

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of North Devon Crematorium Joint Committee held at Crematorium Meeting Room - North Devon Crematorium on Friday, 2nd February, 2024 at 2.30 pm

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Inch (Chair)

Councillors Cann, Cottle-Hunkin, Gubb, Haworth-Booth and Walker

Officers:

Treasurer, Head of Customer Focus, Bereavement (Crematorium) Manager, Senior Accountant and Customer Feedback and Service Improvement Officer

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

27. TO APPROVE THE CORRECT RECORD OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD NOVEMBER 2023 (ATTACHED).

- (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.

28. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgency.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared.

30. 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 Brynsworthy 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.

31. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2023/24.

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.

32. 2024/24 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 Torrridge District Council be approved.
- (v) That the transfer of £100,000 to the Equipment Replacement Reserve be approved

33. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING.

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

Chair

The meeting ended at 3.04 pm