

27 September 2018



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 June 2018 to 31 August 2018 inclusive, with comparative data in the same periods last year:

	2017/18	2018/19	Change
June	120	87	- 33
July	129	122	- 7
August	101	105	+ 4
TOTAL	350	314	- 36

3. There were 314 cremations undertaken during 1 June 2018 to 31 August 2018, compared to 350 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 36 year on year. The reduction in June is due to having both new cremators serviced, therefore reducing the number of available cremation slots.
4. The profile of where families came from can be seen below:

Gateshead	93
Durham	178
Outside Area	43
Total	314

Memorials

5. The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period June to August 2018 compared to the same period the previous year.

	(June – August) 2017/18		(June – August) 2018/19	
	Number	£	Number	£
Large Plaques	9	3,780	2	840
Small Plaques	10	2,760	3	828
Total	19	6,540	5	1,668

6. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 5 / £1,668, compares to 19 / £6,540 in the same period last year, representing a year on year a decrease of 14 / £4,872. The reduction is due to a tender exercise being undertaken with regards to plaque suppliers and we have been awaiting the appointment of the new supplier with regards to inscriptions on the new memorial towers. This exercise has now concluded and applications are starting to come in.

Green Flag Application

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

Staffing

9. Members may recall that the vacant Business Admin Apprentice position was recently re-advertised. Shortlisting was undertaken and six candidates were invited for interview, however five applicants again failed to attend for interview.
10. The remaining applicant had a good interview and was therefore appointed to the position with a commencement date of 3 September 2018.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

11. Members may recall that at the last meeting the crematorium had received a cheque for the recycling of metals from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £5,000 for Marie Curie.
12. Arrangements were made for the cheque to be presented to Marie Curie by the Committee Chair and Vice Chair and a photograph of the presentation is attached at Appendix 2.
13. The recycling of metals scheme has again produced a surplus nationally in 2017/18.
14. Members may recall that a list for future nominations was produced and 'If U Care Share Foundation' have been selected for the next available distribution of funds. This nomination has been submitted and I am currently awaiting a response.

Wi-Fi Connectivity

15. Members may recall that it was agreed at the January 2018 meeting to provide Wi-Fi connectivity to the crematorium.
16. It was established by Durham County Council's Digital and Customer Services team that five access points are required and we are now awaiting an installation date, which will have to be carried out on a weekend.

Website Development

17. As Members may recall it was agreed to look into the production of a website for the Crematorium.
18. Discussions have been ongoing with our Digital and Customer services team, our Chair and Vice Chair with regards to content and a photographer had been appointed to take some new pictures of the crematorium. It is envisaged that wireframe examples of the website will be available for Members to view at this meeting.

Audit Recommendation – Supplier for Book of Remembrance Entries

19. The Internal Audit report earlier this year found that all entries into the Book of Remembrance are completed by one supplier due to the specialism of the work required. It was recommended that a procurement exercise be explored with the Procurement Team in order to ensure value for money whilst maintaining the quality of the Book of Remembrance.
20. Alternative suppliers have recently been identified by the procurement team and they have now asked for a specification to be drawn up for an invitation to tender for the contract. It is expected that this procurement exercise will be completed and the new contract be in place for the new financial year.

Audit Recommendation - Document Retention

21. The Internal Audit report also found that documents are retained for the required 15 years in paper form, however this requires a large amount of storage space. There is currently no scanning of documents undertaken and it was recommended that the possibility of scanning, which would then be attached to the BACAS system should be investigated.
22. The Procurement Team are currently looking at options for scanning all of the documentation, which would then be attached to BACAS. It is expected that a number of options and associated costs will be presented to Members at the next committee meeting.

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

23. Members will recall that an update was given at the last meeting regarding the installation of the 2 new cremators with Mercury Abatement equipment to replace the existing cremators.

24. We are still working with A.T.I. to try and resolve ongoing issues. The initial emission testing results have indicated that they are borderline and it is DCC's Environmental Health team's opinion that the initial test did not fully comply with the emissions requirements. As a result a further three emission tests are required to confirm compliance.

Service Asset Management Plan

25. The current Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was presented to Members on 29 September 2017 and has now been updated to provide further direction and highlight investment requirements for the Joint Committee. The SAMP is attached at Appendix 3 and will need to be refined in line with any future decisions taken by Members.

26. The Service Asset Management Plan is split into four priorities of maintenance need and includes all of the completed and planned crematorium improvement works:

Priority 1 essential works for 2019/20 have been estimated to the sum of £57,000. These will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for next year. Some of the works include:

- Re Decoration works
- Carry out re-lining of 2 hearths
- Carry out plot extension work
- Carry out re-roofing works
- Carry out replacement of service books

Priority 2 works which would need to feature in the 2020/21 budget plans have been estimated to total £70,000. Some of the works include:

- Carry out energy improvement works

Priority 3 works which would fall beyond the next two years, have been costed to the sum of £94,500. Some of the works include::

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 cremators
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 hearths

Longer term works have been costed to the sum of £1,094,500 and some of the works include:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 cremators
- Carry out Re-lining of 2 hearths
- Carry out replacement of 2 cremators

Recommendations and Reasons

27. It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett Joint Committee:

- Note the current performance of the crematorium.
- Note the continued success with regards to the Green Flag Award.
- Note the appointment of the Business Administration Apprentice.
- Note the updated position with regards to the recycling of metals scheme.
- Note the updated position with regards to Wi-Fi connectivity.
- Note the progress with regards to the website development.
- Note the updated position with regards to the procurement of a supplier for entries in the Book of Remembrance.
- Note the updated position with regards to the procurement exercise relating to document retention.
- Note the current position with regards to the cremator replacement.
- Note and approve the content of the Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 3, which will be factored into budget planning in 2019/20 and beyond.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

As identified in the report with regards to the position of the Income.

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 3: Service Asset Management Plan