

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the North Chapel at Portchester Crematorium on Monday 27 June 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Joanne Bull
Councillor Susan Walker

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor Alan Durrant
Councillor Alan Scard

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Lulu Bowerman
Councillor Tim Pike

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Lee Hunt
Councillor Steve Pitt

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)

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Andy Wannell (Treasurer)

936 Appointment of Chairman (AI 2)

RESOLVED that Councillor Joanne Bull (Fareham Borough Council) be appointed chairman for the municipal year 2022/23.

(Councillor Joanne Bull in the Chair)

937 Appointment of Vice-Chairman (AI 3)

RESOLVED that Councillor Tim Pike (Havant Borough Council) be appointed vice-chairman for the municipal year 2022/23.

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

939 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2022 (AI 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 March 2022 be signed as a correct record.

940 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 6) – None

941 Clerk's Items (AI 7)

The Clerk mentioned that he had been advised that a private development company - Mercia Crematoria had outline proposals to develop as a crematorium part of land adjoining Brune Lane currently forming part of Lee-on-the-Solent Golf course. The scheme was at an early stage and the officers would need to consider the implications of such a development as details became clearer.

The Joint Committee's officers considered it important to keep the proposal under review, and it might be necessary to seek external professional advice to ensure the Joint Committee was able to respond positively to any future planning application if and when submitted.

Some members indicated there had already been a degree of public consultation on the proposal.

NOTED

942 Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2022 (AI 8)

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

The Deputy Treasurer highlighted key points within the report after which it was -

RESOLVED that the Annual Return for the financial year ending 31 March 2022 be received 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 2022 and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022 be noted.**

943 Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee – Annual Report – 2021/22 (A9)

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

Arising from consideration of the report members raised the following matters –

- The grant of a new 20 year lease from Fareham BC (para 7k) – this was still to be completed, and the Clerk explained that at present the Joint Committee was holding over on the terms of the existing lease.
- Action Plan to mitigate and reduce the crematorium’s carbon footprint (para 7c) – a number of points were highlighted which are covered in minute 944 below.

RESOLVED that the annual report for the 2021/22 financial year be received and approved and it be sent for information to each constituent authority.

944 Portchester Crematorium Environmental & Climate Change Action Plan

Arising out of consideration of the Annual Report under minute 943, the following main points were mentioned -

- Preparation of an Action Plan to mitigate and reduce the crematorium’s carbon footprint (reported to the Joint Committee on 21 March 2022),
- the appointment of a consultant who is investigating alternative cremation processes and fuel types before proposals are brought forward for consideration by the Joint Committee;
- Benchmarking a crematorium’s ‘carbon footprint’ against other crematoria was not currently undertaken but an industry wide ‘best practice’ might perhaps be developed;
- A need for members to be advised of the current level of the crematorium’s carbon footprint;
- The future provision of solar panels at the crematorium;
- The use of ‘waste energy’, which had been the subject of past investigation. At that time the investigation had shown that it could only be used on site in limited circumstances;
- The opportunities for harvesting rainwater should be explored;
- The provision of sustainable planting;
- The current arrangements that had been made for the recycling of floral tributes;
- The introduction and use by gardening staff of electric vehicles;
- Portsmouth City Council has an energy consultancy team that could be asked to assist.

RESOLVED that the officers bring forward to the December 2022 meeting a report containing proposals for inclusion within a Climate Change Action Plan.

945 Crematorium Service Times (AI 10)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

During consideration of this item, and in response to questions, the Joint Committee was advised that –

- Portchester Crematorium, even with a change to 45 minute service times, would still have more than enough capacity for the number of cremations currently undertaken. Any suggestion that families had to wait was incorrect, and each day Portchester is able to accommodate even at short notice funeral services, subject to funeral directors availability and family wishes.
- At present there was no difference in the cost of a 45 minutes or 30 minutes service.
- Each December the Joint Committee reviews the level of fees charged for cremations and related services as part of the budget setting process.
- ‘Walk Through’ funerals, where no mourners are present, are held at the start of each working day.
- ‘Committal’ services, which follow on from a church service elsewhere, whilst short in nature, currently still occupy a 30 minutes slot.
- Because of forward bookings by some funeral directors, the extension of service times to 45 minutes might not be fully implemented for about 4 weeks.

RESOLVED that all service times be extended to 45 minutes for a trial period of 6 months.

946 Building Repairs and Renewal Programme (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

In submitting the report the Property Manager drew specific attention to the appointment of a consultant who was undertaking a feasibility study and review of the water feature area close to the Book of Remembrance Room, including pedestrian flows and the wider area generally and its relationship with landscape planting. Following the meeting members had the opportunity to visit the area.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

**947 Manager and Registrar’s Report (AI 12) -
General Statistical Report for March – May 2022**

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

Arising from consideration of the report, and in response to questions, the Manager and Registrar advised the Joint Committee –

- That any suggestion that families had to wait some weeks for a funeral was incorrect. Portchester is able to accommodate even at short notice funeral services, subject to funeral directors availability and family wishes. Statistical information showed that each day there were unused ‘slots’ available.
- Although currently 69% of remains were removed in some cases these would be held by families who would bring the ashes back subsequently to the crematorium for scattering.

- The method by which the operating efficiency of the cremators was maintained, and that an average cremation took 90 minutes.
- Portchester did not undertake bariatric cremations.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

948 Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 13)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

Arising out of consideration of the report and in response to a question, members were reminded of the Joint Committee's long standing policy on the removal of memorials and other items left in the gardens of remembrance.

Mention was also made of the contractual arrangements with Brighstone Landscapes and the decision of the Joint Committee on the 21 March 2022. This extended the contract until the 1 January 2028 by approving the 5 year extension option within the current contract.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

949 Dates of Future Meetings (AI 14)

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee meets at 2pm on the following dates in 2022/23, at Portchester Crematorium –

Monday 26 September 2022
Monday 12 December 2022
Monday 20 March 2023
Monday 26 June 2023

The meeting concluded at 3.25 pm.

Chairman

JH/me
28 June 2022
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