset Management Plan and;
- approve the progressing of the Fire Safety Audit remedial works as identified in the report.

7 Forward Plan 2012/13

The Committee received a report which set out proposals with regards to a suggested forward plan of meetings on the Joint Committee for the remainder of 2012/13 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Temple added that he had been made aware that the current schedule and timing of meetings clashed with one of the committee members other council commitments. With such he asked that the Clerk look at rearranging the timing of future meetings to accommodate all members from both authorities.

The Bereavement Services Manager also asked that future Annual meetings take place at 9.30 a.m. to allow more flexibility with appointments at the Crematorium.

Resolved: that the proposed schedule of business be approved on the proviso that the Clerk offers alternative dates, to accommodate all members as soon as practicable.

8 Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report.

Paul Darby, Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised the report had required some changes to the previously circulated document, therefore it was necessary to seek agreement on those changes with Legal Officers of Gateshead Council.

Given the above Members agreed that this item should be deferred until the next meeting in September 2012, to allow for such agreement to be sought.

9 2011/12 Annual Governance Statement

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services and Corporate Director Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which provided details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2011 to March 2012. The AGS was presented for approval by members as part of the consideration of the Statement of Accounts and Small Bodies in England Return 2011/12 (for copy see file of minutes).

The AGS was attached to the report at Appendix 2 and summarised the operations of the Joint Committee during the course of the year 2011/12. It was further reported that pages 43 and 44 had been amended under paragraph 3 to reflect the revised date for consideration of the constitution.

Paul Darby, Head of Finance (Financial Services) further advised that Internal Audit had provided Substantial Assurance on the Joint Committee's system of internal control, none of the minor governance and internal control issues raised warranted comment within the AGS.

Resolved: that the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee approves the Annual Governance Statement for consideration within the Statement of Accounts and Annual Return.

10 Revenue Outturn & Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2012.

The committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services and Corporate Director Resources which sought approval of the Small Bodies in England Annual Return and supporting Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31

March 2012. The report further included details of the outturn position against approved budgets for 2011/12 (for copy see file of minutes).

Paul Darby, Head of Finance (Financial Services) proceeded to run through the financial outturn position for 2011/12 advising that the final outturn position was broadly in line with the provisional outturn position with only a minor reduction of 2,034 in the overall net income for the year.

With reference to the Annual Return and Statement of Accounts it was reported that the documents had been prepared in line with CIPFA guidance and was a statutory document. It was also noted that page 20 of the Statement of Accounts had been amended under paragraph 3 to reflect the revised date for consideration of the Constitution.

Resolved: that the April 2011 to March 2012 Income and Expenditure within the Revenue Financial Monitoring Report and subsequent year balance of reserves, be noted.

11 2011/12 Small Bodies Return

Paul Darby, Head of Finance (Financial Services) explained to members that the Small Bodies in England Annual Return required signing by the Chair following approval by the Joint Committee.

Resolved: that the Small Bodies in England Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair.