

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the Civic Offices, Havant on Monday 24 September 2007 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillors Brian Bayford
Mrs Connie Hockley

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor Peter Edgar

Havant Borough Council

Councillors Anthony Briggs (Chairman)
Dave Collins

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Paula Riches

Apologies for Absence

Councillor John Train (Gosport Borough Council). Councillor Jason Fazackarley (Portsmouth City Council) was also unable to attend.

211 Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 1)

Councillor Paula Riches declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in that Dr Kathleen Primrose was her GP.

212 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2007 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2007 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

213 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 4) - None.

214 Clerk's Items (AI 5) - None.

215 Appointment of Deputy Medical Referees (AI 6)

Further to minute 204/07, the Clerk to the Joint Committee reported that following advertisement and informal interviews, Dr David G Atchison and Dr Kathleen Primrose had been appointed as Deputy Medical Referees. Their appointments had now been confirmed by the Ministry of Justice. The Clerk also reported on the background to the arrangements that had been made for the informal interviews and briefed members of the committee accordingly.

RESOLVED that the appointments of two further medical referees be noted.

216 Report to those Charged with Governance 2006/07 (AI 7)

(TAKE IN DOCUMENT FROM MAZARS, THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS)

The Treasurer to the Joint Committee introduced a report dated 11 September 2007 from Mazars, the Auditors to the Joint Committee. The Treasurer explained that the Auditors had indicated they were prepared to issue an unqualified opinion based on the audit work they had undertaken in respect of the 2006/07 accounts and related matters.

RESOLVED that the report be received and approved.

217 External Audit Plan 2007/08 (AI 8)

(TAKE IN DOCUMENT FROM MAZARS, THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS)

The Treasurer to the Joint Committee explained that the purpose of the document dated 11 September 2007 from Mazars was to bring to members' attention the proposed external audit and inspection plan for 2007/8.

RESOLVED that the contents of the annual audit and inspection plan for 2007/8 be noted and approved.

218 Engineer and Surveyor's Report (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR)

The Engineer and Surveyor introduced his report in respect of the following matters -

(i) Planned Maintenance Programme - Progress Report

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

(ii) Hearth/Arch Relining

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the rephrasing of budgetary provision as identified within the report be approved.

219 Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 10)

(a) General Report

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Arising out of consideration of the report, the Manager and Registrar updated members regarding the number of cremations taking place at Portchester and other crematoria. Mention was made of changes in the population profile, and in that regard reference was also made to the Portchester Crematorium Development Plan that had included statistical information relating to the current and future capacity of the crematorium.

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

(b) Any Other Items of Topical Interest

There were none reported.

220 Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

Consideration was given to the report of the Horticultural Consultant, and colour photographs illustrating the outstanding work that had been achieved were circulated. Mention was also made of a letter that had been received from a member of the public, and in that respect the Horticultural Consultant advised that additional pruning work was required in respect of shrubs that had grown at a faster pace due to the weather conditions that had been encountered in recent months.

RESOLVED that the report of the Horticultural Consultant be noted.

221 Recent Government Consultation Papers on Proposed Legislative Changes (AI 12)

The Clerk to the Joint Committee reported on the following papers that had recently been issued by the government for consultation -

- (a) Consolidation and Modernisation of the Cremation Regulations
- (b) Improving the Process of Death Certification

The Clerk explained that the papers were in themselves extensive documents, and therefore in advance of the meeting executive summaries from each paper had been distributed to members. The consultation period in respect of each paper would close towards the end of October 2007, and members were invited to consider whether they wished to submit any views.

The Clerk to the Joint Committee advised that Dr Hilton, the medical referee, had commented upon one of the suggestions that the cremation regulations be amended to include provision for a family member to examine the forms before the medical referee authorised cremation. In that respect it was Dr Hilton's view that although it would be regarded as an extremely useful safeguard, this would require additional time for the medical referees, a private room for discussion, and probably unusual flexibility in the timing of funerals.

Members of the Joint Committee discussed the main issues arising from the changes suggested in the two consultation papers. Members noted that the various professional bodies were being consulted upon the suggested changes, including the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. Members noted the changes that were being suggested, but felt they did not wish to submit any specific comments.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee notes the publication of the two consultation papers.

222 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting be held on Monday 3 December 2007 at 2.00 pm in the Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

The meeting concluded at 2.30 pm.

Chairman