

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the Town Hall, Gosport on Monday 25 June 2007 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillors Brian Bayford
Mrs Connie Hockley

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor Peter Edgar
Councillor John Train

Havant Borough Council

Councillors Anthony Briggs
Dave Collins

Portsmouth City Council

Apologies submitted

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Jason Fazackarley and Paula Riches (Portsmouth City Council) - engaged on other Council business, and Roger Young (Horticultural Consultant).

(COUNCILLOR MRS CONNIE HOCKLEY, CHAIRMAN, PRESIDING)

196 Variation in the Order of Business

Members agreed that items 8 (Annual Statement of Accounts 2006/7) and 9 (Actual Revenue Expenditure 2006/7), be taken at the commencement of the meeting.

197 Annual Statement of Accounts 2006/7 (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

In presenting his report the Treasurer drew particular attention to the changes in the style of presentation of the statement that had been brought about by revisions to the code of practice on local authority accounting.

Members were asked to consider the annual statement of accounts, and subject to them being approved would then be submitted to the Joint Committee's external auditors, who would consider them and submit their final report on the accounts for consideration at the meeting of the Joint Committee in December.

RESOLVED that the statement of accounts for 2006/7 be approved and submitted to the Joint Committee's external auditors.

198 Actual Revenue Expenditure 2006/7 (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

In considering the report particular mention was made of the slight reduction in the number of cremations carried out during 2006/7, although this reduction was in line with similar reductions at other crematoria.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report on revenue expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2007 be noted.

199 Appointment of Chairman

At this point, in the absence of representatives from Havant Borough Council, it was agreed to hold over this item until later in the meeting.

200 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor John Train, Gosport Borough Council, be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2007/8.

(COUNCILLOR JOHN TRAIN IN THE CHAIR)

201 Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 3) - None.

202 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 March 2007 (AI 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2007 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

203 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 6) - None.

204 Clerk's Items (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE CLERK CIRCULATED AT THE MEETING)

The Clerk explained that the report he had circulated referred to the appointment of deputy medical referees. The purpose of the report was to advise the Joint Committee on the need to make further provision for the appointment of deputy medical referees, following the recent death of Dr Ivan Nelson.

RESOLVED (1) that the Joint Committee's condolences be extended to the family of the late Dr Ivan Nelson;

(2) that the Clerk to the Joint Committee, after consultation with the Manager and Registrar, Chairman of the Joint Committee and Dr Denis Hilton, the Medical Referee, be authorised to submit for approval to the Home Office the names of two doctors to be nominated for appointment as deputy medical referees.

205 External Audit Plan 2006/7 (AI 10)

(TAKE IN DOCUMENT FROM MAZARS, THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS)

The Treasurer to the Joint Committee explained that the purpose of the document from Mazars was to bring to members' attention the proposed external audit and inspection plan for 2006/7. The Joint Committee was asked whether there were any comments it wished to make on any of the documentation that had been received.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee note the contents of the annual audit and inspection plan for 2006/7.

(Councillors Anthony Briggs and Dave Collins arrived during presentation of the Engineer and Surveyor's report, having been delayed in traffic.)

206 Engineer and Surveyor's Report (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR)

The Joint Committee considered the report and recommendations of the Engineer and Surveyor in respect of the following matters.

(1) Planned Maintenance Programme - Progress Report

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

(3) Repairs and Renewals - Cremator Maintenance

The Engineer and Surveyor explained the content of that part of his report dealing with cremator maintenance by drawing specific attention to the work that had been undertaken and the unfortunate communication error that had occurred whilst putting the work in hand. As explained within the report, an extended reporting and consultation process had since been agreed by the Joint Committee's officers to enable future works of an urgent nature to be actively managed within the crematorium's overall financial management regime. In this respect the Engineer and Surveyor drew attention to the proposed paving works for which there had previously been approved budgetary provision of £60,000 (reference 2.7.01 within the 2007/8 maintenance programme). He explained that the forecast expenditure on this item would be reduced by some £23,000 to contribute towards the overall cost of the work on the cremator maintenance.

RESOLVED that the report and action being taken be noted.

(2) Mercury Emissions

The Engineer and Surveyor amplified the content of that part of his report relating to the update on the current situation in respect of the future need to install mercury abatement equipment. It was acknowledged that there were several issues the Joint Committee would need to consider in settling the way forward.

Members supported the suggestion that officers undertake further research and prepare an informal briefing paper.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a briefing paper be prepared for an informal meeting with members.

207 Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 12)

(a) General Report

(TAKE IN REPORT)

RESOLVED that the statistical information submitted by the Manager and Registrar be noted.

(b) Any Other Items of Topical Interest

The Manager and Registrar reported that Portchester had again carried out more cremations during 2006 than any other crematorium in the United Kingdom. At 3,993, this was six more than the total number of cremations during 2005.

The Manager and Registrar also paid tribute to Dr Ivan Nelson, one of the deputy medical referees who had died recently after some 21 years service. He would be sadly missed.

208 Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 13)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

Consideration was given to the report of the Horticultural Consultant, and particular mention was made of the investigative work that was being undertaken to ascertain the problem of the pond losing water.

RESOLVED that the report of the Horticultural Consultant be noted.

209 Dates of Future Meetings

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee meets at 2.00 pm on a rotating basis on the following dates in 2007/8, at the following venues -

Monday 24 September 2007 - Havant
Monday 3 December 2007 - Portsmouth
Monday 3 March 2008 - Fareham
Monday 23 June 2008 - Gosport

210 Appointment of Chairman (AI 1)

RESOLVED that Councillor Anthony Briggs (Havant Borough Council) be appointed Chairman of the Joint Committee for the remainder of the 2007/8 municipal year.

The meeting concluded at 2.35 pm.