

NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

A virtual meeting of the above Committee will be held on **FRIDAY 19th JUNE 2020 AT 2.30 p.m.**

Members: Representing North Devon Council

Councillors Bulled, Cann (Vice Chairman), Davis, Gubb, Lovering, Phillips and Walker

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors Christie, Gubb, Harding, A. Inch (Chairman) and Pennington.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2020 (attached).
 - (a) Matters Arising
3. Items brought forward which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. To agree the agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information).

PART 'A'

6. Crematorium Matters. Report by the Crematorium Manager (attached)
7. Outturn 2019/2020 Report by Treasurer (attached)
8. Dates of Future meetings:
Friday 7th August 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
Friday 6th November 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
Friday 5th February 2021 @ 2.30 p.m.

PART 'B' (Confidential/Restricted Information)

Nil

NOTE: Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

In addition to any document specifically mentioned, reports included in this Agenda will have been prepared with reference to any or all of the following:

1. All relevant statutory provisions.
2. All relevant Government circulars and ministerial advice.
3. All relevant adopted policies of the Council.
4. Capital Works Programme.
5. Current Estimates.
6. Standing Orders
7. Consultants' opinion and advice.
8. Published works relevant to the subject of the report.

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held at the Crematorium, Barnstaple on Friday 7th February 2020 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Representing North Devon District Council

Councillors Bulled, Cann, Davis, Y.Gubb, Lovering and Walker

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors Christie, J.Gubb, Harding, Inch (Chairman) and Pennington

Officers

Crematorium Manager, Treasurer, Secretary and Accountant.

(a) APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Phillips

(b) MINUTES

- (i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2019 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (ii) Matters Arising – There were no matters arising

(c) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared

(d) CREMATORIUM MATTERS

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

i) Solar Panels

It was noted that costs were still being investigated

ii) Achievements

It was noted:

- a) That the replacement flower area cover for the Aspen Chapel had been ordered and that the installation would be completed by the end of

March. The replacement oak structure cost was significantly more than the quote previously obtained due to a near doubling in oak costs. However the deteriorating condition of the existing structure meant delay was not possible.

- b) That the first cremator re-line would also be carried out at the same time to minimise the period of noise disruption which was being managed by a closure of Aspen chapel.
- c) The Crematorium Manager presented photos of the new upgraded Quality Cardboard Caskets that had been ordered.

iii) Staffing

It was noted:

- a) That the One of the three technicians had tendered his resignation, effective at the end of March and the recruitment process was under way.
- b) That the lead medical referee (a statutory post) was retiring in April and the vacancy advertised.

iv) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted that 'Over and Above' had been nominated for the next award in July.

The Crematorium Manager reported that he had received two additional requests to be added to the scheme from:

- The Calvert Trust who provided outdoor experiences on Exmoor to those with life limiting and terminal conditions. Activities were fully accessible and included sailing, carriage driving recumbent cycling, archery and abseiling. The whole family was supported and could attend together with the main guest and as a consequence provide a boost to all those affected by the conditions.
- Over and Above had made a request for a further award on the basis that they supported multiple projects simultaneously. Their latest project was to raise funds to build a new Cancer and Wellbeing Centre. The new centre would extend support to North Devon patients who were not being treated in Exeter (who had their own unit for RDE patients only). It would offer counselling, bereavement support, complimentary facilities, support group, accommodation for visitors etc. Once set up the on-going costs would be £120k p.a.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) To add both charities to the Metals recycling award list.

- b) That Over and Above (Cancer and Wellbeing Project) replace the North Devon Cancer Trust on the list
- c) That no further requests to be included in the list be considered for 2 years

Councillors Davis declared a Personal Interest in the Calvert Trust as her son had used the facility and she was an independent referee for the trust.

Councillor Walker declared a Personal interest in the Calvert Trust as she had used the facility

Mark Drummond, Crematorium Manager declared a Personal interest in the Calvert Trust as his son had used the facility

Councillor Lovering declared an interest in the North Devon Hospital 'Over and Above' Charity as she worked in the maternity unit at the hospital

v) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

vi) Garden Improvements 2020/21

RESOLVED that the following Garden Improvements for 2020/21 be approved:

Section	Element	Works	Priority	Cost (plus 15% prelims/contingency)	Cumulative cost
Painters	Footpaths/drainage	Upgrade surface	1	£13,000	£13,000
Back Stretch	Footpath	Upgrade Surface	1	£8280	£21,280
Composers	Footpaths	Upgrade Surface	1	£23,000	£44,280
Rowan Exit area	Shelter	Install sail shelters (rain/wind/sun)	2	£13,500	£57,780
Authors/Royals	Hedges	Remove hedge, new fence and memorial beds	2	£9343	£67,123

vii) Cameo

The Committee noted that an application for the 2019 round of CAMEO (mercury abatement scheme) had been submitted on the basis of 1524 abated cremations. There were 1616 abated cremations in 2018.

viii) Larkbear Development

The Crematorium Manager reported that Devon County Council had indicated that they intended to remind the developers in late January 2020 that they had until June 2020 (9 months from 26th September 2019 when planning was approved) to apply for, achieve approval and execute the approved highways scheme works. It was noted that an intention to submit a TRO application had been submitted.

He stated that he had concerns regarding the traffic chaos that the proposals would cause. A bus gate probably operated by a camera was proposed.

He further stated that he had been approached by local Councillors regarding a small piece (approx. 1 metre) of grassed area owned by the Crematorium Joint Committee being used to enable the pavement to be re-aligned/installed between Sandringham Gardens and the Crematorium. He had no objections and had sought legal advice.

RESOLVED that subject to legal advice and checking the Crematorium Joint Committee constitution (as to whether the decision is required to be made by both Local Authorities) the request to use a small piece (approx. 1 metre) of grassed area owned by the Crematorium Joint Committee for the provision of a pavement to be re-aligned/installed between Sandringham Gardens and the Crematorium be approved.

Councillor Davis declared an interest as a Devon County Councillor and as the Lead Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste
Councillor Inch declared an interest as a Devon County Councillor.

(e) PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2019/20

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the performance for Quarter 3 April to December 2019/20.

The Accountant stated that if the projected deficit materialised funds could be used from the earmarked reserve or the distribution to the two Authorities reduced.

(f) 2020/21 BUDGET, FEES AND CHARGES

RESOLVED on consideration of a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the budget and charges 2020/21.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the basic Cremation charge for 2020/21 of £715 (including a standard urn) be approved as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report

- (ii) That the 2020/21 Budget as set out in paragraph 3 of the report be approved.
- (iii) That the fees and charges for 2020/21 as detailed in paragraph 6.3 of the report and appendix 2 be approved
- (iv) That the distribution of surpluses for 2019/20 of £347,680 to the constituent authorities: £208,608 to North Devon Council and £139,072 to Torridge District Council be approved.
- (v) That the transfer of £100,000 to the equipment replacement reserve be approved

Members congratulated the Crematorium service as being one of the few services that was awarded a full assurance audit by the Internal Audit.

(g) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates for future meetings were agreed:

Friday 19th June 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
Friday 7th August 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
Friday 6th November 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.
Friday 5th February 2021 @ 2.30 p.m.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda Item 6

19th June 2020

Crematorium Matters – Manager’s Report

Update from Previous Minutes

Solar Panels

No developments – project on hold due to covid crisis.

Achievements

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 is hoped works will be completed by mid-June.

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 works would have been very difficult.

The new logo’d caskets are in use after the sourcing was switched to the UK (originally China). There have been increased costs.

Staffing

The new technician started work on 6th April.

A new lead Medical Referee (Dr Nick Relph) has 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.

Covid Crisis Update

- Uptake of Cremation services increased in April, returning to normal levels in May.
- Free webcasting was (and remains) available to mitigate the reduced mourner numbers. My personal thanks to Councillor Walker who sought the Joint Committee’s consent.
- Crematorium gardens were initially shut by legislation but re-opened when that element was amended to allow.
- Only Rowan Chapel is in use as its size allows easy social distancing. At the time of writing this report the capacity is 18. The maximum possible whilst maintaining 2-metre social distancing is 33. Rowan’s exclusive use is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.
- The office closed early in the crisis but its re-opening is imminent with screens, gel points, barriers and split receptions (enquiries at one, booked appointments at the other) all in place by mid-May.
- The early ordering of safety equipment/materials and support of North Devon Council procurement ensured all equipment was available before and throughout the crisis.
- The efforts of the staff has been the subject of much positive comment by Funeral Directors.

- The conduct of professionals using our service has been exemplary and extremely supportive.

Metals Recycling Charity Award

Over and Above (maternity bereavement suite) has been nominated for the next award (July) as previously reported. 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)

No further additions to be considered prior to February 2022.

Cremation Figures

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
April	109	102	161	125	139	163	117	150	121	176
May	111	123	117	135	118	126	138	136	137	136
June	129	116	102	123	143	125	129	127	127	
July	107	111	121	106	111	126	142	133	128	
Aug	116	106	117	100	109	114	120	106	118	
Sept	88	104	107	122	127	121	127	106	114	
Oct	102	101	98	125	140	127	137	132	129	
Nov	116	129	96	120	108	157	135	127	115	
Dec	88	100	98	120	128	123	131	119	113	
Jan	143	159	164	142	131	158	182	169	147	
Feb	127	121	116	154	136	137	175	143	133	
Mar	132	144	127	157	151	162	164	145	143	
Total	1368	1416	1424	1529	1541	1639	1697	1593	1525	

The average delay from death to service is currently 15 days. The increase in services in April returned to normal levels in May.

Garden Improvements 2020/21

Works have been suspended due to the covid crisis. The cover for the Rowan exit will be reviewed as the long-term use of the chapel makes the works difficult unless weekend working can be secured.

Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

No developments.

Enquiries are 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 will be communicated to the two authorities whose authority is required in matters of land acquisition.

NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

19th June 2020

REPORT OF TREASURER

OUTTURN 2019/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report presents the Outturn figures for the financial year 2019/20.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. It is recommended that the Outturn Report 2019/20 be noted.

2.2. It is recommended that the Reserves and Balances contained in 3.4 be approved.

3. REPORT

3.1. A summary of the revenue expenditure and Income for the year is shown below together with the original budget and forecast as at 31st December. The actual for 2018/19 is also shown for information.

3.2.

	2018/19 Actual £	2019/20 Original Budget £	2019/20 Forecast as at 31 st December £	2019/20 Actual £
Premises	225,975	259,710	282,797	285,232
Transport	695	1,000	784	750
Supplies & Services	157,387	174,060	167,944	161,622
Central Support & Employees	264,294	303,050	292,431	291,148
Total Expenditure	648,351	737,820	743,956	738,752
Fees & Charges	1,091,602	1,076,480	1,068,241	1,083,354
Sales	90,934	100,270	90,793	82,695
Interest	2,354	3,750	4,474	4,295
CAMEO*	6,344	5,000	6,333	6,333
Miscellaneous	1,161	0	0	1,523
Total Income	1,192,395	1,185,500	1,169,841	1,178,200
Cont Earmark Reserve	30,000	0	0	0
Cont Equipment Replacement	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Distribution NDC	220,608	208,608	208,608	208,608
Distribution TDC	147,072	139,072	139,072	139,072
Additional Surplus/(Deficit)	46,364	0	(21,795)	(8,232)

* Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation

- 3.3.** The expenditure is £5k lower than the forecast at December but slightly higher than the original budget. However, this does include the extra £20k previously approved by the Joint Committee for the cremator re-lining, this additional cost was offset by underspends on various budgets including a period with a vacant post.

The income received was £8k higher than the forecast at December due to the higher number of cremation's in the final quarter of 2019/20. However, the income received was still £7k lower than the original budget

The net effect of the expenditure and income variances identified above is a lower deficit of £8k which is £14k lower than that reported at December, this deficit has been funded from the Capital Funding Reserve.

3.4. Reserves and Balances

	Capital Funding Reserve	Equipment Replacement Reserve	General Reserve
	£	£	£
Opening Balance 1 st April 19	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 20	333,246	400,000	100,000

The Capital Funding Reserve was set up to accumulate funds for capital projects at the Crematorium. The 2019/20 revenue deficit has been funded from this reserve. The remaining balance will be available for Phase B (Garage/Memorial Hall).

The Equipment Replacement Reserve was set up to build up funds to replace the cremators and filtration equipment at the end of their useful life.

The working balance has been maintained at £100,000, which is the level recommended taking account of the financial risks associated with operating the crematorium.

Mark Knight
4th June 2020