

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Joint Committee held at the Public Services Plaza, Havant on Monday 23 September 2013 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Keith Evans
Councillor Leslie Keeble

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor Peter Edgar
Councillor Dennis Wright

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Dave Collins

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Hugh Mason (Chairman)

Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Mike Fairhurst (Havant BC), and Councillor Jason Fazackarley (Portsmouth CC), both engaged on other council business.

535 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2) - None

536 Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 June 2013 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 June 2013 be signed as a correct record.

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

(a) Minute 519 – Presentation to Gosport BC's Scrutiny Board

The Clerk mentioned that a presentation had been given to Gosport Borough Council's Scrutiny Board on Wednesday 17 July at the Crematorium. The presentation included a tour of the Crematorium.

(b) Minute 525 – Annual Return

The Treasurer reported that BDO LLP, External Auditors had now completed their work and had provided an unqualified certificate and opinion for 2012/13. This was circulated to members and accepted and approved by the Joint Committee.

The auditors had also provided an issues arising report which would be presented to the Joint Committee in December together with a covering report of actions already completed and a plan of any further actions that may be required.

(c) Minute 523 – Risk Management

It was noted that the matrix information used to identify, assess and score each risk had been circulated to members.

538 Clerk's Items (AI 5) - None

539 Portchester Crematorium Internal Audit Report – 2013 (AI 6)

(TAKE IN INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT)

The Treasurer explained that account had been taken of the recommendations made to strengthen those controls that had been identified within the report. It also needed to be noted that at the time field work to prepare the audit report was being undertaken the Joint Committee was still to approve the new set of financial regulations; these having been subsequently approved at the meeting on 17 June 2013 under minute 523(3).

RESOLVED that completion of the Internal Audit and report in accordance with the 2013/14 Audit Plan be noted and accepted.

540 Engineer and Surveyor's Report - Planned Maintenance Programme - Progress Report (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR)

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

541 Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

In presenting his report the Horticultural Consultant explained that given the good weather conditions it had been possible to reduce the number of grass cuts during the summer period, although, dependent upon the weather it might be necessary to carry out additional mowing during the autumn and winter period.

RESOLVED that the report be received and approved.

542 Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 9)

(a) General Statistical Report

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(b) Any other items of topical interest – Metals Recycling Scheme

The Manager and Registrar reported that following consultation with members during August, there had been widespread support for the submission of an application for the Rowans Hospice under the metals recycling scheme operated by the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management. The application had now been submitted, with the support of the Rowans who had been consulted.

NOTED

543 Developing and Enhancing the Crematorium's Services (AI 11)

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

Arising out of consideration of the report members noted the arrangements that currently existed whereby the Manager and Registrar had discretion to permit a double time slot to be allocated for a funeral where there appeared to be a need.

In respect of the cremation fee, members endorsed the view of officers that at present it was not necessary to make any recommendation for change.

After further detailed consideration it was -

RESOLVED that the report's recommendations be approved, as follows -

- (1) that in addition to the long standing discretion which the Manager and Registrar has to permit a double slot to be allocated for a funeral, he be authorised to permit a 40 minute slot where there appears to be a need, and in respect of this arrangement he brings forward for consideration timetable options to develop 40 minute timeslots.**
- (2) that in respect of chapel decor and decoration the services of a design consultant be sought to advise on what changes could be considered taking account of current trends in the design and decoration of crematoria chapels.**
- (3) that the action being taken to enhance the floral arrangements behind and around the catafalque in each chapel be supported.**
- (4) that that the action taken to facilitate video streaming be endorsed, and arrangements now be made to offer video streaming through the internet to any family requesting it, and the Manager and Registrar, in consultation with the Clerk to the Joint Committee, be authorised to finalise the arrangements including the necessary security safeguards for the provision of this service.**

- (5) that the proposal to install large video screens and associated equipment as outlined in the report be approved and pursued, and that the Manager and Registrar prepares a guidance note regulating the use of this service.
- (6) that the initiative to proceed with digitising the remaining Books of Remembrance and arranging for all the Books to be available on line through the internet including the installation of a video console within the garden of contemplation or near vicinity be approved and progressed.
- (7) that the use of the services of Portsmouth City Council's Web Design team be approved for the Portchester Crematorium Web site to be refreshed.
- (8) that the suggestions contained within the report in respect of reception and internal direction and signage arrangements be developed and a further report with detailed costs be brought forward for consideration by the Joint Committee, with priority being given to improved signage.
- (9) that the arrangements in respect of a customer survey outlined in the report be pursued.
- (10) that enhanced publicity supporting Portchester Crematorium's services be arranged, as described within the report.

544 Crematorium Mercury Abatement Project (AI 10)

- (a) The Engineer and Surveyor reminded the meeting that following completion of this project last year some works had been undertaken at roof level to mitigate noise emanating from the fan system. Reference was made to two complaints that had been made by nearby residents to Fareham BC's Environmental Health Department. There had been an onsite meeting between the Engineer and Surveyor and the EHO, from whom a response was currently awaited, in respect of the works that had been undertaken.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(b) Mercury Abatement Consultancy Service Contract

Before considering this part of the item the Joint Committee -

RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting during this item of business because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence received in respect of a matter relating to the Mercury Abatement Consultancy Contract.

Take in exempt minute setting out the decision of the Joint Committee.

545 Building Surveying Consultancy Service (Exempt Item) (AI 12)

(TAKE IN EXEMPT REPORT FROM THE ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR)

The purpose of the exempt report from the Engineer and Surveyor was to recommend a strategy for ensuring continuity of adequate support in the provision of the building surveying consultancy service in both the medium and long term.

Take in exempt minute setting out the decision of the Joint Committee.

546 Horticultural Grounds Maintenance Contract (Exempt Item) (AI 13)

Before considering this item the Joint Committee –

RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting during this item of business because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of ‘exempt information’ within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

(TAKE IN EXEMPT REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

The purpose of the exempt report from the Horticultural Consultant was to report back as requested by the Joint Committee on the contract for the provision of horticultural and grounds maintenance services that expires in December 2014. The report also included options and recommendations as to the way forward.

Take in exempt minute setting out the decision of the Joint Committee.

547 Date of Next Meeting (AI 14)

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be held at 2pm on Monday 9 December 2013 in Portsmouth.

The meeting concluded at 3.25pm

Chairman

JH/me
26 September 2013
1060923m.doc