

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held at the Crematorium on Friday 2nd February 2024 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Representing North Devon District Council

Councillors Cann, Haworth-Booth and Walker (Vice Chair)

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors Cottle-Hunkin (sub for Councillor Johns), Gubb and Inch (Chair).

Officers

NDC Head of Customer Focus, Crematorium Manager, Treasurer, Secretary, Accountant and NDC Customer Feedback and Service Improvement Officer

(a) APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Christie, Denton, Harding, Johns and Lovering

(b) MINUTES

- (i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2023 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (ii) Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

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

There were no items of urgency.

(d) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared.

(e) CREMATORIUM MATTERS

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

i) Trainee Manager: Update

It was noted that as previously reported, the manager had indicated his intention to retire at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, facilitated by reducing working days over two years to enable recruitment of a trainee manager to take over from 1/4/2025. North Devon Council SMT had approved the business case to enable the process to move to the advertising of the post internally within both North Devon and Torridge Councils with the aim of the trainee post being filled by 1/4/2024. It was anticipated that the 'pay-back' for the associated costs would be within two-years (from 1/4/2025).

ii) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted. The actual figure for January was 154.

iii) Direct Cremations

It was noted that the cremation numbers for the 9-months of operation were:

Direct Cremations	April 2022 – December 2022	April 2023- December 2023
Total	99	172

and that 9% were non-resident Direct Cremations

iv) Crematorium Organist

It was noted that the Crematorium Organist Contract had been awarded until February 2027 with an option to extend by up to additional 2 years. The new rate would be £25 per service.

v) Phase B Works (Garage/Memorial Room)

It was noted that the building works had been completed. A number of payments still remained outstanding (including the retention), but the final total was expected to be close to the projected budget.

vi) Medical Referee

It was noted that on 1st April 2024 legislation removed the need to scrutinise any medical information as part of the crematorium's application process. Despite this, the Medical Referee role had been unexpectedly retained whilst the Government consulted on how cremations would be authorised in the future. The absence of the need for medical scrutiny strongly suggested the Medical Referee role would be replaced by a process of 'non-medical' crematorium staff scrutiny and authorisation.

vii) Crematorium Solar Panels

It was noted that the Rowan chapel was constructed in 2015/16 with a sufficiently strong roof to permit the installation of solar panels. North Devon Council intended to investigate the installation of panels at the Brynsworth Environment Centre. It was hoped to initially obtain a specification and anticipated cost through an engineer previously used by Torridge Council (report cost approximately £2,000 - £3,000).

It was agreed to undertake a survey to install panels at the crematorium using the same method and at a similar cost and that the funding thereof be met from the Budget Management Reserve to enable options and costs to be reported to the next Joint Committee meeting.

viii) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted:

That North Devon Hospice had received an award of £14,000 and that Cruse would be the next nomination in line with the current rota.

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

The Joint Committee considered applications from the following additional charities seeking to be added to the rota:

- Huntington's Disease Association
- Child Bereavement UK
- Young Lives v Cancer
- Widowed and Young
- Stroke Association

It was agreed that It was agreed that no additions be made to the existing rota list.

(f) PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 3 2023/2024

The Joint Committee noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the performance for quarter 3 April to December 2023/2024.

It was noted that the invoice for gas had just been received and was considerable higher than budgeted £6,000 per month at £9,000 per month. This would affect the budgeted figures for both financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

(g) 2024/2025 BUDGET, FEES AND CHARGES

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the budget, fees and charges for 2024/2025.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the basic Cremation charge for 2024/25 of £850 be approved as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report
- (ii) That the 2024/25 budget as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report be approved.
- (iii) That the fees and charges for 2024/25 as detailed in paragraph 4.6 and appendix 2 be approved.
- (iv) That the distribution of surpluses for 2023/24 of £416,230 to the constituent authorities: £249,740 to North Devon Council and £166,490 to Torridge District Council be approve.
- (v) That the transfer of £100,000 to the Equipment Replacement Reserve be approved

(h) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would be on Friday 7th June 2024 @ 2.30 p.m.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.04 p.m.