

30 January 2015

Mountsett Crematorium Performance and Operational Report



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager

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

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

	2013/14	2014/15	Change
September	85	100	+ 15
October	92	119	+ 27
November	97	107	+ 10
December	90	111	+21
TOTAL	364	437	+73

- 3. The profile of where families came from can be seen below. In summary 122 came from Gateshead, 251 from Durham and 64 from outside of the area.

Gateshead	122
Durham	251
Outside Area	64
Total	437

- 4. The 2014/15 income budget estimated that there would be 1,150 cremations undertaken by the Mountsett Crematorium in the year. Taking into account the increased cremation numbers in the first 9 months of this year, the projected outturn indicates an increase of 132 (1,282) cremations compared to budget and therefore an over achievement of cremation fee income of £83,160.

Memorials

5. The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in period September to December 2014 compared to the same period the previous year.

	(Sept - Dec) 2013/14		(Sept - Dec) 2014/15	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	10	3,280	15	6,036
	10	3,280	15	6,036

6. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 15 / £6,036, compared to 10 / £3,280 in the same period last year shows a year on year increase of 5 / £2,756. As Members will recall, at the meeting held in October 2014 the Service Asset Management Plan included an option to increase the availability of wall space through the installation of a Memorial Tower. This has been included in the 2015/16 budget.

Operational Matters

Staffing

7. Members will recall at the meeting held on 3 October 2014, approval was given for a replacement trainee Crematorium Attendant position to be advertised and an appointment has now been made. The new member of staff started on 8 December 2014 and is settling in well.
8. Since the last committee meeting the cleaner, who has been at the Crematorium for 23 years, left at the end of November 2014. The DCC Facilities cleaning team currently attend 3 times a week, which will continue until the end of March 2015. The Crematorium staff continue to keep up the same standards of cleanliness whilst carrying out their normal duties when the cleaning team are unavailable.
9. It is therefore proposed to employ a new cleaner who can carry out cleansing duties 5 days a week instead of the 3 days previously to ensure that the crematorium is maintained to a high standard at all times. This would equate to an additional 4 hours per week at an extra cost of £2,078.

Green Flag Application

10. It is proposed that an application is submitted to retain the Green Flag award / status in 2015 and a management plan for this will be updated to help maintain the award, although any future works will be covered by existing budgets. Progress updates will be provided to future meetings.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

11. The Crematorium received a cheque from the recycling of metals from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £3,333 for Cancer Research UK.

12. Arrangements were made for the cheque to be presented to Cancer Research UK by the Committee Chair on 4 November 2014. (See Appendix 2).

Mountsett Crematorium car park extension

13. After the meeting held on 3 October 2014 it was requested that the Bereavement Services Manager investigate the possibility of creating extra car parking spaces within the crematorium.
14. The car park currently accommodates 55 cars along with 2 disabled parking spaces. When there is a large funeral the car park fills quickly and cars are directed to the nearest parking facilities next to the Plough Inn in the near vicinity. A recent study has indicated that on average the car park reaches over capacity 4 times a month.
15. Work due to be completed by the end of March 2015 will see some road widening along with the creation of a possible 12 extra car parking spaces along the exit road from the crematorium car park to ease congestion.
16. An area of land next to the existing car park has been identified as a possible extension to the car park, however in order to proceed a design scheme will need to be produced to develop the project. It is unknown how many spaces this area will create until the scheme is developed, however initial estimates indicate that it may provide an extra 27 car parking bays. A sum of £7,000 has been quoted in order to progress this design work which involves excavating trial holes, carrying out a topographical survey as well as surface water drainage designs.
17. It is therefore proposed to proceed with the design work and a sum of £7,000 has been included in the 2015/16 budget in anticipation of this being supported by members of the Joint Committee.

Mountsett Crematorium: Replacement of Cremators and Installation of Mercury Abatement Plant

18. As Members may recollect, at the meeting held on 4 October 2013 it was agreed that an option would be supported in principle to continue to run the existing cremators as long as possible and build up reserves prior to any large scale scheme to replace them.
19. An updated feasibility study will be required, at an estimated cost of £15,000, in order to provide updated options for the Joint Committee to move the project forward by the time the Cremators will require replacing in 2020.
20. It is proposed that given the continued financial pressures within local government that the feasibility study should consider the following full range of options available including:

- Option 1 (as per the current proposal) to install 2 cremators with mercury abatement equipment in a proposed extension (or any new technology on the market at this time).
 - Option 2 to install 2 cremators with mercury abatement equipment to current location where existing cremators are in situ and a smaller proposed extension (or any new technology on the market at this time).
 - Option 3 to install 1 cremator with mercury abatement equipment (or any new technology on the market at this time) and any excess cremations to be carried out at a collaborative crematorium. However this option will need to be discussed with potential partners.
 - Option 4 to install no cremator, but to retain the Chapel in order to carry out services and all cremations to be carried out at a collaborative crematorium. However this option will need to be discussed with potential partners.
21. It is therefore proposed to undertake the feasibility study at an estimated cost of £15,000 and the outcomes will be presented to the committee at the September 2015 meeting.

Recommendations and Reasons

22. It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett Joint Committee:
- Note the current performance of the crematorium and monitoring against budget.
 - Note the appointment of a trainee crematorium attendant.
 - Agree to the additional cost of employing a cleaner over 5 days a week.
 - Note the application for the Green Flag Award.
 - Note the distribution of recycling income to the respective charity.
 - Agree to proceed with design works for extending the car parking provision within the Crematorium.
 - Agree to undertake a feasibility study on the replacement of Cremators and installation of Mercury Abatement Plant.

Contact: Graham Harrison, 03000 265606

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

As identified in the report with regards to the position of the Income, cleaner, car park extension and replacement of Cremators.

Staffing

As identified in the report with regards to appointing a Trainee Crematorium Attendant and employing a Cleaner.

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: Letter of thanks from chosen Charity



Neville's Cross Friends of Cancer Research UK

16, Cherrytree Drive,

Langley Park,

Durham

DH7 9FX

☎ 0191 373 9009

✉ robertson-k1@sky.com

10th November, 2014

Dear Graham,

Thank you very much for the donation of £3333.00 from the ICCM recycling of metals scheme.

At Cancer Research UK, the world-class doctors and scientists are working together to push through new and effective treatments for cancer faster than ever before, and to prevent more people from developing the disease.

If you would like further information on the work of Cancer Research UK please check the very detailed national website

Thank you again for thinking of Cancer Research UK.

Anne Robertson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Anne Robertson'.

(Chairperson)

