

## **PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the North Chapel at Portchester Crematorium on Monday 13 December 2021 at 2.00 pm.

### **Present**

#### **Fareham Borough Council**

Councillor Ian Bastable  
Councillor Simon Martin

#### **Gosport Borough Council**

Apologies submitted

#### **Havant Borough Council**

Councillor Tim Pike

#### **Portsmouth City Council**

Councillor Hugh Mason (Chairman)

### **Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Alan Scard and Kathleen Jones (Gosport BC); Councillor Lulu Bowerman (Havant BC – engaged on other council business) and Councillor Dave Ashmore (Portsmouth CC).

### **915. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

None.

### **916. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2021 (AI 3)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 20 September 2021 be signed as a correct record.

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

None.

### **918. Clerk's Items (AI 5)**

None.

### **919. Finance Strategy and Budget for 2022/23 (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

The Deputy Treasurer, in submitting the report and in response to members' questions, detailed the treasury management arrangements that would be applied in respect of surplus funds invested with Fareham BC, given the current low market rates.

Attention was also drawn to paragraph 23 of the report showing a comparison of crematoria numbers for 2019 and 2020, and the affect which the pandemic had on increasing the number of cremations undertaken. Portchester had seen increases similar to increases at other crematoria.

**RESOLVED (1) that the Finance Strategy 2022/23, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved;**

**(2) that the Finance Strategy 2022/23 be sent to the four constituent authorities to note for their information.**

**920. Revenue Budget Report - 2022/23 (AI 7)**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

In submitting the report, and in response to questions, the Deputy Treasurer drew specific attention to –

- The rationale for calculating the cost of walkthrough funerals;
- The variations in the sums included for National Non Domestic Rates, arising from a successful revaluation and refund;
- Pension fund details were provided by Hampshire County Council, it being noted that a pension fund revaluation was undertaken every 3 years;
- The level of Web Casting costs to be charged in 2022/23 was still to be notified by Obitus, and would be reported to the Joint Committee;
- The inclusion within the Capital Programme of £50,000 for a feasibility study into a complete cremator replacement programme (dealt with in more detail in the Property Manager's Report). Mention was made that new cremators would offer greater efficiency and the feasibility study would include examining the types of fuel; number of cremators required; emerging and proven technologies; and seeking net zero carbon emissions.

**RESOLVED (a) That the capital works programme as detailed in Appendix D to the report 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 2022;**

**(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 2021/22 and 2022/23.**

#### **921. Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 8)**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

In submitting the report the Manager and Registrar mentioned particularly –

- the increasing number of cremated remains removed from the Crematorium, although in some cases these were subsequently brought back to Portchester for scattering;
- the extensive take up of Obitus, although web casting had declined to a more average level in recent months now that larger numbers could attend services in person.

In response to a question about gas consumption, the Deputy Treasurer explained the current procurement arrangements between a consortium of authorities with a contractor, and that any increase in cost could be contained within the budget that had been set.

In respect of cremator efficiency, the Manager and Registrar explained that cremations took place daily with the number of cremators used depending upon the number of coffins presented – for example 21 cremations had involved all 5 cremators, whereas a day when there were 8 funerals, only 2 cremators had been used.

**RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.**

#### **922. Building Repairs and Renewal Programme (AI 9)**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

In submitting the report, and in response to questions, the Property Manager highlighted particularly the following new works proposed –

- Lighting Upgrade – This would involve an upgrade across the complete crematorium site to ensure that lighting used was fit for purpose with energy efficient fittings;
- Waiting Rooms Refurbishment – This work should be completed in the next financial year, dependent upon product availability. The £30k estimate was thought to be adequate for the type of work envisaged, but could not be a final figure until the full range of work was settled;
- Cremators Replacement Feasibility – This would involve the appointment of a consultant and an investigation into options for a complete replacement of the existing cremator equipment. New cremators would offer greater efficiency and the feasibility study would include examining the types of fuel and energy that could be used; number of cremators required; emerging technologies such as resomation as well as proven technologies; seeking net zero carbon emissions; and energy recovery from excess heat.

**RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and approved.**

**923. Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 10)**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

Members gave consideration to the options and recommendations contained within the report about tree sculpture carvings and the outcome of the tree survey.

**RESOLVED (1) that Option B set out in the report (viz the replacement of wood carved trees 1 & 2 with new sculptures in the same position sunk into the ground and the removal of the tops of tree 3 to be attached to a new base in the same position) be approved;**

**(2) that arising from the tree survey report, the action required be undertaken, and that the two substantial trees identified for felling be used for new carvings.**

**924. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 21 March 2022 (AI 11)**

**Members noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee will be at 2pm on Monday 21 March 2022 at Portchester Crematorium.**

The meeting concluded at 3.10 pm.

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Chairman