

## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 2.30 p.m.

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.

### **(a) APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Lovering

### **(b) MINUTES**

- (i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 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 their 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) 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

**(e) OUTTURN 2019/20**

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:

	<b>Capital Funding Reserve £</b>	<b>Equipment Replacement Reserve £</b>	<b>General Reserve £</b>
Opening Balance 1 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	333,246	400,000	100,000

**(g) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates for future meetings were noted:

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 @ 2.30 p.m.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 2.52 p.m.