

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

26 September 2018

Quarterly Performance and Operational Report



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with the quarterly 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 for the same period last year:

	2017/18	2018/19	Year on Year Difference
June	185 + 1*	183 + 0*	- 2; -1*
July	173 + 1*	173 + 2*	0; +1*
August	156 + 1*	186 + 1*	+30; 0*
TOTAL	514 + 3*	542 + 3*	+28; 0*

* = Non-Viable Foetus (NVF) ** = Stillborns (STs) *** = Body parts

3. The full profile of where families came from can be seen in Appendix 2. In summary 159 came from Durham, 17 came from Spennymoor and 366 from outside of the area. There have been 3 NVF cremations undertaken for the period covered by this report, the same as in the comparable period last year. There was 28 more cremations undertaken in the period June to August 2018 compared to the same period last year.

Memorials

4. 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 – Aug) 2017/18		(June – Aug) 2018/19	
	Number	£	Number	£
Vase Blocks	4	2,696	4	2,642
Large Plaques	21	8,892	13	5,466
Small Plaques	4	1,044	1	261
Niche	6	7,555	1	177
Renewal	35	6,493	19	2,597
Total	70	26,680	38	11,143

5. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 38 / £11,143 compares to 70 / £26,680 in the same period last year. This shows a decrease of 32 / £15,535 year on year. This decrease is mainly down to the sale of new plaques not being taken up and a reduction in plaques being renewed after the initial 10 year period.

Green Flag Award

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

Staffing

8. Members agreed at the April 2018 meeting to advertise for a Business Administration Apprentice position. Eight applicants were shortlisted and invited for interview, but unfortunately six of them failed to attend.
9. The remaining two applicants had good interviews and one was appointed to the position with a commencement date of 10 September 2018.

Wi-Fi Connectivity

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

Heritage Open Weekend

12. Members may recall that Durham Crematorium has been part of Durham's 'Heritage Open Days' programme for several years now.

13. Once again we opened our doors to the general public for behind the scenes guided tours between 13 and 16 September 2018. This was well received with 60 visitors attending over the 4 day event. Feedback from the tours included "A fascinating insight into this generally mysterious behind the scenes process".

Recycling of Metals Scheme

14. Members may recall that at the last meeting it was noted that 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 Cruse Bereavement Care.
15. Arrangements were made for the cheque to be presented to Cruse Bereavement Care by the Committee Chair and Vice Chair. A photograph of the presentation and an extract of an email received from the charity is attached at appendix 3.
16. The recycling of metals scheme has again produced a surplus nationally in 2017/18.
17. Members may recall that a list for future nominations was produced and Solan Connor Fawcett Family Cancer Trust were selected for the next available distribution of funds. This nomination was submitted and I am pleased to announce that a cheque from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management to the sum of £5,000 for the charity has been received. Arrangements will be made for the cheque to be presented by the Committee Chair and Vice Chair.

Audit Recommendation – Supplier for Book of Remembrance Entries

18. 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.
19. 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

20. The Internal Audit also found that documents were being 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.

21. 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.

Audit Recommendation - Donation Box

22. The Internal Audit report also found that the donation box, which is located to the left hand side next to the exit of the chapel is causing some confusion for mourners when a private collection is also being taken on the opposite side. It was suggested that monies may have been being placed in the Crematorium's collection box in error and that although the sign above the donation box indicates that the money collected is for the Gardens of Remembrance, this is considered misleading as the money is paid into the Crematorium's accounts. It was recommended that the Committee consider the value of retaining the donation box in light of potential confusion to mourners and the low level of income that the box generates (£662 in 2017/18).
23. Following the internal audit there has been additional signage placed next to the donation box advising members of the public that this is not for family donations.
24. Members are therefore asked to consider and agree upon one of the following options:
 - Option 1 Retain the donation box, with monies being paid into the Crematorium's accounts to support the maintenance of the Gardens of Remembrance.
 - Option 2 Retain the donation box, with monies being paid to a chosen charity.
 - Option 3 Remove the donation box from the site altogether.

Service Asset Management Plan

25. The current Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was presented to Members on 28 September 2017 and this has now been updated to provide further direction and highlight investment requirements for the Joint Committee over the coming years. The SAMP is attached at Appendix 4 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. The works will be procured in line with Durham County Council's contract procurement rules, which uses a framework of specialist providers.

27. Priority 1 essential works for 2019/20 have been estimated to the sum of £265,450. 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 hearths x 1
- Carry out energy improvement works
- Replacement of organ
- Improvement to wall by book of remembrance building
- New paving around floral tribute area
- Improvements to office accommodation

Priority 2 works, which would need to feature in 2020/21 budget plans have been estimated to total £121,090. Some of the works include:

- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 3
- Carry out Re-lining of cremators x 3

Priority 3 works, which would fall beyond the next two years, have been costed to the sum of £24,790 and some of the works include:

- Re-Decoration Works
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 3

Longer term works have been costed to the sum of £135,090 and some of the works include:

- Carry out Re-lining of cremators x 3 in 2024
- Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 3 in 2024
- Re-Decoration Works

Recommendations:

28. It is recommended that Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee:

- (i) Note the current performance of the crematorium.
- (ii) Note the continued success with regards to the Green Flag Award.
- (iii) Note the updated position with regards to the Apprentice post.
- (iv) Note the updated position with regards to Wi-Fi connectivity.
- (v) Note the Crematorium's involvement in Durham's Heritage Open Days programme.
- (vi) Note the updated position with regards to the recycling of metals scheme.
- (vii) Note the updated position with regards to the procurement of a supplier for entries in the Book of Remembrance.
- (viii) Note the updated position with regards to the procurement exercise relating to document retention.
- (ix) Discuss and agree on an option with regards to the donation box.
- (x) Note and approve the content of the Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 4, 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 and the crematorium improvement works.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

Risk

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no Equality and Diversity implications associated with this report.

Accommodation

The development project will improve customer and staff accommodation.

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no Human Rights implications associated with this report.

Consultation

Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were consulted on the contents of this report.

Procurement

There are no procurement issues associated with this report.

Disability Issues

There are no disability issues associated with this report.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Appendix 2: Breakdown of Figures

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total Jun-Aug
Durham	66	39	54	159
Barnard Castle	1			1
Binchester			2	2
Birtley	1		2	3
Bishop Auckland	1	5	8	14
Bishop Middleham	1			1
Blackhall	1	2	2	5
Chester Le Street	10	13	14	37
Chilton	1		1	2
Consett	1	1	2	4
Crook	4	5	7	16
Darlington			1	1
Easington	4	5	9	18
East Rainton			1	1
Esh	1			1
Esh Winning	2	2	2	6
Fencehouses	1			1
Ferryhill	7	6	5	18
Fishburn		1	1	2
Frosterley	1			1
Great Lumley	4	3	3	10
Harrogate			1	1
Hartlepool	2	1	1	4
Haswell			1	1
Hetton Le Hole	3	4	2	9
Horden	2	3	5	10
Houghton	3	6	1	10
Lanchester	2		1	3
Langley Park	3	3		6
Lancaster			1	1
Murton	2	2	1	5
New Brancepeth	1			1
Newcastle		1		1
Newton Aycliffe	3	5	5	13
Ouston		1		1
Penrith		1		1
Peterlee	9	11	8	28
Sacrison	1	1	2	4
Scotland			1	1

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total Jun-Aug
Seaham	10	14	13	37
Sedgefield	1	2	2	5
Shildon	2			2
Shotton	6	1	1	8
South Hetton	2	1	2	5
South of England		1		1
Spennymoor	6	7	4	17
Stanhope		1		1
Stanley		2	2	4
Stockton		1		1
Sunderland	1		1	2
Thornley	2	1	2	5
Tow Law			1	1
Trimdon	4	3	2	9
Washington	1	1	3	5
West Auckland	2			2
West Cornforth	1	3		4
Wheatley Hill		2	3	5
Willington	3	6	1	10
Wingate	4	5	4	13
Wynyard		1		1
U.S.A.			1	1
Total	183	173	186	542

Appendix 3: Re-cycling of metals cheque presentation



Cllr Jean Chaplow, Chair of Durham Crematorium Committee and Ian Machin Vice Chair, presenting a cheque for £5,000 to Sarah McDermott and Irina Sokolova-Snegir from Cruse Bereavement Care.

Email received from Charity:

On behalf of Cruse Bereavement Care Tees Valley & Durham Area I thank you for the very generous second donation of £5,000 via the ICCM. Due to recent changes in funding from the local CCG we are finding ourselves in a very difficult time right now, financially, and this unexpected £10,000 in total has been a blessing.

Please thank, once again, Jean and Ian for their support.

with kindest regards

Sarah McDermott
Area Coordinator (Finance, Administration & Training) Cruse Bereavement
Care Tees Valley & Durham Area