

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held at the Crematorium on Friday 10th June 2022 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Representing North Devon District Council

Councillor Cann.

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors J. Gubb (In the Chair), Hurley, Inch and Pennington.

Officers

Crematorium Manager, Secretary, Treasurer, Accountant and J. Mann – Head of Housing, Planning and Health.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR 2022/23

RESOLVED that Councillor Walker be appointed Chair of the Joint Committee until re-appointments are made in the next municipal year.

(b) APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bulled, Christie, Davis, Y. Gubb, Phillips and Walker.

(c) APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR 2022/23

RESOLVED that Councillor J. Gubb be appointed Vice Chair of the Joint Committee until re-appointments are made in the next municipal year.

(d) MINUTES

- (i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2022 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (ii) Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

(e) ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

Gas Contract – It was reported that the gas contract had expired at the end of March and the Crematorium had inadvertently been placed on the default tariff. A new contract had however, now been agreed but the price had tripled.

It was agreed that the implications of the increase be included in the quarter 1 performance report for consideration at the next meeting.

(f) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared.

(g) CREMATORIUM MATTERS

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

i) Covid Crisis Update

It was noted that the Aspen Chapel was now in use and that there were no other active measures in use other than signage/hand gel provision

ii) Staffing Matters

It was noted:

- A) That no appointment had been made to the Bereavement Administrator post following interviews and would be re-advertised.
- B) That the Lead Gardener had temporarily become a part-time (3-day) role. Some of savings would be used to 'buy-in' extra help during peak workload periods.

iii) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted:

That Families in Grief had been nominated for the next award (July). All 'reserve list charities', previously on the award rota, had been written to seeking re-application requiring strong evidencing their bereavement support. The current rota was:

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

iv) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

v) Garden Improvements

It was noted that Rowan Exit Sails had been received and were awaiting installation and that the Garden Pond had been completed

vi) Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

It was noted that the proposed scheme had been referred back for further consultation as the agreed change was too significant to be implemented without further public consultation.

Councillor Cann declared an interest in the above matter as a Member of HATOC.

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

It was noted that the Tender was being produced by the appointed consultants.

viii) Medical Referee

It was noted that the Government had stated that it hoped to introduce the Medical Examiner role in April 2023 removing the crematorium funded Medical Referee role (£18.50 per cremation).

This would:

- Remove the role of Medical Referee except for an unspecified transition period from April 2023.
- Require a new process to authorise cremations (previously Medical Referee role) to ensure application is lawful. Likely to become a Crematorium Registrar (manager) role.
- Bring financial savings (cost of Medical Referees approx. £29,000 per annum), subject to any additional payments for the transferred authorisation responsibility.
- Simplify and speed the application for cremation process (no medical forms to submit/check).
- Simplify the process of digitally storing cremation applications for 15 years rather than paper storage.

(h) OUTTURN 2021/2022

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the outturn for 2021/2022.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the outturn report be noted
- ii) That the reserves and balances as outlined in paragraph 5.1 of the report be approved.

(i) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would be on Friday 5th August 2022 @ 2.30 p.m.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 2.52 p.m.