

**REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE  
19 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**REPORT BY: MANAGER AND REGISTRAR**

**CREMATION OF COFFINS THAT EXCEED THE STANDARD SIZE**

**Purpose of report**

As requested by the Joint Committee under minute 421, to advise on the number of occasions it has been necessary for a coffin that exceeded the standard size to be transferred elsewhere for cremation.

**Recommendation**

That the report be noted

**Background**

The cremators at Portchester Crematorium have a maximum coffin width of 28 inches. This is a standard size and takes into account safety margins when the coffin is charged into the cremator. The new crematorium at Wessex Vale has a maximum width in one of their cremators published at 40 inches. The length and height of the chamber has never caused any problems as these are sufficient to accommodate almost any size of coffin. A 28 inch coffin is sufficient to accommodate a body weight of approximately 25 - 28 stones although this is only an approximate guide and other factors may affect this figure.

The Engineer and Surveyor answered a query from Members at the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> June about how many times cremations have had to be conducted elsewhere because of width restriction at Portchester.

I can report that there have been three occasions in recent years when the coffin exceeded the standard size. In all three the service was conducted in the chapel at Portchester and the coffin then transferred by the funeral director for cremation elsewhere (the nearest at that time being Woking). This figure does not take into account any instance where the first choice for cremation would have been Portchester but the funeral directors (knowing the maximum width) have bypassed us altogether and had the service and cremation at another crematorium.

**James Clark**  
**Manager & Registrar**

1<sup>st</sup> September 2011

*Background List of Documents –  
Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 - None*