

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held at the North Devon Crematorium, Barnstaple on Friday, 4th February, 2022 at 2.30 pm

Present: Representing North Devon District Council

Councillors Bulled, Cann, Davis, Y. Gubb, Walker (Chair).

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors P Christie and D Hurley

Officers

Crematorium Manager, Secretary and Accountant

(a) APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors J. Gubb, Inch, Lovering and Pennington and the Treasurer.

(b) MINUTES

- (i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2021 (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) EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS AND RESTRICTION OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED:

- (i) That under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended from time to time) namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).
- (ii) That all documents and reports relating to the item be confirmed as 'Not for Publication'

(e) BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: UPDATE.

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Crematorium Manager (previously circulated) regarding an update on a future development opportunity previously reported.

RESOLVED that the business opportunity be not pursued.

(f) RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that the Public and Press be re-admitted to the meeting.

(g) CREMATORIUM MATTERS

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

i) Covid Crisis Update

It was noted:

That mourner numbers had been kept at 162 during the latest surge in cases and mask wearing strongly encouraged through on-screen messaging.

ii) Achievements

It was noted:

That the Music/Webcast system contract had been re-tendered as it had reached the 4-year term. One tender had been received from the existing contractor with no increase in price and had it been accepted.

iii) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted:

That the Over and Above (Cancer & Wellbeing Centre) had been awarded £15,000, paid on 8th December 2021. A cheque presentation by Councillor Walker with associated press release was made on 13th December. As yet the next round of nominations had not opened.

RESOLVED:

(A) That the be current list of supported Charities be reduced to the following:

Families in Grief
North Devon Hospice
Cruse
Children's Hospice SW

(B) That the following currently supported Charities be placed on a substitute list:

North Devon Children's Holiday Foundation

Over and Above (North Devon Hospital – Maternity Unit Bereavement Suite)
Clarity
Calvert Trust
Over and Above (Cancer & Wellbeing Centre)

- (C) That the following new applications received for consideration be not added to the supported list of Charities. A strong connection to bereavement and North Devon needed to be demonstrated.

Alzheimer's Society – Devon & Cornwall Branch
Target Ovarian Cancer
Over and Above (Midwifery students, Midwives, Doctors and Maternity Care Assistants) specialist training.
North Devon Against Domestic Abuse (NDADA)
Young Lives Vs Cancer
SUDEP – Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy

- (D) That the list be re-considered in 2 years' time (February 2024).

iv) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

v) Garden Improvements

It was noted that the Rowan Exit Sails had been ordered and the steel supports installed.

vi) Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

It was noted that following representations by the Crematorium Manager it had been agreed that the new camera-enforced bus gate in Old Torrington Road would be made 'one-way', permitting crematorium (all) traffic to approach using the existing route as well as Gratton Way whilst having to depart via Gratton Way only.

This was, however, subject to either traffic calming or a 20mph speed limit along Old Torrington Road being implemented. The funding status for the speed limit change or traffic calming remained unclear as was the consequence if funding was not made available by Devon County Council.

vii) Phase B works (garage store/memorial room)

It was noted that on 15th February 2019 the Joint Committee agreed to proceed with Phase B works (demolish garages and rebuild storage in bungalow garden).

However, staff changes combined with difficulties during Covid had delayed the works. The new Surveyor had reviewed the project. In light of the underground services within the works area he had proposed that the site for the new storage be within the existing bulk-materials area (upper carpark) and that the hearse waiting area be placed at the entrance using part of the ground cleared by the garage demolition.

A consultancy firm had been asked to report the likely costs and outline Proposals.

In the event there are residual funds, the Surveyor hoped to identify possible funding sources for a site survey for solar panels on Rowan Chapel roof and possibly grants towards the installation.

The Joint Committee considered three projected cost options (tabled).

RESOLVED that option 3 (Car Park only including turning area tarmac) be agreed to be put out to tender

viii) Children's funeral fund

It was noted that the cost of providing funeral services for the under 18s (including stillbirth) had been claimed from the Government Children's Funeral Fund and this year had resulted in a total of approximately £6,200 being recovered and another £2,300 pending (11 services).

The Joint Committee previously requested that this be reported for consideration regarding the most appropriate use of the income.

The lead gardener had identified modest enhancements to the children's area and the failing natural pond for consideration.

RESOLVED:

(A) That the following brief and quotation outlined in the tabled report be agreed:

Brief:

- Renovate the existing circular pond area to create a new pond with a diameter of approx. 6.5 – 7 m, with a natural rockery stone edge and a 1 m wide perimeter of grass.
- To create a natural 'rock island' in the middle of the pond by positioning a drilled rock, connected to the existing pump, to provide a babbling water feature.

Main pond works

To carry out the following:

- Protect the access paths with boards/sheets.
- Endeavour to catch as much of the pond fauna as is reasonably possible and transfer to a temporary storage tank
- Pump out the pond water and discharge to surround beds/drains.
- Use a mini digger to dismantle the existing pond and surrounding growth then carry out excavation and grading works to create the new pond form.
- To remove and dispose of all arisings from site.
- Supply and line the void with a protective membrane.
- Supply and install an EPDM pond liner.
- Fill the pond with water supplied by you.
- Place local natural rockery stones around the perimeter of the pond to hold the liner in place and help reduce the view of the liner during the seasonal fluctuation in water levels.
- Cultivate the surrounding soil and prepare to a finish, then supply and lay turf.

For the sum of £6354.00 + VAT

Rock island with drilled rock water feature

- Supply and position a drill rock (approx. 600 – 700 mm height), probably set on a few other stones.
- Connect the existing pump to the rock.

- (B) That in future monies claimed from the Children's Funeral Fund be allocated to the General Fund.

(h) PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2021/2022

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the performance for Quarter 3 April to December 2021/2022.

(i) 2022/23 BUDGET, FEES AND CHARGES.

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the budget, fees and charges for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the basic Cremation charge for 2022/23 of £750 be approved as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report
- (ii) That the 2022/23 budget as set out in paragraph 3 of the report be approved.
- (iii) That the fees and charges for 2022/23 as detailed in paragraph 6.2 and appendix 2 be approved.
- (iv) That the distribution of surpluses for 2021/22 of £416,230 to the constituent authorities: £249,740 to North Devon Council and £166,490 to Torridge District Council be approved.
- (v) That the transfer of £100,000 to the Equipment Replacement Reserve be approved

(j) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would be on Friday 10th June 2022 @ 2.30 p.m.

The meeting commenced at 2.30pm and ended at 3.38pm.