

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the Collingwood Room, Civic Offices, Fareham on Monday 23 September 2024 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Ian Bastable
Councillor Joanne Burton

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor June Cully (Chairman)
Councillor Tony Jessop

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Amy Restull

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Hugh Mason

Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Suzy Horton (Portsmouth City Council) and Councillor Grainne Rason (Havant BC)

1045 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2) – None

1046 Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2024 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 24 June 2024 be signed as a correct record.

1047 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 4) – None

1048 Building Repairs and Renewal Programme (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

Arising from consideration of the report and questions, the Property Manager confirmed that the costs of the various works identified within the report were included within the 2024/25 budget. He also explained the arrangements being made for the design and approval of the signage. This would include large scale signage, garden layout plans, and take into account those with disabilities.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

1049 Replacement of Cremators – Update Report (AI 7)

(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 –

- Holding over some cremations was now making better efficiency of the two working cremators.
- The ability to undertake bariatric cremations, for which there was an increasing demand, was built into the new cremators. The decision to purchase the four new cremators was taken in March 2023.
- Bariatric funerals now required direct level access to the catafalque and although this had not been explored when the decision on new cremators was taken it would need to feature as part of other future improvements proposed in the south chapel.

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

1050 Manager and Registrar’s Report (AI 8) - (a) General Statistical Report for June 2024 – August 2024

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

In submitting her report the Manager mentioned that –

- The gas consumption for the period was the lowest she had known and was a positive result from the improved efficiency of operating the two existing cremators with the hold over facility. Generally the cremators were working from 8am to 5.30pm. Once operational the two new cremators would further improve efficiency by the nature of their design.
- Although on average Portchester was undertaking 10 cremations a day, it had been noted that companies providing direct cremations would have an effect on numbers. Mention was made of the facility at Andover which carried out 13,000 cremations last year, drawn from a very wide area.

NOTED

(b) Other items of topical interest – Memorials

The Manager reported that memorial leaves and plaques were now being sold and leaflets about this new service had been issued.

NOTED

1051 Crematorium Improvement Works (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

In submitting his report the Property Manager highlighted and amplified its main points. Arising from consideration and in response to members questions the following main points arose –

- Section 7 - In respect of services and information this would include options to develop a video story for availability to families to show at subsequent memorial services. In 2023/24 there were 175 walk through funerals.
- The brochure mentioned in Section 7 being developed by the Manager and her team would bring together the full range of services offered at Portchester. The intention was for this to be available to all funeral directors to give to families so they could make an informed choice. The brochure would also be available on the Crematorium web site.
- Paragraph 4.4 - Improvements to the South Chapel would include replacing the existing curtains with curtains and an arrangement similar to that in the North Chapel, with the possibility of additional space for mourners.
- Paragraph 6.2 - The cost of removing the fountain had been less than budgeted due to the structure being less difficult to remove and a low tender figure.
- Paragraph 6.4 – The Property Manager would contact each of the 4 authorities to ascertain if any had the architectural availability before seeking an outside appointment to develop the proposals.

RESOLVED that the programme of improvement works set out in the report be approved.

1052 Crematorium Grounds – General Update (AI 10)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

In submitting his report the Horticultural Consultant drew specific attention to the condition of the pond, the number of fish it contained, and the build up of silt, upon which advice was being sought on how to improve water quality. In respect of the small wildflower border it would be the intention for this to contain natural flowers.

The outcome of the 'In Bloom' judging was not yet known, and it was agreed the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee be invited to attend the Crematorium along with the Brighstone staff when any award is received.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

1053 Clerk's Items (AI 5)

The Clerk reported on an approach that had been received from the Portchester Memorial Gardens. Members were updated on the action officers had taken.

NOTED

1054 Date of Next Meeting – 2pm on Monday 9 December at the Civic Offices, Fareham

The Meeting concluded at 3.30pm

Chairman

JH/me
24 September 2024
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