

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

3rd October 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 June 2014 to 31 August 2014

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

	2013/2014	2014/2015	Change
	June-August	June-August	
June	99	93	- 6
July	84	102	+ 18
August	103	90	-13
TOTAL	286	285	-1

Gateshead	99
Durham	146
Outside Area	40
Total	285

3. In summary there were 285 cremations undertaken during 1 June 2014 to 31 August 2014, compared to 286 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 1. The total number of cremations undertaken during the period 1 April – 31 August 2014 was 495, compared to 501 in the comparable period during 2013, this represents a decrease of 6 cremations (1.2%).
4. Discussions have been ongoing with funeral directors who indicate that they are also suffering a reduction in numbers. Indeed they are starting to advertise more

and look at ways to reduce their operating costs. Attached at Appendix 2 is a national comparison table of weekly deaths for the first quarter of 2013 & 2014. As can be seen, the national position mirrors the same reduced levels that the crematoria is experiencing.

5. The 2014/15 Income budget provided for 1,150 cremations to be undertaken during the financial year. Despite the small reduction in cremation numbers observed during recent months we still project to exceed the budgeted position, with forecast numbers being 1,177, 27 cremations greater than the budget.

Memorials

6. The table below outlines the number and value (exc. VAT) of the memorials sold in period 1 June 2014 to 31 August 2014 compared to the same period the previous year (2013).

	June-August 2013		June-August 2014	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	3	984.00	7	2,391.00
Total	3	£984.00	7	£2,391.00

6. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold were 3 / £984.00 in 2013/14, compared to 7 / £2,391.00 in 2014/15 – an increase of 4 / £1,407.00 over the two periods.

Operational Matters

Green Flag Application

7. The Green Flag Award recognises good quality parks and green spaces, and a sign to visitors that sites are well maintained and well managed with excellent facilities. Once again this year Mountsett Crematorium was successful in obtaining a Green Flag Award for the third year running, which is a great achievement.
8. This award is testimony to the dedication of the staff working at the Crematorium and comes on top of the award of Gold Star Status in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Accreditation.

Crematorium Staffing

10. The position of Business Administration Apprentice has now been filled and I am pleased to report to members that the candidate has settled in well to the position.
11. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Crematorium Assistant (appointed June 2014) is no longer working at the Crematorium. We are currently in the process of re-advertising the position and I will report to members an update at the meeting.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

12. The recycling of metals scheme has produced a further surplus of £250,000 nationally for autumn 2013.
13. A programme of charities was agreed previously by members for any future available funding. The nomination for Cancer Research UK has been submitted and I am awaiting a response.

Crematorium Brochure

14. Members will recall the draft brochure which was presented at the last meeting. This has now been signed off by the Chair and Vice Chair and a final version is being distributed to Members at the meeting for information.
15. Following the meeting these will also be distributed to Funeral Directors, One stop shops, libraries, medical centres and local death related charities in order to try and publicise and market the services we provide to the bereaved.

Service Asset Management Plan

16. A report on our second Service Asset Management Plan was presented to members on 4th October 2013. This has now been amended and can be found in Appendix 3 to provide further direction and future budget pressures. The SAMP will need to be refined in line with any decisions taken on redevelopment at the crematorium.
17. The Service Asset Management Plan has been split into 4 elements and sets out improvement works as follows:

Urgent essential works for 2014/15 have been included within the crematorium improvement works, feasibility studies have now been estimated to the sum of **£81,500** which includes a contingency sum, design & management fees and other fees & charges. Some of the works include:

- Upgrade and paint handrail
- Renew South perimeter fence
- Carry out improvements to catafalque doors
- Road widening
- Carry out re-lining of cremators
- Re placement of grass cutter

Desirable works for 2015/16 which have not been included within the Crematorium improvement works; have been estimated to the sum of **£90,775** most of the works are included in the feasibility study for the crematorium improvement works set out earlier:

- Install shower to changing room
- Provide order of service screen
- Re placement of sound system within chapel
- Re placement of CCTV system within crematorium
- Installation of memorial tower
- Tarmac roads and car park
- Re placement of hearth

- Re decoration works

Desirable works for 2016/17 which have not been included within the Crematorium improvement works; have been estimated to the sum of **£42,950** some of which are not included in the feasibility study for the crematorium improvement works:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of cremators
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths
- Installation of memorial tower

Longer term works, 2017 onwards; these works have now been costed to the sum of **£2,598,214** some of the works include:

- Re-decoration works
- Carry out extension to crematorium
- Carry out upgrade to electricity supply
- Carry out installation of cremators and mercury abatement.
- Provide memorial wall
- Carry out Re-lining of cremators
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths

18. At a previous meeting, members agreed that the crematorium extension and cremator replacement project would be delayed/ put on hold at this stage. The SAMP includes a 2020 completion date for these works.

Recommended:

21. It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee consider and agree:-

- Noting the current performance of the crematorium.
- Note the current situation with regards to the sale of Memorials.
- Note to continued success with regards to the Green Flag Accreditation.
- Note the current staffing status.
- Note the current round of money available with regards to the recycling of metal scheme.
- Note the completed Crematorium Brochure for distribution.
- Note and agree the content of the Draft Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 3
- Agree to consider within the 2015/16 budget (to be presented to members at the January Meeting) to fund the planned maintenance requirements.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

As identified in the report.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

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 Discrimination Act

There are no implications

Legal Implications

As outlined in the report.

Appendix 2: Comparison of Weekly Deaths First Quarter 2013 & 2014

Comparison of Weekly Deaths (England & Wales)

First Quarter 2013 & 2014

■ 2013 (Provisional)
■ 2014 (Provisional)



