

## **NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the above Committee will be held in the Aspen Chapel at the Crematorium, Barnstaple on **FRIDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021 AT 2.30 p.m.**

Members: Representing North Devon Council

Councillors Bulled, Cann, Davis, Gubb, Lovering, Phillips and Walker

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors Christie, Gubb, Hurley, A. Inch, and Pennington.

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### **AGENDA**

1. Appointment of Chairman 2021/22 (North Devon Council Member)
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Appointment of Vice Chairman 2021/22 (Torridge DC Member)
4. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2021. (Pages 3 - 6)
5.
  - (a) Matters Arising
5. Items brought forward which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency.
6. Declarations of Interest.
7. To agree the agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information)
8. Crematorium Matters. Report by the Crematorium Manager (Pages 7 - 8)
9. Outturn 2020/21. Report by Treasurer (Pages 9 - 10)
10. To note that the next Crematorium Joint Committee meeting will be on Friday 6th August 2021 @ 2.30 p.m.
11. Part II  
There are no Part II items
12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

**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 virtual meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Representing North Devon District Council

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

Representing Torridge District Council

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

Officers

Crematorium Manager, Treasurer, Secretary and Accountant.

### **(a) APOLOGIES**

There were no Apologies.

### **(b) MINUTES**

- (i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (ii) Matters Arising – There were no matters arising

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

### **(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) Covid Crisis Update**

It was noted:

That the number of mourners permitted remained at 30, unchanged by the lockdown. Post-funeral events were now limited to 6 people (from 15).

The crematorium although extremely busy has continued to operate without the need for any measures to provide additional service times. Since the end of November there had been 29 deaths that had listed Covid as the primary cause of death.

ii) Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) Funerals Market Investigation.

It was noted that the CMA had produced their final report regarding both funeral directors and crematoria. The report stated that local authority crematoria fees were higher than should be expected (£80-£170) due to an average 6% increase over the last 10 years. Privately run crematoria fees were higher still.

The annual review of surrounding crematoria's pricing demonstrated that, despite significant upgrading of facilities, North Devon's fees were about £285 lower than nearby privately run crematoria and over £100 lower than the nearest local authority Crematorium (no organist).

The report encouraged Local Authorities to enter into a tendering process with local funeral providers to offer a fixed (reduced) cost funeral service.

The Crematorium Manager stated that he would investigate the tendering process and whether it could be undertaken on a Crematorium basis only on behalf of both authorities or whether each authority would have to undertake its own tendering process.

iii) Achievements

That the Car park had been re-covered in new stone and the bulk materials area cleared.

iv) Metals Recycling Charity Award

That Clarity had been awarded £10,000 (paid direct December 2020). The 'formal cheque presentation' had not yet taken place.

The Calvert Trust (Exmoor) had been proposed for the next award (due June 2021).

Subsequent nomination list:

**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)**

**Clarity**

**Calvert Trust**

No further additions to be considered prior to February 2022.

v) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

vi) Garden Improvements 2020/21

It was noted:

That the Path work's, half the hedge had been removed and fencing had been completed.

That the following had been ordered: ground preparation & metal supports for the 'sail' weather protection outside Rowan Chapel.

That the following had not yet been ordered: Remainder hedge works, sails, new hedges. It is anticipated these will be ordered shortly.

That the Lead Gardener has had some serious personal issues, which had put pressure on the gardening team and therefore a limited programme of improvements (linking resin paths, bulk material area fence and hedge replacement work's) was proposed for 2021/22.

It was agreed that a card be sent to the Lead Gardener on behalf of the joint committee expressing the Committee's thoughts at this very difficult time.

vii) Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

It was noted that the Traffic order was being drafted to move the bus gate to Old Torrington Road and enable it to be signed for camera-enforcement rather than relying on physical restrictions. There did not seem to be any intention to exempt any funeral related traffic or restrict times of operation. If implemented in that form all crematorium traffic will have to use Gratton Way and the mini roundabout at Sainsbury together with the additional residential and construction traffic. The consequences of this were of significant concern. Once published there would be a consultation process which it is intended to participate in.

**(f) PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2020/2021**

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the performance for Quarter 3 April to December 2020/2021.

**(g) 2021/2022 BUDGET, FEES AND CHARGES**

Councillor Pennington expressed concern at the proposed Cremation fee increase especially in view of the CMA report which stated that that fees were higher than expected, as a result of an average 6% increase over the last 10 years. Last year the Cremation fee was increased from £680 to £715 and a further increase this year to £730 represented a 7% increase.

The Crematorium Manager stated that last year's increase included the charge for a casket that had previously been charged separately. The actual Cremation Fee increase was in line with inflation. The CMA report suggested that the increase was 6% each year.

The Chairman stated that the Cremation fee was significantly lower than any other Crematoria in the region.

Councillor Christie stated that whilst figures were compared with other areas Torridge had the lowest wages In England and North Devon had two areas of deprivation. North Devon and Torridge were not rich areas, and he was unsure that we should just look to compare charges with other areas and any increase, could have an effect, on people. He would like to re-look at the Cremation fee in the future.

RESOLVED that on consideration of a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the budget, and charges 2021/2022.

- (i) That the basic Cremation charge for 2021/22 of £730 be approved as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report
- (ii) That the 2021/22 budget as set out in paragraph 3 of the report be approved.
- (iii) That the fees and charges for 2021/22 as detailed in paragraph 6.2 and appendix 2 be approved.
- (iv) That the distribution of surpluses for 2020/21 of £347,680 to the constituent authorities: £208,608 to North Devon Council and £139,072 to Torridge District Council be approve.
- (v) That the transfer of £95,480 to the Equipment Replacement Reserve be approved

#### **(h) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next meeting would be on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021 @ 2.30 p.m.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.

11<sup>th</sup> June 2021

## Crematorium Matters – Manager’s Report

### Covid Crisis Update

On 17<sup>th</sup> May the number of mourners permitted was increased to 50 following the removal of the legislated 30-limit and a risk assessment of the chapel.

On June 21<sup>st</sup> it is anticipated all legal & social-distancing restrictions/requirements will be lifted. To help the transition initially only Rowan Chapel will be in use.

If that is the case, seating will probably increase to 160 which retains slightly enhanced spacing. Use of on-screen hymn lyrics will be retained to reduce need for staff to touch shared items as will hand sanitizing equipment in all mourner and staff facilities. All other restrictions will be lifted. The seating capacity will be reviewed once any winter spike in Covid-19 has been considered.

### Achievements

An electrostatic sprayer has been deployed after each service since early March (kills viruses within 1 minute). This reduced need for staff to manually wipe surfaces and enhanced coverage.

Software enhancements for service users purchased & pending implementation:

- Public access to search for service dates/times via the internet (not private services).
- Automatic email confirmation of service bookings/changes to Funeral Directors.

A shipping container has been rented (on-site) to cover storage shortage pending re-build of garages.

### Staffing Report

The second temporary part-time gardener post has been in place for over 2-years which affords full employment protection rights to the current staff-member. In light of this the view of the Joint Committee is sought regarding making the post permanent.

### Metals Recycling Charity Award

Clarity has been awarded £10,000 (paid direct December 2020). The ‘formal cheque presentation’ has not yet taken place.

The Calvert Trust (Exmoor) has been proposed for the next award (due June 2021).

Subsequent nomination list:

**Over and Above (Cancer & Wellbeing Centre)**

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**North Devon Hospice**

**Cruse**

**Children’s Hospice SW**

**Over and Above (North Devon Hospital – Maternity Unit Bereavement Suite)**

**Clarity**

## Calvert Trust

No further additions to be considered prior to February 2022.

## Cremation Figures

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
<b>April</b>	102	161	125	139	163	117	150	121	174	124
<b>May</b>	123	117	135	118	126	138	136	137	136	103
<b>June</b>	116	102	123	143	125	129	127	127	126	
<b>July</b>	111	121	106	111	126	142	133	128	136	
<b>Aug</b>	106	117	100	109	114	120	106	118	118	
<b>Sept</b>	104	107	122	127	121	127	106	114	121	
<b>Oct</b>	101	98	125	140	127	137	132	129	120	
<b>Nov</b>	129	96	120	108	157	135	127	115	149	
<b>Dec</b>	100	98	120	128	123	131	119	113	141	
<b>Jan</b>	159	164	142	131	158	182	169	147	176	
<b>Feb</b>	121	116	154	136	137	175	143	133	136	
<b>Mar</b>	144	127	157	151	162	164	145	143	141	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1416</b>	<b>1424</b>	<b>1529</b>	<b>1541</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>1697</b>	<b>1593</b>	<b>1525</b>	<b>1674</b>	

## Garden Improvements

The car-park hedge laid – aesthetically and with regards to maintenance this is an enhancement and enable to provision of a footpath by DCC to serve the 200 new homes adjacent to the crematorium.

Bulk materials area in the car-park is about to be fenced from view.

Rowan exit sails still pending due to contractor workload.

## Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

The traffic order to remove the existing bus gate in Gratton Way and replace it with a new bus gate in Old Torrington Road has been published. The only exemptions currently confirmed are buses/PSVs/bicycles. Enforcement is expected to be by camera.

This would require all vehicular traffic, including the funeral cortege, to approach via Roundswell/Sainsbury mini-roundabout/Gratton Way Industrial Estate.

It is necessary to reply to the consultation by 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and the views of the Joint Committee will be communicated by the manager following this meeting.



## NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

11<sup>th</sup> June 2021

### REPORT OF TREASURER

#### OUTTURN 2020/2021

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report presents the Outturn figures for the financial year 2020/21.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. It is recommended that the Outturn Report 2020/21 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 31<sup>st</sup> December. The actual for 2019/20 is also shown for information.

#### 3.2.

	2019/20 Actual £	2020/21 Original Budget £	2020/21 Forecast as at 31 <sup>st</sup> December £	2020/21 Actual £
Premises	285,232	285,740	293,141	290,177
Transport	750	1,000	461	439
Supplies & Services	161,622	188,630	212,967	222,242
Central Support & Employees	291,148	310,540	310,755	308,642
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>738,752</b>	<b>785,910</b>	<b>817,324</b>	<b>821,500</b>
Fees & Charges	1,083,354	1,121,890	1,154,254	1,216,507
Sales	82,695	99,180	87,479	83,892
Interest	4,295	4,000	599	517
CAMEO*	6,333	4,000	5,544	5,544
Miscellaneous	1,523	0	0	1,189
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,178,200</b>	<b>1,229,070</b>	<b>1,247,876</b>	<b>1,307,649</b>
Cont Equipment Replacement	100,000	95,480	95,480	95,480
Distribution NDC	208,608	208,608	208,608	208,608
Distribution TDC	139,072	139,072	139,072	139,072
Additional Surplus/(Deficit)	(8,232)	0	(12,608)	42,989

\* Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation

- 3.3.** The expenditure is £4k higher than the forecast at December but £36k higher than the original budget. The reasons for the increase over the original budget are due to unforeseen plant maintenance, increased costs for music and web services and unrecoverable Vat. These have been reported in previous monitoring reports.

The income received is £60k higher than the forecast at December due to the higher number of cremation's in the final quarter of 2020/21.

The net effect of the expenditure and income variances identified above is rather than a deficit of £13k projected at December, there is a surplus of £43k. This surplus has been transferred to the Capital Funding Reserve.

The final accounts for the Aspen Chapel refurbishment have been settled during 2020/21 and the costs were £8k lower than anticipated so these funds have also been put back into the Capital Funding Reserve.

**3.4. Reserves and Balances**

	<b>Capital Funding Reserve</b>	<b>Equipment Replacement Reserve</b>	<b>General Reserve</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Opening Balance 1 <sup>st</sup> April 20	333,246	400,000	100,000
Contribution in year	0	95,480	0
2020/21 Revenue Surplus	42,988	0	0
Aspen Chapel Refurb balance	8,033	0	0
Closing Balance 31 <sup>st</sup> March 21	384,267	495,480	100,000

The Capital Funding Reserve was set up to accumulate funds for capital projects at the Crematorium. The 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, and also to provide the funding for hearth replacements and cremator re-linings when required. It is anticipated that there will be sufficient funds when required but this will be continually monitored.

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**  
**28<sup>th</sup> May 2021**