

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.

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.