

Friday 2nd February 2024

Crematorium Matters – Manager’s Report

Trainee Manager Update

As previously reported, the manager has 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 have 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 is anticipated that the ‘pay-back’ for the associated costs will be within two-years (from 1/4/2025).

Cremation Figures (excluding NVF)

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
April	122	137	161	114	146	119	172	122	132	149
May	133	114	123	136	131	137	131	100	146	153
June	119	141	124	125	125	120	124	108	131	128
July	103	105	123	138	129	125	135	122	110	138
Aug	100	106	112	120	105	122	116	111	133	132
Sept	117	123	118	124	103	111	119	129	136	134
Oct	122	137	125	133	130	125	117	119	119	129
Nov	116	104	153	132	125	113	145	130	132	135
Dec	117	123	122	130	116	113	139	125	134	130
Jan	142	131	152	179	165	144	172	140	178	150E
Feb	149	131	135	171	143	130	132	119	174	
Mar	156	150	160	160	137	136	139	157	171	
Total	1496	1502	1608	1662	1555	1495	1641	1482	1696	

Direct Cremations

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

Note: 9% are non-resident Direct Cremations.

Crematorium Organist

The contract has been awarded until 4th February 2027 with an option to extend by up to 2 additional years. The new rate is £25 per service (previously £20.50).

Phase B Works (Garage Store/Memorial Room)

The building works are complete. A number of payments remain outstanding (including the retention), but the final total is expected to close to the projected budget.

Medical Referee

On 1st April 2024 legislation removes the need to scrutinize any medical information as part of the crematorium's application process. Despite this, the Medical Referee role has been unexpectedly retained whilst the Government consult how cremations will be authorised in the future. The absence of the need for medical scrutiny strongly suggests the Medical Referee role will be replaced by a process of 'non-medical' crematorium staff scrutiny and authorisation.

Crematorium Solar Panels

The Rowan chapel was constructed in 2015/16 with a sufficiently strong roof to permit the installation of solar panels. North Devon Council intends to investigate the installation of panels at the Brynsworthy Environment Centre. It is 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 would be possible to investigate the possibility of installing panels at the crematorium using the same method and at a similar cost. Subject to funding being approved by the Joint Committee (possibly funded from the Budget Management Reserve) it would then be possible to report the options and costs to the Joint Committee at its next meeting when any surplus figures will be known.

Metals Recycling Charity Award

North Devon Hospice has received an award of £14,000 (21/11/2023). Cruse has been nominated for the next award (approx. July 2024). Rota for subsequent awards:

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

Applications have been received from five additional charities seeking to be added to the rota, the following outlines their respective submissions for the Joint Committee's consideration.

Huntington's Disease Association

The Huntington's Disease Association is the only organisation in England and Wales offering support to people affected by Huntington's disease. Huntington's disease is a life-limiting, genetic disorder that causes a breakdown of nerve cells in the brain. This leads to symptoms affecting three main areas, movement, behaviour and cognition. Through our work we offer practical advice and support, training to health and social care professionals and fund research into the disease. We want a better life for anyone affected by Huntington's disease. We currently support around 8000 people affected by Huntington's disease; whether they have Huntington's, care for people who have Huntington's or are at risk of developing the disease in the future, we are here for them every step of the way. In addition, we are the only organisation worldwide with a Juvenile Huntington's Disease Adviser who is able to provide specialist support and advice to children affected by Juvenile Huntington's disease.

The Huntington's Disease Association wants to enable everyone affected by Huntington's disease to live their life to its fullest potential by, improving care and support for those affected Educating families and the professionals who work with them about Huntington's disease Championing the needs of the Huntington's disease community.

Evidence of support specifically in the North Devon and Torridge Council areas:

Across Devon CCG we support **91 adults** living with Huntington's disease. Of which **33** of them are carers.

We also support **3 children** - 2 of them at risk and 1 classed as a child carer.

Bereavement Support:

We offer lots around Bereavement support.

We have a team of Specialist Advisers who can talk with and support anyone dealing with a bereavement. This includes home visits, zoom calls and phone calls.

We offer webinars around end of life and bereavement.

We have a helpline adviser who can support people.

We have a [page on our website](#) with a chat function so people can access support via 'Grief Chat'. We also use this page to sign post to other helpful services that can help our families get the support they need during this difficult time.

We have information of [End of Life](#). And if you follow this link you'll see a video of one of our webinars around Advanced Care Plan. This was hosted by Cathy Lyon, former manager of a specialist care home, Huntington's Disease Association trustee and end-of-life doula.

Child Bereavement UK

We have an entire website of information and support we offer to bereaved families, children and young people on our website here [Child Bereavement UK](#). The support we offer to families ranges from face to face bereavement support practitioners to young people's groups and family groups and then training. We train hundreds of professionals each year to support children who are bereaved.

In the last 12 months we've had one referral in your local area (bearing in mind 40% of our contacts to the helpline are anonymous) and both the online support and helpline are available to everyone across the UK as is the specialist training.

Young Lives Vs Cancer

Young Lives vs Cancer support local Devon families dealing with a childhood cancer diagnosis and help them to find the strength to face everything that cancer throws at them. In the past year, our team have supported 108 young cancer patients and their families in Devon, and have given 85 grants to these families to the value of £15,215.

One of the ways we help families is through bereavement support. Hearing your child is not going to get better and that they are going to die is one of the hardest things any parent will ever have to deal with. We help young cancer patients and families prepare for death, we encourage them to think about how the child or young person can be remembered and help them all deal with their worries.

Our care teams provide bereavement support through home visits, local support groups and memory days. We do this to help children, young people and their families find a way to cope, and to help those left behind find a way to go on living. We also help families to pay for funeral costs, through our Young Lives vs Cancer Compassionate Grant.

Below is a quote from a mum we supported through our incredible care team in the South West following the sad passing of her 8 year old son –

“Our Young Lives vs Cancer Social Worker came to visit when we lost him in the hospice on that very day. I can't thank her enough. She's visited since then, she's phoned me since, and we've emailed each other. We can't thank her enough for everything she has done.

“I think with some people, once you've had something like this, they tend to leave you and you never have that support again, but we still know we have that support from Young Lives vs Cancer. I know if I need anything I can text or email her, and she'll help me.”

We would be so grateful to be considered as a beneficiary of North Devon Crematorium via the ICCM recycling scheme. It is only through donations like this that we can continue to provide this specialist support to families in Devon who are facing the very worst of times.

Widowed and Young

I am writing to ask whether you would consider adding WAY Widowed and Young to your list of recipients of funds through the ICCM Metals Recycling Scheme.

Who we are

WAY Widowed and Young is a bereavement charity for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner die. It offers young widows in Barnstable and across the Southwest access to a community of young widows who understand how it feels to lose a partner. We have our own charity registration number (1164988) and are responsible for generating our own funds with which to operate.

Our aim is;

- to ensure all those eligible to be members are aware of WAY and;
- have access to the peer-to-peer network and support that WAY offers
- raise awareness and understanding of the issues affecting those widowed young

WAY's Devon Area Volunteer (also a young widow) oversee the peer-to-peer activities for Barnstable members (which include social events, meals out & weekends away). Members also have access to a 24/7 Legal and Financial Helpline, Telephone “in the moment” support and counselling service, members only website, bereavement resources, online events, member magazines, monthly e-news.

WAY currently has over 1800 members in the Southwest and 344 members local to Barnstable. The Southwest has nearly 4000 annual deaths of people aged 18-51yrs old and 690 in the immediate areas to Barnstable, meaning there are far more potential young widows who need support. (*ONS Death figures).

Difference we make

In the last 12 months WAY supported over 4600 members throughout the UK, with new membership representing 46% of this number in the last 12 months. There were over 1000 face-to-face events being attended by approx. 4000 members and 87% of members report using closed Facebook pages for support. WAY's website has had 104,584 visits since January 2023 and our social media platforms have over 28, 000 followers.

Our Request

An ICCM donation would be used to;

1) Continue to provide services for young widows in Barnstable and surrounding areas (costs of volunteer support; members benefits -helpline, resources, digital members platform, management of social media closed member groups, member newsletters and magazines etc).

This will help beneficiaries to;

- feel less isolated
- have an improved network of support
- be better able to cope with their grief
- access counselling, finance and legal advice via the helpline

2) Reach out and help more people who are eligible to find and access WAY's support (via media platforms such as ITV, local press, social media campaigns, leaflets, local networks such as GP's, Hospices, Funeral directors etc)

Why is WAY so important

ONS Death figures show approx. 23,000 annual deaths of 19-50yrs resulting in thousands of people being widowed at a young age. Losing a life partner is one of the most traumatic things that can ever happen to anyone. It throws everything in your life upside down, and life will never be the same again. The secondary losses for young widows can be catastrophic; they face the complete collapse of a shared life, decreased support mechanisms, solo parenting where there are children (70% of WAY's members have children and with more than 150 being pregnant at time of bereavement), loss of social networks resulting in loneliness and isolation. Financial instability is very common, sometimes resulting in the loss of the family home – a recent study with our members showed 1 in 5 met the minimum income poverty standard and 68% were struggling financially. Young widows are more likely to suffer depression, anxiety inc. PTSD suicidal thoughts, intense grief due to their partners death most likely unexpected or violent - the latest ONS figures (2020) for deaths between 18yrs-50yrs old show; 16% Accidents; 12% Death by suicide; 23% Cancer; 6% COVID- 19; 9% Alcohol related; 2% Murder.

We would be very grateful for any contribution Barnstable Crematorium can make and hope you will look favourably on our request.

Stroke Association

In terms of bereavement support, we currently offer the GriefChat service – a free service for anyone who visits our 'in memory' pages, where people can chat to a bereavement counsellor. We also have our Helpline, which is a support phone number for those affected by stroke whether that be that they are the stroke survivor, or if they have lost a loved one through stroke. We also have a dedicated in memory team to support families who want to honour and remember their loved ones with a tribute page.

In terms of local support, in the South West in 2021 over 10,000 people had a stroke. We also know that in this area, stroke prevalence is higher than the national average. 89 groups were part of the Stroke Group Network and Stroke Association Connect supported 451 beneficiaries.

With the support of ICCM donations, we can continue to fund our bereavement support services and groups local to you, such as 'Say Aphasia'.