

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

31 January 2013

Fees and Charges 2013/14



Joint Report of Terry Collins – Corporate Director: Neighbourhood Services; Don McLure – Corporate Director: Resources & Treasurer to the Joint Committee

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out details of the proposed Fees and Charges for Mountsett Crematorium for 2013/14.

Background Information

2. In reviewing existing charges or setting new charges inflationary pressures; the potential impact of competition in terms of price and quality; trends in demand; results of customer surveys; budget targets; cost structure implications; impact on other service areas; alternative more effective charging structures and proposals for targeted promotions etc need to be fully taken into consideration.

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3. The inflationary and cost pressures facing the crematorium along with the views of the Bereavement Services Manager with regards to the local market (including harmonisation with Durham Crematorium) and customer impact from any proposed increase and benchmarking data on the charges levied in other neighbouring facilities.
4. Taking the above into consideration, the following revisions to the current fees and charges are proposed for 2013/14:-

Cremation Charges

5. It is proposed that Adult Cremation fees are increased by 11.63% to £530 in 2013/14. This results in a monetary increase of £50 per adult over the age of 16 years. Total cremation fees levied for 2013/14 (inclusive of medical referee fees and environmental surcharge) are therefore proposed at £550.
6. The proposed increase considers a requirement to build up reserves in order to ensure sufficiency to fund future capital works (as highlighted previously in the Service Asset Management Plan reported to members at the September 2012 meeting).
7. It is proposed to retain the NIL charging policy for child cremations. Members will see from Appendix 3 that neighbouring crematoria charges range from £23 to £206.

Book of Remembrance

8. There is no proposed increase to the Book of Remembrance fee for 2013/14.
9. A full schedule of the proposed fees and charges for Mountsett Crematorium is shown in Appendix 2, with benchmarking comparison data shown in Appendix 3 for members' information. As can be seen, the cremation fees compare well, and (even factoring in the 2013/14 proposed increases) is the second lowest in relation to the neighbouring crematoria, most of whom, at this time, have not yet finalised their fees and charges proposals for 2013/14.

Recommendations and Reasons

10. It is recommended that:-

- Members of the Joint Committee note and approve the proposed fees and charges at Appendix 2 effective from 1 April 2013
- All approved fees and charges are incorporated into the 2013/14 budget.

Background Papers

2012/13 Budget and Financial Monitoring Reports
2013/14 Budget Working Papers

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

A detailed schedule of the proposed fees and charges for Mountsett Crematorium is included at Appendix 2. These proposals have been factored into budget proposals for 2013/14.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

Risk

The sensitive pricing of services is essential to maintain the competitiveness and reputation of Mountsett Crematorium in the current economic climate. The proposed increases in fees and charges next year will ensure that the charges remain competitive in comparison with neighbouring facilities, and this, together with a prudent assumption in terms of the number of cremations undertaken next year, plus the strong reputation of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee, should ensure risk is minimised with regards to the achievement of the income budgets. Increases will be publicised in advance and communication carefully handled.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The proposals set out in this report are based on a harmonised fees and charges policy with the Mountsett Central Crematorium and provide equity of treatment / access across County Durham. An equality Impact assessment screening has been undertaken which has revealed no issues.

Accommodation

There are no Accommodation implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

None

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 Joint Committee.

Procurement

None

Disability Discrimination Act

None

Legal Implications

None