



NOTICE OF MEETING

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 2.00 PM

**COLLINGWOOD ROOM - FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
CIVIC OFFICES**

Telephone enquiries to John Haskell, Clerk to the Joint Committee
023 9222 0839

(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the Minutes of this meeting.

The agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view on-line at www.portchestercrematorium.org)

Membership of the Joint Committee

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor June Cully (Chair)
Councillor Tony Jessop

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Grainne Rason
Councillor Amy Redsull

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Joanne Burton
Councillor Ian Bastable

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Suzy Horton
Councillor Hugh Mason

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**
- 2 **Declarations of Members' Interests**
- 3 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2024** (Pages 5 - 10)
Attached.
- 4 **Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda**
- 5 **Clerk's Items**
The Clerk to the Joint Committee will report on any matters requiring attention.
- 6 **Building Repairs and Renewal Programme** (Pages 11 - 12)
Report from the Property Manager attached.
RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee notes the contents of the report.
- 7 **Replacement of Cremators - Update Report** (Pages 13 - 16)
The purpose of the attached report from the Property Manager is to inform members on progress with the project to replace the existing cremators at Portchester Crematorium.
RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee notes the contents of the report.
- 8 **Manager and Registrar's Report** (Pages 17 - 18)
(a) General Statistical Reports attached for June - August 2024.
(b) Any other items of topical interest.
- 9 **Crematorium Improvement Works** (Pages 19 - 22)
The purpose of the attached report from the Property Manager is to provide members with details of various works at Portchester Crematorium to improve facilities and services offered.
RECOMMENDED that the programme of improvement works set out in the report be approved.
- 10 **Horticultural Consultant's Report** (Pages 23 - 24)
A report from the Horticultural Consultant on grounds maintenance generally

is attached.

RECOMMENDED that the report be received and noted.

- 11 Date of Next Meeting - Monday 9 December 2024 at 2pm in the Civic Offices, Fareham.**

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Agenda Item 3

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the Collingwood Room, Civic Offices, Fareham on Monday 24 June 2024 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Ian Bastable
Councillor Joanne Burton

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor June Cully
Councillor Tony Jessop

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Grainne Rason
Councillor Amy Restull

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Hugh Mason

Welcome and Introductions

New members were welcomed to the meeting and officers serving the Joint Committee and members were introduced.

Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Suzy Horton (Portsmouth City Council), and Andy Wannell (Treasurer)

1032 Appointment of Chairman (AI 2)

RESOLVED that Councillor June Cully (Gosport Borough Council) be appointed Chairman for the municipal year 2024/25.

(Councillor June Cully in the Chair)

1033 Appointment of Vice-Chairman (AI 3)

RESOLVED that Councillor Hugh Mason (Portsmouth City Council) be appointed vice-chairman for the municipal year 2024/25.

1034 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 4) – None

1035 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2024 (AI 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 18 March 2024 be signed as a correct record.

1036 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 6)

Minute 1028 – Memorial Tree and Memorial Frieze

The Manager and Registrar circulated a leaflet promoting the memorial plaques now available at the Crematorium, which would also be advertised on the crematorium website.

1037 Clerk's Items (AI 7) - None

1038 Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2024 (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

In submitting her report the Deputy Treasurer amplified its key points, explaining in particular that it together with the Annual Governance Statement was an integral part of the Joint Committee's governance arrangements.

In response to questions arising from members the Deputy Treasurer highlighted the following main points –

- Pensions Reserve – an amendment to the 2022/23 column figures in respect of the following two entries –

Actuarial gain/loss	£864,000
Contributions to liabilities	- £244,000

- Although staff costs mentioned in section 4 of the accounting statement had increased over 2022/23 by a very small amount this was as a result of various of factors that had increased the previous year's usual costs including absence cover and severance;
- The cremation figure of 2,881 related to the financial year 2023/24, whereas for industry wide reporting purposes a calendar year figure would be quoted, and although this would exceed 3,000, overall the number of cremations undertaken at Portchester had fallen;
- The crematorium's fixed asset value is undertaken by an external valuer periodically with the next valuation likely to take account of the new replacement cremators having been installed or installed in part, with existing fixed assets having been removed. Year-end accounting will reflect these changes including the most recent relining of cremators to ensure resilience of the service during the cremators' replacement programme which is being depreciated over a two year rather than 10 year period;

- Whilst gas prices continue to be unstable the Crematorium has had in place for many years procurement arrangements through the local authority Crown Commercial Service framework to ensure purchase at the best price available.

RESOLVED that the Annual Return for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 be approved and signed as appropriate, as follows -

- (a) Section 1 - Accounting Statements for Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee be approved and signed;**
- (b) Section 2 - Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed;**
- (c) That the Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2024 and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024 be noted.**

1039 Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee – Annual Report – 2023/24 (AI 9)

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

In respect of Item 7(d) the Fountain area and Garden of Contemplation, members were advised that the short-term option for the fountain area had now been undertaken, with the fountain's removal having taken place and planned planting. Officers would be meeting to consider options and costings that could be brought forward for a staged implementation of the result of the feasibility study previously considered in June 2023.

RESOLVED that the annual report for the 2023/24 financial year be received and approved and it be sent for information to each constituent authority.

1040 Building Repairs and Renewal Programme (AI 10)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

1041 Replacement of Cremators – Update Report (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

In submitting his report the Property Manager highlighted its main points, and in response to members questions the Joint Committee was advised that –

- The work being undertaken was not having any direct effect upon those attending services at the crematorium, nor the number of services taking place. A 'heather border' large vinyl picture was being used to screen a working area at the northern end of the site, and a builders' compound had been established in part of the external car park;

- Although a holdover facility was being provided this would not be used for any funeral where there had been an advance request to use the viewing room;
- Members were reminded of the careful calculations and modelling that had been undertaken based on existing and projected cremation numbers that had determined a need for 4 cremators and how the work on removal of existing cremators and replacement could be achieved with minimal risk;
- The risk assessment that had been undertaken to ensure resilience of the crematorium operation throughout the entirety of the cremators' replacement works, which had included for example the previous relining of one of the soon to be decommissioned cremators, and cremator engineers working on site.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee notes the written progress report for the period March 2024 – May 2024 and the verbal update.

**1042 Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 12) -
(a) General Statistical Report for March 2024 – May 2024**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

In submitting her report the Manager mentioned that –

- the slight fall in cremations was in line with industry figures reported by funeral directors.
- although the statistical information showed a figure of some 72% of ashes being removed, this was a figure derived at the time of cremation, with many sets of ashes being subsequently brought back to the crematorium for scattering;
- the average gas consumption for each cremation had now fallen from 70cu.m to 55cu.m;
- the Obitus web casting and visual tributes service was continuing to be very popular.

NOTED

(b) Other items of topical interest – Statutory Medical Examiner Scheme – Implementation from September 2024

The Manager explained that the Medical Examiner Scheme would commence nationally on the 9 September, whereby every death would be considered by a medical examiner or the coroner irrespective of whether the deceased was to be cremated or buried. The Medical Referee role (in respect of all cremations) would continue for a transitional period, still to be determined, but with a 6 months' notice period when the role was to end, after which the medical referee fee would no longer apply. The medical examiner service would be part of the NHS but there was no indication whether in future a fee might be introduced. **NOTED**

1043 Crematorium Grounds – General Update (AI 13)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Steve Uden from Portsmouth City Council's Parks and Leisure Service was introduced, who had now been appointed Horticultural Consultant for the Crematorium, as part of his duties with the Council.

In response to questions, members were advised that the Crematorium Manager had requested the use of sustainable planting in the former water feature area, which could be moved elsewhere in due course.

The tree inspection and condition survey was likely to be undertaken in the next 6/7 months. This would reveal whether any trees required felling. At present tree work was needed in respect of removing some deadwood and possibly in the future planting some smaller light native trees.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

1044 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee next meets at 2pm on the following dates at the Civic Offices, Fareham -

**Monday 23 September 2024,
Monday 9 December 2024,
Monday 17 March 2025,
Monday 23 June 2025**

The Meeting concluded at 3.04pm

Chairman

JH/me
26 June 2024
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Agenda Item 6

Report to: Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee

Date: 23 September 2024

Report of: Ian Cousins, Property Manager

Subject: Repairs and Renewal Programme



Ref	Item Description	Cost £	Commentary
2106	Staff Area Improvements	10,000	Works on hold whilst Cremator Replacement scheme is in progress.
2108	Signage	20,000	Updated proposal accepted. Design of new signs being finalised.
2115	External Redecoration	25,000	Works on hold whilst Cremator Replacement scheme is in progress.
2116	Lighting Upgrade	75,000	Works on hold whilst Cremator Replacement scheme is in progress.
2118	Garden Shelter Maintenance	10,000	Works to frames commenced with others awaiting costs from contractors.
2120	Fountain Removal	13,750	Revised cost with allowance for new planting.
2121	Cremator Replacement	4,500,000	See Cremator Replacement Report – for an update on progress

Note – This report provides details on the significant projects being undertaken at the Crematorium with any day to day or completed projects omitted.

Recommendation - That the report be noted

Ian Cousins
Property Manager

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

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Agenda Item 7



**REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE –
23 September 2024**

REPORT BY: PROPERTY MANAGER, IAN COUSINS

REPLACEMENT OF CREMATORS – UPDATE REPORT

1. Purpose

1.1 To inform members on progress with the project to replace the existing cremators at Portchester Crematorium.

2. Progress

2.1 The details below cover the period June to August 2024.

2.2 Strip out works for removal of 4 old cremators and associated plant is completed.

2.3 Works to adapt current openings and floor space where current cremators have been removed has now been finished.

3. Supply and Installation of new gas cremators

3.1 The works to remove the four old cremators with associated plant has been completed, on time and to programme. The delivery and installation of phase 1 filtration / abatement equipment on the mezzanine level is also now complete.

3.2 Detailed investigations have been conducted to the chimney stack liners both internally and externally. These investigations have confirmed that the liners are extremely corroded and in need of replacement. Subject to the agreement of final costs with the contractor these works will be programmed into phase 2 during 2025.

3.3 During September delivery and installation of the two new cremators will be commenced.

4. Building Contract for works associated with the installation of new gas cremators

4.1 Works to adapt current openings and floor space previously occupied by the old cremators has been successfully carried out as per engineer's design in readiness for the install of 2 new cremators.

4.2 Formation of the new viewing room, control room, hold over facility space and widening of the plant room entrance doors has been completed. It should be noted that due to installation of new cremators the viewing room will remain unavailable for use until the conclusion of Phase 2 work in the autumn of 2025.

4.3 Various electrical and mechanical works for the new facilities have also been completed.

5. Programme

5.1 The current overview programme as set out below remains unchanged except for the addition of the replacement flue liners to the Phase 2, 2025 Cremator works.

Phase One - 2024		
Building Works	New plant room access, hold over facility and viewing room. Structural works to allow installation of two new cremators.	April to August
Cremator Works	Removal of four existing cremators. Installation of new abatement and two cremators.	May to December
Phase Two - 2025		
Cremator Works	Removal of remaining two old cremators. Installation of new abatement equipment and two cremators.	April to October.
Building Works	Structural works to allow for installation of two new cremators.	April to October

5.2 Installation of the holdover facility commenced and was completed as per the works programme.

5.3 Works to date are all in accordance with programme.

6. Financial Update

6.1 Currently projected costs remain within the allocated budget of £4.5m agreed at the Joint Committee meeting on the 20th March 2023.

7. Conclusions

7.1 All contractors involved in this project have continued to collaborate well with the on-site team and the wider professional team to minimise disruption to the daily operation of the crematorium.

7.2 Regular meetings are held with the contractors and consultants to ensure any issues are discussed and resolved.

7.3 Works are continuing to run in accordance with the agreed programme.

Ian Cousins
Property Manager
September 2024

Background List of Documents –
Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972: Nil

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Agenda Item 8

REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT
COMMITTEE – 23rd SEPTEMBER 2024



REPORT BY: MANAGER AND REGISTRAR

STATISTICS

1. MONTHLY COMPARISON

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
JUN	216	240	242	173
JUL	204	229	222	188
AUG	239	252	237	216

2. TOTAL CREMATIONS

	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TO END AUGUST</u>
2021	3264	2178
2022	3118	2078
2023	3024	2109
2024	-	1799

3. DISPOSAL OF REMAINS

Ashes received from other Crematoria.....	50
i) Total disposals within grounds.....	157
ii) Remains removed from crematorium.....	387
iii) Retained.....	33
	TOTAL 577
Scattered 29 %	Removed 71%

4. GAS CONSUMPTION

Total gas consumption (cu.m.)	22225
Total cremations.....	577
Average gas consumption (cu.m)	39

5. OBITUS

	Webcast	Visual Tributes
JUN - 95% (164) used Obitus services	30% (52)	75% (129)
JUL - 97% (182) used Obitus services	23% (42)	72% (136)
AUG – Figures unavailable at time of report		

10th SEPTEMBER 2024

Agenda Item 9



**REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE –
23 September 2024**

REPORT BY: PROPERTY MANAGER, IAN COUSINS

CREMATORIUM IMPROVEMENT WORKS

1. Purpose

1.1 To provide members with details of various works at Portchester Crematorium to improve facilities and services offered.

2. Background

2.1 Over recent years The Joint Committee has made significant investment in the facilities at the Crematorium with works to improve the chapels, the waiting rooms, and the current major works to replace the cremators.

2.2 The market for cremation services in the United Kingdom has changed considerably in this period with the opening of numerous privately owned crematoriums and the increased popularity of direct cremations.

2.3 In the local market we have the now well-established Oaks Crematorium at Havant owned by the Southern Co-op. We have also seen the granting of planning permission in July 2023 to Mercia Crematoria Developments Ltd for a new crematorium at Lee-on-Solent.

2.4 We remain the busiest crematorium in the South-East Hampshire area due to the popularity of the site, the continued investment in our facilities and the commitment of the team employed at Portchester to deliver the best possible service.

2.5 To keep pace with public expectations we need to continue the investment in our site, facilities, and services to remain competitive in the local market for cremation services.

3. Improvement Plan

3.1 Whilst we remain a popular site, the age of our building, location and planning restrictions limits the opportunities to develop outside existing facilities.

3.2 We therefore propose the following pieces of work that support and develop the existing facilities as well the development of the product and services offered.

3.3 For the built environment we develop our chapels to meet modern requirements, the majority works will focus on the South Chapel to align its facilities closer to those currently provided in our popular North Chapel.

3.4 Carry out significant works to the main toilet facilities to ensure they achieve a similar standard to a new crematorium.

3.5 We develop a revised scheme to provide a new Garden of Contemplation.

3.6 We improve our service offering and the provision of information.

4. Chapel Improvements

4.1 A significant programme of works is proposed in the South Chapel which would build on the improvement made in the last successful refurbishment and further enhance the facilities offered in this chapel.

4.2 We will look to open up the space to provide greater flexibility and facilities that allow us to offer bariatric funeral services for the first time as a result of the significant investment in new cremators.

4.3 Bariatric funerals require direct level access for funeral directors and a key piece of work will provide a level surface for their equipment to successfully reach the catafalque and therefore we propose works to adjust floor levels to accommodate this change.

4.4 As a result of this we will remove the existing proscenium arch and curtain arrangement, with enhancements required to new wall finishes to part of the area and a new curtain arrangement.

4.5 To further allow flexibility in the use of the space the existing fixed seating will be removed and loose seating provided like that in the North Chapel.

4.6 The complete area will be redecorated, with adaptations to the lighting and new flooring to be provided throughout the chapel.

4.7 Within the North Chapel it is proposed that the existing catafalque will be replaced with one suitable to take a bariatric funerals service.

5. Toilet Improvements

5.1 A significant upgrade to our North Chapel and Waiting Room toilets to provide an appearance that complements that delivered in the recently refurbished waiting room.

5.2 This will involve new wall and floor finishes but retain the existing layout to provide the maximum facilities possible in the space available acknowledging the high level of demand on these facilities at peak times.

5.3 The South Chapel Toilet will be redecorated whilst proposals for the former fountain area are developed.

6. New Garden Contemplation

6.1 At the Joint Committee meeting on the 26 June 2023 (minute 996), members were advised on the results of a feasibility study into options to develop the existing fountain area in a new Garden of Contemplation. This included improved exit arrangements from the chapels and courtyard garden for the South Chapel.

6.2 The early costings showed the scheme at between £1.5m and £3m and with insufficient funds within the capital budget, whilst the cremator replacement programme is delivered, an alternative plan was approved to remove the fountain and replace with planting. These works have now been completed at a significantly reduced cost of £13,750.00 rather than the budgeted £75,000.00 due to efficiencies in the design and procurement process.

6.3 We now propose to develop a revised scheme to provide a new garden of contemplation in the former fountain area. This will include looking at making better use of the space, revisiting the scope of the feasibility study including the exit routes from the South and North Chapel, the garden area for the South Chapel and other building works.

6.4 It is planned that we engage an experience architect to develop our proposals and appoint specialists to allow the development of a proposal that can be brought forward for members consideration in 2025.

7. Services and Information

7.1 It is proposed that we will review the service types currently provided and look to add new types of services such as the provision of bariatric services mentioned earlier above to ensure our offering remains relevant to a changing market for cremation services.

7.2 As we offer new services such as the bariatric and new memorial tree it is important that we inform the public and funeral directors what we offer at Portchester Crematorium. We propose to develop a colourful and informative brochure that details all the facilities provided, services offered, memorial offerings that are available to our local communities.

8. Programme

8.1 Early investigations will be commenced this year with a plan to complete some items this financial year.

8.2 The majority of the items listed will be completed in either the 2025/2026 or the 2026/2027 financial year.

8.3 With the Cremator Replacement works due to continue to the autumn of 2025 careful planning and programming will be required to deliver both pieces of works simultaneously. Key issues will be allowing the works to be completed safely and limiting the impact on the public. Therefore, some elements of work may need to be deferred to 2026/2027 financial year.

9. Financial

9.1 Initial costing suggests a budget of £362,000.00 should be allowed for delivery of all the works detailed above. These works would be funded by the previously agreed Site Improvements budget for both the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 financial years.

9.2 With the current underspend on the Renewals programme in the 2024/2025 financial year due to the impact of the cremator replacement works we will look to bring some items forward earlier where possible.

9.3 All costs are provisional at this stage, subject to survey and further investigations.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The programme of works detailed allows us to continue the development of the built environment at Portchester Crematorium.

10.2 The programme allows for the development of our services and information to support the marketing of Portchester Crematorium in a competitive market.

10.3 It should be recorded that whilst these works are important the significant works to replace the cremators will take priority.

Ian Cousins
Property Manager

September 2024

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

Agenda Item 10



**REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE -
Monday 23 September 2024**

REPORT BY: THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT

CREMATORIUM GROUNDS – GENERAL UPDATE

The summer bedding is providing a long-lasting display of colour and is well maintained with both weeding and watering by Brighstone. One of the borders is coming to the end of its best as a display and it may be worth looking at improving the soil to better retain moisture and nutrients. The winter bedding will be planted up in the middle of October.

The 'In Bloom' Judge visited in the Summer and seemed suitably impressed with the Crematorium Grounds and their maintenance. He liked the way that green waste is composted and re-cycled onto the grounds and the use of wood chip as a mulch between shrubs. He also enjoyed seeing the sculptures including the Heron and the new memorials including the Maple Tree, Landmark Freize and Naval Freize. We await the judgement.

He came up with a couple of areas for improvement including incorporating a small wildflower border/area to encourage wildlife and rainwater harvesting for watering plants. Brighstone staff reported that there had been less butterflies and bees on the flowers this year and this may help to support them.

He also felt that members of the team working on the grounds should be able to have the opportunity for their work to be celebrated possibly by attendance at the awards ceremony.

The former water feature will be planted up by the end of October with the design that incorporates sustainable planting which should make the area attractive and easy to manage.

The pond has become cloudy during the summer months and investigations are being made to discover the cause. The UV lamp in the filtration system is being replaced by Brighstone which may help with water quality. A pond expert has been invited to make a site visit to advise on how to improve the water quality and make it clearer.

An area shaded by pine trees that had formerly had Rosa Rugosa, a very thorny shrub rose will be replanted over the autumn/winter period. This will probably be with shrubs that will tolerate this dry/shaded acidic soil including Camellias, Azalea's and Rhododendron.

Again the Brighstone Team have worked hard to maintain the crematorium site to a high standard.

Stephen Uden
Horticultural Consultant

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