

NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual meeting by Zoom

Friday, 19 June 2020 - 2.30 pm

- PRESENT Representing North Devon District Council
- Councillors Bulled, Cann, Davis, Y.Gubb, Phillips and Walker
- Representing Torridge District Council
- Councillors Christie, J.Gubb, Harding, Inch (Chairman) and Pennington
- Officers
- Crematorium Manager, Treasurer, Secretary and Accountant.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lovering

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2020 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD

Matters Arising – There were no matters arising

The Chairman and Committee expressed their thanks to the Crematorium Manager and staff for their continued work during the current difficult times.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared

26. CREMATORIUM MATTERS

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Crematorium Manager (previously circulated).

i) Solar Panels

It was noted that due to the Covid 19 crisis there had been no developments

ii) Achievements

It was noted:

- a) That the Aspen Flower area frame (not roofing) was completed on the day the Covid shutdown was announced. The contractor did some safety works (fencing and waterproof cover) to prevent damage. It was hoped works will be completed by mid-June.
- b) That both cremators were re-lined immediately prior to the Covid-peak. The Barnstaple Hotel provided free key-worker accommodation for the engineers after their hotel closed. Without their support the work would have been very difficult to complete.
- c) That the new logo caskets were now in use after the sourcing was switched to the UK (originally China). There had been increased costs.

iii) Staffing

It was noted:

- a) That the new technician had started work on 6th April.
- b) That a new lead Medical Referee (Dr Nick Relph) had been appointed by the Ministry of Justice. The previous post-holder (Dr Loveden) remained in a deputy role to support the crematorium during the Covid crisis.

iv) Covid Crisis Update

It was noted:

- That the uptake of Cremation services increased in April, returning to normal levels in May.
- That free webcasting was (and remains) available to mitigate the reduced mourner numbers. The Manager expressed his personal thanks to Councillor Walker who sought the Joint Committee's consent.
- That the Crematorium gardens were initially shut by legislation but re-opened when the Government guidance was relaxed.

- That only the Rowan Chapel was in use as its size allowed easy social distancing. At the time of writing this report the capacity is 18. The maximum possible whilst maintaining 2-metre social distancing was 33. Rowan's exclusive use was expected to continue for the foreseeable future.
- That the office was closed early in the crisis but its re-opening was imminent with screens, gel points, barriers and split receptions (enquiries at one, booked appointments at the other) all in place by mid-May.
- That the early ordering of safety equipment/materials and support of North Devon Council procurement ensured all equipment was available before and throughout the crisis.
- That the efforts of the staff had been the subject of much positive comment by Funeral Directors.

In answer to a question from a Member the Crematorium Manager stated that if there was a second Covid spike he was confident that the Crematorium would be able to manage and plans were in place.

The Treasurer reported that Devon County Council was the responsible local authority for Covid planning and were producing in consultation with District Council's and Crematoria an Outbreak Management Plan by the end of June 2020 in case there was a second Covid spike.

v) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted that Over and Above (maternity bereavement suite) had been nominated for the next award (July) as previously reported and the subsequent nomination list:

Clarity
 Calvert Trust
 Over and Above (Cancer & Wellbeing Centre)
 Families in Grief
 North Devon Children's Holiday Foundation
 North Devon Hospice
 Cruse
 Children's Hospice SW
 Over and Above (North Devon Hospital – Maternity Unit Bereavement Suite)

That no further additions would be considered prior to February 2022.

vi) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

vii) Garden Improvements 2020/21

It was noted that the works had been suspended due to the Covid 19 crisis. The cover for the Rowan exit would be reviewed, as the long-term use of the chapel would make the works difficult unless weekend working could be secured.

vii) Larkbear Development

It was noted that there had been no developments and that enquiries were in hand regarding releasing a small strip of the frontage to Devon County Council to allow for a large footpath improvement scheme. The previous support of the Joint Committee would be communicated to the two authorities whose authority was required in matters of land acquisition.

27. OUTTURN 2019/2020

The Joint Committee considered the outturn report 2019/20 by the Treasurer (previously circulated).

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Outturn Report 2019/20 be noted.
- ii) That the following Reserves and Balances be approved:

	Capital Funding Reserve	Equipment Replacement Reserve	General Reserve
	£	£	£
Opening Balance 1 st April 2019	341,478	300,000	100,000
Contribution in year	0	100,000	0
2019/20 Revenue Deficit	(8,232)	0	0
Closing Balance 31 st March 2020	333,246	400,000	100,000

28. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates for future meetings were noted:

- Friday 7th August 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
- Friday 6th November 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
- Friday 5th February 2021 @ 2.30 p.m.

The meeting commenced at 2.30pm and closed at 2.52pm

Chair:

Date: