

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee** held in Mountsett Crematorium Meeting Room, Mountsett Crematorium, Dipton on **Monday 27 June 2016 at 9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor O Temple (Chairman)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

#### **Durham County Council**

Councillors A Batey, C Hampson, I Jewell, O Milburn, T Nearney and M Plews

#### **Gateshead Council:**

Councillors J Lee

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Dodds, M Charlton, D Davidson, L Green and M Ord (Gateshead Council)

### **2 Declarations of Interest, if any.**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 Membership of the Joint Committee**

The Chair advised that the membership of the joint committee had remained unchanged however there was currently a vacancy on the Gateshead membership due to the resignation of Councillor Patricia Ronan.

### **4 Appointment of Chair**

That Councillor O Temple be re-elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.

### **5 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

That Councillor K Dodds be re-elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

### **6 Appointment of Treasurer to the Joint Committee**

The Clerk advised that P Darby had recently been appointed as Interim Corporate Director Resources and with such was now appointed as Treasurer to the Joint Committee.

### **Resolved:**

That P Darby, Interim Corporate Director Resources be appointed as Treasurer to the Joint Committee until such time as a permanent appointment is made.

## **7 Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 April 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **8 Review of the Terms of Reference**

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee which provided details of a review of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee's Constitution, which, in accordance with the Annual Governance Statement requirements is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Clerk advised that the review had not highlighted any requirements to change the current Constitution or governance arrangements set out within.

### **Resolved:**

That the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be reapproved following a full review which had been completed in accordance with Annual Governance Statement requirements.

## **9 Annual Governance Statement 2015/16**

The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Interim Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services and Interim Corporate Director Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which provided details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2015-March 2016. The AGS was presented for approval as part of the consideration of the Joint Committee's Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the 2015/16 Annual Governance Statement be approved as part of consideration of the Joint Committee's Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016.

## **10 Revenue Outturn and Joint Committees Return for the Financial Year Ended 31/03/2016**

The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Interim Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services and Interim Corporate Director Resources which sought approval of the Joint Committee's Return for Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee for the financial year ended 31 March 2016. The report further included details of the final outturn position against the approved budgets for 2015/16 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Principal Accountant reported that the final outturn position was broadly in line with the provisional outturn reported to the Joint Committee on 29 April 2016 with only a minor change (£2,433 decrease) to the overall net income for the year.

With regard to earmarked reserves the Principal Accountant advised that contributions to the earmarked reserves were (£140,383) more than originally budgeted, primarily due to the increase in cremation income during the year, the over provision in the CAMEO abatement budget and the Business Rates refund, offset by the additional costs relating to the car park extension, albeit lower than previously anticipated.

It was further reported that in line with the MCJC Reserves Policy, a transfer to the General Reserve of (£16,920) was required as part of the final accounts process. This resulted in a net transfer to the Cremator Replacement Reserve of £265,921). The retained reserves of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee at 31 March 2015, was £1,001,158 along with a General Reserve of £242,070 giving a total reserves and balances position of £1,243,248 at year end.

The Principal Accountant then asked members to approve sections 1 and 2 of the Joint Committees Return for the year ended 31 March 2016.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the revenue outturn position as at 31 March 2016, including the year end position with regards to the reserves and balances of the Joint Committee.
- ii) That The Joint Committee approve Section 1 – Accounting Statements 2015/16 of the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016.
- iii) That the Joint Committee approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2015/16 of the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016.
- iv) That the Chair, Clerk and Treasurer sign the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016.

## **11 Quarterly Performance and Operational Report**

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Bereavement Services Manager which provided an update relating to performance and other operational matters (for copy see file of minutes).

It was reported that there were 257 cremations undertaken during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 May 2016, compared to 198 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 59 year on year. With regard to the sale of memorial plaques it was reported that during the period 2 plaques had been sold (£652), compared to 3 (£1,215) in the same period last year.

As previously reported an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) had been purchased. All staff had now been trained and the defibrillator was now in place.

Moving on, it was reported that a Business Administration Apprentice was employed in 2014 on a 2 year temporary contract, which was due to come to an end on 14 July 2016. It was noted that the contract would not be extended and the position be frozen. Members agreed that the position be frozen until a suitable replacement could be appointed.

Details were then reported in respect of the 50<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Celebration which was to be held on 23 July 2016. Members were reminded to let the Bereavement Services

Manager know if they were able / unable to attend. It was further reported that an open event would be held following the service and it had been agreed by the Communications team that this could now be opened up to the public.

The Bereavement Services Manager then went on to report that the recycling of metals scheme had generated £4,444 and a cheque for this value had been presented to Derwentside Hospice Care Foundation.

Further details were reported with regard to the ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2016 and it was proposed that the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chair attend the conference as representatives of the Joint Committee.

Moving on to the issue of car parking the Bereavement Services Manager advised that as previously reported the car park had been extended to 88 spaces although on some occasions the capacity was still inadequate. He therefore presented 3 options for the Joint Committee's consideration. Details of each were included within the report and members' views were sought.

In conclusion details were reported with regard to the replacement of cremators and installation of mercury abatement plant. It was reported that ATI were the successful company during the very thorough and competitive tender process. Durham County Council's Design Team were currently working alongside the cremator manufacturer in order to design the equipment to fit in with the propose extension. Work was progressing well and it was anticipated that construction works would commence January 2017.

Councillor Temple added that he felt fortunate to be involved in the procurement process and had found the process extremely interesting. He further added that he was extremely impressed with the quality and price offered by the supplier and was hopeful of a good result for the Crematorium.

Councillor Batey in referencing the apprentice's position and the work of the Economy & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny's work, added that she would like to see the position re-advertised. Councillor Jewell further commented that extra care should be taken with the selection of the next apprentice.

Moving on to discuss the issues surrounding car parking, Members agreed that Option C, to continue to monitor the situation be agreed. Councillor Batey added that she wanted to pass on her congratulations to the team on the car park improvement works and new spaces created adding that she had noted that this had alleviated car parking problems during well attended funerals.

#### **Resolved:**

- i) That the current performance be noted.
- ii) That the completion of the defibrillator staff training be noted.
- iii) That the situation with regards to the Business Administration Apprentice post be noted and that the position be re-advertised at the end of the 2 year contract period.
- iv) That the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations be noted.
- v) That the distribution of recycling income received to the respective charity be noted.

- vi) That the Bereavement Services Manager and Chair of the Joint Committee attend the next ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition.
- vii) That Option C, in respect of car parking be agreed and the situation continue to be monitored.
- viii) That progress with regards to the cremator replacement project be noted.

## **12 Forward Plan 2016/17**

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which set out the suggested forward plan of meetings of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming year (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the proposed schedule of meetings as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

## **13 Such other business as in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.**

### **Iconography – Arrangements for covering the existing fixed cross in the Chapel area.**

The Bereavement Services Manager reported that following discussions at the previous meeting, a quote had been sought for the supply and installation of an electronic curtain, which could be used to cover the cross which was displayed on the main marble wall in the Chapel area. He advised that work would cost in the region of £4,000 and Members views were sought.

M Morley, Gateshead Council added that following the last meeting he had checked what arrangements were in place at Birtley and Saltwell Crematoria and noted that both had received requests for the cross to be covered during services. Arrangements to do so had subsequently put in place.

Councillor Nearney commented that he felt that the curtain should be installed to provide peace of mind to those using the crematorium at a very sensitive time. Members reiterated these comments and agreed that the works should be undertaken.

### **Resolved:**

That the Bereavement Services Manager make arrangements for the supply and installation of an electronic curtain to be fitted.