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North Devon Council
Brynsworthy Environment Centre
Barnstaple
North Devon EX31 3NP

K. Miles.
Chief Executive.

NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the North Devon Crematorium Joint Committee will be held in the North Devon Crematorium on **FRIDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2019 at 2.30 pm.**

Members of the North Devon Crematorium Joint Committee

Representing North Devon Council

Councillors Bulled, Cann (Vice Chair), Davis, Gubb, Lovering, Phillips and Walker

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors Christie, Gubb, Harding, A. Inch (Chair) and Pennington.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. To approve the correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 9th August 2019 (Pages 5 - 8)
3. Items brought forward by the Chairman
4. Declarations of Interest
5. To agree the agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information)

PART 'A'

6. **Crematorium Matters** (Pages 9 - 12)
Report by the Crematorium Manager (attached).
7. **Performance Monitoring Quarter 2 of 2019/2020** (Pages 13 - 14)
Report by the Treasurer (attached).
8. **Exclusion of Public and Press and Restriction of Documents**
RECOMMENDED:

- (a) 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).

- (b) That all documents and reports relating to the item be confirmed as 'Not for Publication'

PART 'B' (CONFIDENTIAL RESTRICTED INFORMATION)

- 9. **Future Development Opportunities** (Pages 15 - 18)
Report by the Crematorium Manager (attached).

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1. The recording must be overt (clearly visible to anyone at the meeting) and must not disrupt proceedings. The Council will put signs up at any meeting where we know recording is taking place.
2. The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.
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NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of North Devon Crematorium Joint Committee held at Crematorium Meeting Room - North Devon Crematorium on Friday, 9th August, 2019 at 2.30 pm

PRESENT: Representing North Devon District Council

Councillors Bulled, Cann, Y.Gubb and Lovering

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors J.Gubb, Harding and Inch (Chairman)

Officers

Treasurer, Crematorium Manager, Secretary and Accountant

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Christie, Pennington, Phillips and Walker and the Head of Operational Services (NDC).

10. TO APPROVE THE CORRECT RECORD OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH JULY 2019 (ATTACHED).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2019 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no matters arising.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lovering declared an interest in item 6 in relation to the metals recycling charity award scheme and the proposal to include the North Devon Hospital 'Over and Above' Charity as she worked in the maternity unit at the hospital.

13. CREMATORIUM MATTERS.

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

i) Update from last meeting

It was noted:

That North Devon Council was currently evaluating the benefits of solar panels on several buildings. The crematorium would be considered as part of this process and the Joint Committee would be updated as the process developed.

The current cremator equipment company had been asked to provide

Estimates' for life expectancy and replacement costs of the key equipment to enable a review of the level of the existing fund being built (currently at £100,000 a year).

The figures would be based on total replacement as it was unclear whether a process of progressive upgrading or a radical replacement of all equipment (a different manufacturer or entirely different 'cremation' process) were the most likely course of action in the future.

ii) Staffing

It was noted that the bereavement administrator post had been advertised and interviews would be completed later this month (probably 20th August).

iii) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted that the awards had progressively increased over the last 5 years from about £4,500 to £8,000 at least twice a year.

The current rota was as follows:

Families in Grief

North Devon Children's Holiday Foundation

North Devon Hospice

Cruse

Children's Hospice SW

North Devon Cancer Care Centre Trust

The committee considered the addition of two charities to the rota both strongly bereavement associated.

- The North Devon Hospital 'Over and Above' charity whose aim was to raise funds for a new Bereavement Suite on the labour ward in which to care for women and their families who experience a loss.
- CLARITY a 'North Devon only' mental health charity with centres in Barnstaple and Torrington providing services and support to people experiencing mental health and emotional issues (including bereavement through suicide support). It was staffed entirely by volunteers (including professional therapists).and aim to help people before they harm themselves or others as well as post-bereavement support.

It was RESOLVED:

- A) To add both charities to the Metals recycling award list.
- B) To add the two charities in the order listed above after the Children's Hospice SW (ie North Devon Hospital 'Over and Above' followed by Clarity'

Councillor Lovering wished it recorded that she abstained from voting

vi) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

vii) Children's Funeral Fund For England

It was noted that North Devon Crematorium (together with all local funeral directors) currently followed the industry norm practice of not charging for funeral services relating to a child up to and including the age of 17. Typically this has included extended services at no cost.

From 23rd July 2019 a Ministry of Justice scheme became available enabling Parents/Crematoria/Burial Authorities/Funeral Directors to reclaim the funeral costs relating to children prior to their 18th birthday, but not 'pre-term babies'. The number of child & stillborn funerals (cremation) a year was stable at about 7 a year.

This raised the issue of whether to claim the new Ministry of Justice payment or to continue to provide the service without charge and without claiming from the new payment Ministry of Justice.

The Committee considered the following three options:

1. Claim the Ministry of Justice fee for all services up to the age of 17.
2. Never claim the Ministry of Justice fee.
3. Charge the Funeral Director for services to enable them to claim under the Ministry of Justice scheme.

It was RESOLVED:

- A) To claim the Ministry of Justice fee for all services up to the age of 17
- B) That the Crematorium Manager monitor the uptake of memorials etc following such services and report thereon at the end of the financial year
- C) That the Crematorium Manager report at the end of the financial year on the amount of monies reclaimed from the Ministry of Justice to enable the Committee to decide where to allocate the additional income
- D) That authority be delegated to the Crematorium Manager to determine whether or not to charge for any additional services in such cases.

14. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1 2019/20.

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the performance for Quarter 1 April to June 2019/20.

Agenda Item 2

North Devon Crematorium Joint Committee - 9 August 2019

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.09 pm

8th November 2019

Crematorium Matters – Manager’s Report

Update from Previous Minutes

Planning for Replacement Cremation Equipment

- The life expectancy of the existing cremation equipment has been revised by the manufacturer to be approximately 20 years, a further 12 years from now. Parts of the system may need replacing earlier, some later.
- The cost today would be about £750,000 to replace completely with equivalent equipment. Allowing for a 3% annual rate of inflation the total cost would be about £1,100,000 in 2031.
- At the current rate the fund is building a reserve for replacement would reach £1,600,000 in 12 years (existing £400,000 plus 12 years of £100,000 per year). This supports a reduction in the rate at which funds are being added to the equipment reserve.
- On the presumption of a ‘same technology like for like’ replacement there are two options:
 1. Reduce amount added to reserve to £60,000 per year (reaching £1,120,000 in 2031).
 2. Reduce amount added to reserve to £80,000 per year – allowing for major cremator re-brick costs to be automatically funded from the reserve.

It is recommended that option 2 be adopted as this will allow a high degree of certainty around major maintenance expenditure and reduce the variance in surpluses year on year.

Solar Panels

No developments – still investigating costs.

Achievements

The annual internal audit of the crematorium conducted by Mazars Risk & Assurance Services identified no concerns and no issues to be addressed – a pleasing ‘clean bill of health’.

The cremator computers have been replaced (aged 8 years) and re-housed in a better bespoke housing.

Music system remote control extenders have been installed in Rowan and Aspen Chapels allowing the chapel attendant to operate the system from anywhere surrounding the chapels.

Additional music system remotes have been installed in each chapel, allowing the minister/officiant to control the music from the lectern if they prefer.

Williamson bed (a rhododendron bed in Authors) has been cleared, re-edged and re-planted after consultation with the memorial owners. The recycled plastic edging is a promising long-term solution to replace the short-lived softwood edging widely used on-site.

Agenda Item 6

The close-down of the Phillips memorial building has been completed with the Phillips family ashes having been interred in a large sanctum and the other encased ashes returned to their respective families in accordance with their expressed wishes.

Polyhives have been purchased for the bee colonies. The more vulnerable (swarm) colony have already been transferred. It is hoped these will offer superior warmth in winter and coolness in summer to help them thrive.

Staffing

The new Bereavement Administrator was selected on 20th August and started employment on 23rd September.

Metals Recycling Charity Award

A cheque for £8,000 has been received for the Children's Hospice South West. The formal presentation was made by Cllr Tony Inch on 25th October on behalf of the crematorium.

The next charity to be nominated will be 'Over and Above' as previously agreed. Rota showing next nomination first:

Over and Above (North Devon Hospital)
Clarity
North Devon Cancer Care Centre Trust
Families in Grief
North Devon Children's Holiday Foundation
North Devon Hospice
Cruse
Children's Hospice SW

Cremation Figures

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
April	125	109	102	161	125	139	163	117	150	121
May	90	111	123	117	135	118	126	138	136	137
June	103	129	116	102	123	143	125	129	127	127
July	99	107	111	121	106	111	126	142	133	128
Aug	83	116	106	117	100	109	114	120	106	118
Sept	111	88	104	107	122	127	121	127	106	114
Oct	97	102	101	98	125	140	127	137	132	129
Nov	115	116	129	96	120	108	157	135	127	
Dec	107	88	100	98	120	128	123	131	119	
Jan	169	143	159	164	142	131	158	182	169	
Feb	140	127	121	116	154	136	137	175	143	
Mar	117	132	144	127	157	151	162	164	145	
Total	1356	1368	1416	1424	1529	1541	1639	1697	1593	

Note: The latest mortality rates are the lowest since 2001, approximately 10% down this year compared to 2018.

New South West Crematorium

A pre-application for planning has been submitted for a new crematorium just south of Bude. In the event the application proceeds without significant disruption (unlikely in view of local opposition) a realistic operational date would be 3-5 years.

Emergency Planning

The recent roadworks outside the crematorium resulted in an unexpected interruption to our power supply, fortunately after the last service but whilst still cremating. The systems were able to complete the cremations despite the power supply and gas being cut (automatic safety feature). This was a 'lucky escape' and prompted a review of how the service could continue in the event of another similar incident. Initial investigations suggest that Aspen's recent refurb (which separated its electric supply board) offers the possibility of a generator back-up with battery support to cover the initial outage. This would allow the day's services to complete albeit, only in the smaller chapel.

Investigations on the options/costs are underway.

Service Improvement

An imminent booking software update will enable a 'Public Diary' capability. This would bring the capability for the public and funeral directors to search on line for any service (by name) or view all the services booked for a specific day.

The service would be available via a link on our soon to be updated website. This is a desirable service that would be widely used and enable a search at any time of the day. Private services would be blocked from searching.

The costs are £1,850 installation plus an annual service charge of £550 (payable 1st January 2020). The authority of the Joint Committee is sought for the additional funding/annual fee.

A live site can be viewed here:

<https://isa.chiltern.gov.uk/Telebook/ReadOnlyDiary.html>

Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

Proposals for the road layout, bus gate, new footpaths/cycle lanes and parking restrictions which will impact the access to the crematorium are starting to emerge. The latest information will be brought to the attention of the Joint Committee.

Christmas Working

It is proposed to operate outside the Council Closedown – only closing on Friday 27th December and 'early closing' on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

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NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

8th November 2019

REPORT OF TREASURER

PERFORMANCE MONITORING QTR 2 2019/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report presents the financial performance information for April to September 2019/2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the performance for April to September 2019/2020 be noted.

3. REPORT

3.1. A summary of the Expenditure and Income for the period April to September is shown below together with the Original and Profiled Estimates. Also shown is the projected outturn and projected outturn variance.

3.2.

	Original Budget 2019/20	Profiled Budget (Apr-Sep)	Actual Apr-Sep	Variance (under)/over	Projected Outturn	Projected Outturn Variance
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Premises	259,710	129,855	82,163	(47,692)	266,444	6,734
Transport	1,000	500	478	(22)	957	(43)
Supplies & Services	174,060	87,030	90,701	3,671	168,688	(5,372)
Central Support/Employees	303,050	151,525	142,710	(8,815)	293,885	(9,165)
Total Expenditure	737,820	368,910	316,052	(52,858)	729,974	(7,846)
Fees	1,076,480	538,240	534,304	(3,936)	1,107,577	31,097
Sales	100,270	50,135	49,410	(725)	98,821	(1,449)
Interest	3,750	1,875	2,208	333	4,415	665
CAMEO*	5,000	2,500	0	(2,500)	5,000	0
Total Income	1,185,500	592,750	585,922	(6,828)	1,215,813	30,313
Cont to Equip Replacement Res	100,000	50,000	50,000	0	100,000	0
Distribution NDC	208,608	104,304	104,304	0	208,608	0
Distribution TDC	139,072	69,536	69,536	0	139,072	0
Surplus	0	0	46,030	46,030	38,159	38,159

* Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation

3.3. Qtr 2 is showing expenditure £52,858 under the profiled budget and income is £6,828 lower than the profiled budget giving a total net variance of £46,030 increased surplus. The projections for the year are predicting expenditure £7,846 over budget and income £30,313 over budget producing a net variance of £38,159 increased surplus.

Agenda Item 7

3.4. The main budget variances are discussed below:

- 3.4.1. Premises – Profiled budget underspends relate to grounds, buildings and plant repairs and maintenance. These underspends are likely to be utilised during the remainder of the year. Full year projections are showing utility costs higher than budget. Also the budget includes £42,000 for one of the cremator hearth's to be replaced, the full year figures assume this will be carried out in 2019/20. However, this may not be required until 2020/21.
- 3.4.2. Supplies & Services – The profiled budget overspend relates to the annual insurance premium and annual music fee being paid in the first half of the year. The full year underspend is across various budgets.
- 3.4.3. Central Support/Employees – The underspends relate to a period of time with a staff vacancy.
- 3.4.4. Income – Income from cremation fees is lower than the profiled budget due to the lower number of services in Qtr 2 but higher than full year projected budget as it is anticipated that services will increase for the remainder of the year. Income from sales is slightly lower than both the profiled and full year budget.
- 3.4.5. The receipt from CAMEO has not yet been received for 2019/20 but it is anticipated that the budgeted £5,000 will be received.
- 3.4.6. If the projected outturn is achieved there will be an additional surplus of £38,159.

3.5. Reserves and balances. The current amounts held by the joint crematorium committee and projected balances are:

	Capital Funding Reserve	Equipment Replacement Reserve	General Reserve
	£	£	£
Balance 31 st March 2019	341,478	300,000	100,000
Contribution 2019/20	0	100,000	0
Projected Balance 31st March 2020	341,478	400,000	100,000

The projected balance at 31st March 2020 can be used for the Phase B project, demolishing the garage/memorial hall and rebuild new memorial hall.

These figures do not include the projected additional surplus identified in 3.2 above of £38,159.

Mark Knight
9th October 2019

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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