

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Joint Committee held at Portchester Crematorium on Monday 9 December 2019 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Apologies submitted

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor June Cully

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Tim Pike (Chairman)
Councillor Leah Turner

Portsmouth City Council

Apologies submitted

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Steve Pitt on other council business, and Councillor Lee Hunt (Portsmouth CC); Councillors Keith Evans and Simon Martin (Fareham BC); and Councillor Kathleen Jones (Gosport BC) on other council business.

843. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

None

844. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 September 2019 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 23 September 2019 be signed as a correct record.

845. Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 4)

Minute 838 – Business Continuity and Staffing report

The Clerk advised that the report mentioned under minute 838 was still in the course of preparation, although the part dealing with the Manager and Registrar's post was included for consideration at today's meeting. The Clerk said it was hoped to bring forward other aspects of the report to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

Minute 840 – Recycling of Metals Charitable Scheme

It was noted that the Manager & Registrar was still to check with the ICCM whether a suicide prevention charity could be nominated for an award.

846. Clerk's Items (AI 5)

(a) Inspection by the FBCA

The Clerk to the Joint Committee reported that The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities had created a new inspection scheme to ensure standards of quality are maintained by crematoria.

The purpose of the scheme was to provide the operator of the crematorium with confidence that it met the national standards laid down by the Federation through its Code of Cremation Practice. As part of this new Inspection Scheme, all 290 crematoria across the UK would be inspected once every 5 years. Portchester had been selected for inspection on the 12 December, and a report on the outcome of the inspection would be circulated to members and reported to the Joint Committee at the March 2020 meeting. The Joint Committee was advised that a similar previous visit and successful inspection was undertaken in 2010.

RESOLVED that arrangements for the visit be noted.

847. Finance Strategy and Budget for 2020/21 (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

In presenting the report the Deputy Treasurer amplified key points within the proposed strategy and budget, and answered questions from members.

RESOLVED

(1) that the Finance Strategy 2020/21, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved;

(2) that the Finance Strategy 2020/21 be sent to the four constituent authorities to note for their information.

848. Revenue Budget Report - 2020/21 (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

In presenting the report and in answer to questions, the Deputy Treasurer drew particular attention to the principles underpinning preparation of the budget, including the sum proposed as a contribution for capital works, as described within the report. The proposed cremation fee of £650 from 1 April 2020 was still considerably lower than that charged by other crematoria in the area.

RESOLVED

(a) That the capital works programme as detailed in Appendix D be approved;

(b) That the Joint Committee approves the proposed cremation fees and other charges as set out in Appendices B & C from 1 April 2020;

(c) That the proposed revenue account estimates as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;

(d) That the Joint Committee writes to the Leader of each constituent authority to advise them of the annual payment to be received from the Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

849. Building Works Programme (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

Arising from presentation of the report and questions the Property Manager mentioned specifically-

- the Vestry refurbishment;
- South Chapel New Curtains;
- the Book Room refurbishment feasibility study which would include considering more durable types of floor finish;
- the water feature feasibility study which was intended to include examining alternative better uses of the 'garden of contemplation'.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

850. Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 9)

(a) General Statistical Report

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

Arising from his report and questions, the Manager and Registrar commented generally on the statistical information, and that recently there had been an increasing number of funerals, including a number of bookings for early in the new year.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(b) Any other items of topical interest – public comments register

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

RESOLVED that the report be noted with interest.

(c) Any other matters – None

851. Horticultural Consultant's Report – Grounds Maintenance (AI 10)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

Arising from questions, the Horticultural Consultant explained that there had been no tree damage as a result of recent very windy weather. During last summer trees along the northern boundary had been pruned. He also said that so far there had been no cases of Ash dieback disease.

RESOLVED that the report be received and approved.

852. Portchester Crematorium Garden of Remembrance –Grounds Clearance (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE CLERK TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE)

In submitting the report the Clerk drew specific attention to the nature of the various representations that had been received previously, and the detailed options for consideration, as set out in the report.

Following consideration and discussion including comments about storage arrangements for items removed and possible suggestions for ways of creating a permanent memorial, members endorsed the report's recommendations and it was -

RESOLVED

(1) That the long standing policy (to preserve the simple beauty of the gardens) against the provision of memorials and similar items in the crematorium grounds be re-affirmed, taking into account that this policy is stated on the form completed by families at the time of making application for cremation;

(2) That families be allowed to place temporarily one plastic vase supplied by the crematorium in the area where its family ashes have been interred to hold cut flowers, and that as and when flowers have finished blooming, staff will remove the flowers and place the vase into store for collection and re-use;

(3) That grounds clearances be undertaken at 3 monthly intervals mid-way between Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday and Father's Day, on dates to be settled by the Manager and Registrar;

(4) That items removed from the grounds be kept for a period of 6 months, after which they be disposed of if not claimed, and that the Crematorium Regulations be amended accordingly;

(5) That the arrangements described in paragraph 8.3.6 of the report be implemented for the storing of items removed;

(6) That the Manager and Registrar and the Property Manager consider seeking an alternative location for the storage facility;

(7) That the Book of Remembrance continues to be promoted as the primary means of memorial, but officers investigate a proposal for an alternative means of memorial in more detail, for the Joint Committee to consider at a future meeting;

(8) That the Clerk be asked to submit to the Joint Committee in December 2020 an update report.

853. Portchester Crematorium Manager & Registrar Retirement (AI 12)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE CLERK)

RESOLVED

(1) That the arrangements made for the recruitment to the post of Manager and Registrar be noted and that authority be delegated to the Clerk, Treasurer and personnel officer to make an appointment after consultation with the Chairman;

(2) That the grateful thanks of the Joint Committee be placed on record for the long and distinguished service given by James Clark upon his retirement in February 2020 and for his valuable and outstanding contribution for 31 years to the work of Portchester Crematorium and the Joint Committee as Manager and Registrar.

Presentation to Mr James Clark upon his future retirement

Following this item the Chairman of the Joint Committee referred to James' outstanding service and presented him with a framed retirement certificate recording the Joint Committee's resolution. He extended to James the Joint Committee's good wishes for a long and happy retirement, and other members joined and echoed the chairman's congratulatory comments.

James suitably replied, emphasising the important role that the members of the 4 local authorities comprising the Joint Committee had played over so many years, since the Crematorium opened in 1958.

854. Date of Next Meeting (AI 13)

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be held at 2pm on Monday 23 March 2020 at Portchester Crematorium.

The meeting concluded at 3.00 pm.

Chairman