

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

24 April 2014



Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with an update relating to performance and other operational matters.

Performance Update:

Number of Cremations: for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014

2. The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods for the previous year:

	2012/2013	2013/2014	Change
	Period Jan-March	Period Jan-March	
JAN	149	123	- 26
FEB	117	95	- 22
MARCH	123	107	- 16
TOTAL	389	325	- 64

Gateshead	91
Durham	194
Outside Area	40
Total	325

3. In summary there were 325 cremations undertaken during 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014, compared to 389 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 64. The total number of cremations to 31 March 2014 is 1191 compared with 1404 in the previous year of 2012/13. This is a decrease of 213. Members should note however that 2012/13 was an exceptional year with a long winter and higher mortality rates compared with 2013/14.

Members will recall however, that the 2013/14 budget was set to undertake 1,250 cremations during year. The actual cremations undertaken are therefore less than the budgeted position by a total of 59 cremations. This is reflected within the budgetary control report

The comparative figures for the three financial years 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 are as follows:

- 2010/11: 1,188 cremations
- 2011/12: 1,258 cremations
- 2012/13: 1,404 cremations.

4. A similar decrease in numbers at Central Durham Crematorium has been observed. Discussions have been undertaken with funeral directors who have advised on experiencing the same downward trend and reduction in their service provision. We continue to monitor the weekly figures when compared to previous years.

The table in Appendix 2 shows how the figures fluctuate over the past 4 years and confirm that even with the lower levels experienced in 2013/14 they remain higher than those budgeted for 2014/15 (1150)

5. The table in Appendix 3 shows the comparison of Weekly Deaths (England & Wales) for the 4th quarter which shows how the figures fluctuate over the period and confirm that a decrease in weekly numbers can be seen. The annual cremation figures from neighbouring crematoria will shortly be released in the summer which will compare cremation trends and these will be brought to the meeting when released. Also discussions with I.F.Z.W. have indicated that a similar decrease in cremation numbers in Germany have been observed of between 8 to 12%.
6. Notwithstanding the reduction the crematorium has a good reputation with good service provision. To maintain this it is planned to produce a brochure promoting the various services available and retain market share. A survey of Funeral Directors will also be conducted in order to reflect on the existing provisions and provide an overview of areas for improvement in the current service.

Memorials

7. The Table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in Quarter 4 2013/14 compared to the same period the previous year (2012/13).

	Period Jan – Mar 2013		Period Jan – Mar 2014	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	7	2,296.00	9	2,952.00
Total	7	2,296.00	9	2,952.00

8. In overall terms the number and value of memorials 7/£2,296.00 in 2012/13, compared to 9/£2,952 in 2013/14 – an increase of 3 for the period.

Operational Matters

Staffing

9. Members will recall approval given previously for a trainee Crematorium Attendant position be advertised. The position has now been filled temporarily by a member of staff from DCC Clean and Green Service.
10. The recently appointed Business Administration Apprentice has now been offered a full time position within another service. To ensure business continuity, the reserve candidate has been contacted. Early indications are that they the role will be filled via this route.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

11. Members will recall at the meeting held on 31 January 2014, the Committee agreed to nominate different charities each round of application.
12. A nomination was put forward for the British Heart Foundation. I am pleased to announce that a cheque has been received to the sum of £4,112 and arrangements will be made to present the cheque in due course.

Service Asset Management Plan Update

13. Members have previously been updated on the progress of works identified within the Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP). The following works have now been completed:
 - Renew Hot water heaters
 - Replacement of carpets throughout
 - Replacement of curtain in chapel area
 - Replacement of blinds
 - Provide tribute screen for services.

It should be noted however, that elements (external handrail upgrades, perimeter fence renewal and cremator relines) scheduled for 2013/14 have not been completed and will now be undertaken during 2014/15. Members will recall that a £29,700 provision has been made within the 2014/15 budget for these elements.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

As identified in the report.

Staffing

There are no implications.

Risk

There are no implications.

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications.

Accommodation

There are no implications.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications.

Human Rights

There are no implications.

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.

Procurement

There are no implications.

Disability Issues

There are no implications.

Legal Implications

As outlined in the report.

Appendix 2: Previous Years comparisons

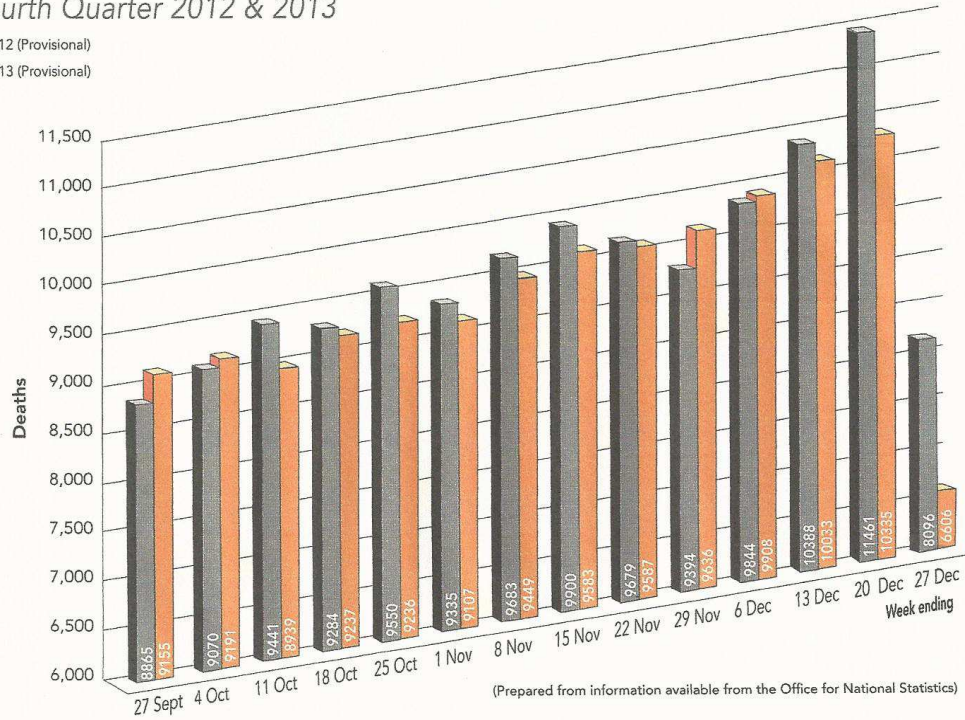
Mountsett Crematorium					
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
April	107	91	89	105	112
May	104	90	103	112	103
June	111	89	103	85	99
July	104	83	99	128	84
August	92	86	101	119	103
September	83	102	106	101	86
October	103	89	93	109	92
November	96	85	102	146	97
December	114	95	113	115	90
January	123	132	126	150	123
February	76	126	107	119	95
March	94	107	116	124	107
	1,207	1,175	1,258	1,413	1,191
Base					
Increase on 2009/10		-2.65%	4.23%	17.07%	-1.33%
Increase on 2010/11		N/a	7.06%	20.26%	1.36%
Increase on 2011/12		N/a	N/a	12.32%	-5.33%
Increase on 2012/13		N/a	N/a	N/a	-15.71%
				Budgeted numbers 2013/14	1,250
				Budgeted numbers 2014/15	1,150

Appendix 3: Comparison of Weekly Deaths (England & Wales) 4th Quarter 2012/13

Comparison of Weekly Deaths (England & Wales)

Fourth Quarter 2012 & 2013

■ 2012 (Provisional)
■ 2013 (Provisional)



(Prepared from information available from the Office for National Statistics)