

# **MANSFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE**

**28 FEBRUARY 2022**

## **OPERATIONS UPDATE REPORT**

### **1. SUMMARY**

1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on staff and the current operation of the crematorium

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Members note the report

2.2 That members approve Appendix 1 as the revised memorial prices

### **3. STAFFING**

3.1 The operational service is fully staffed and development training for staff continues to ensure a multi-tasking team can cover all areas of work within the crematorium and grounds to ensure cover is always provided.

3.2 The manager post is awaiting moderation following an updated Job Evaluation Questionnaire, to confirm the grading and associated salary prior to re-advertising

### **4. CREMATORS AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT**

4.1 Number 3 cremator brickwork failed on the charge door thus resulting in the cremator having to be closed down. The charge door was re-bricked on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December but on inspection of the top chamber, it was noted that this also had collapsed beyond repair this leading to the cremator being closed down until a full cremator re-brick could take place at a later date.

4.2 Number 3 cremator had a full re-brick that was completed on 19<sup>th</sup> February at a cost of £42,285.21

4.3 The first of the yearly servicing of the cremators has been completed in February.

4.4 Compulsory legal emissions testing was completed in February and the associated report will be provided by Scotec.

4.5 The current cremulator is around 15 years old and has processed around 34-35,000 cremated remains, the cremulator is an essential part of equipment in the cremation process but has been regularly breaking down. A replacement refurbished cremulator at a cost of £12160.00 plus VAT has been identified, which will be supplied with a 12-month warranty, except for the electrical motors & electrical contactors which will have a 6-month warranty. This will ensure the timescale to process remains is not impacted by equipment failure in the short to medium term.

Positives -

- (a) A new cremulator would cost in the region of 30 – 40K.
- (b) The current cremulator will be kept on-site and used as the backup cremulator.
- (c) Both cremulators will be serviced and maintained by the same company that holds spare parts.
- (d) Families will receive their cremated remains back on time and without further distress being caused.
- (e) The purchase will be funded from the unallocated capital PPW for 2021/2022 that was put on hold that would have been used to purchase a new cremulator.

Negatives -

- (a) The contract for new cremators and abatement will also include the ancillary equipment for all of the cremation process.

4.6 Cremation numbers will remain at 12 per day due to the age of the cremators and concerns around over-heating and reliability.

## **5. COVID/OMICRON**

5.1 Guidance from the government is constantly monitored for any changes that the crematorium needs to follow.

5.2 Covid risk assessments are reviewed monthly or when guidance changes.

5.3 Operational staff are still working a shift pattern to mitigate transmission of the Covid/Omicron virus. Staff are reminded to take daily LFT before work and to follow HR guidance for a positive LFT result.

- 5.4 Administration staff have the resources to work from home to mitigate the risk of transmission and also if they need to isolate.
- 5.5 Two of the gardeners will continue to work outside with the available resources to keep the grounds in good condition.
- 5.6 Witnessed Scatterings continue
- 5.7 The Book of Remembrance has continued to remain open Monday to Friday due to the safety measures that have been implemented to reduce the risk to staff and visitors. Floral Halls remain open for the public throughout the week.
- 5.8 Face coverings in all public areas are still a requirement for staff in line with MDC procedures/government guidelines as well as hand sanitiser and appropriate signage as per the risk assessments.
- 5.9 Saturday cremation fees were waived whilst the ongoing issue with number 3 cremator. We also put on extra services each Friday and these were held over, with permission from the families, to be cremated on a Saturday to make more service slots available.

## **6. PROJECT UPDATE**

- 6.1 The new CCTV system has been installed at a final invoice is £15,541.00.
- 6.2 The new Audio/Visual system has been installed thus providing a more reliable service for the bereaved but has come in slightly over the budget of 20K advised. This was due to further upgrades being required once the old system was removed, the final invoice is £25,194.54
- 6.3 Funeral director's self-booking system is still awaiting the completion of the installation, following the transfer to laptops for the team. Integrity and security checks are taking place prior to rollout.
- 6.4 The crematorium has had a new web-based phone system installed, as part of a wider organisational update. The new system allows for more focussed messaging and holding options which enhances the caller experience. The new system also supports agile working for the office team.
- 6.5 Work to finalise the plan for the revamped pond and the surrounding area is underway.
- 6.6 The crematorium had previously been approached by a local funeral director about direct cremations. This is no longer being pursued as the funeral director chose another crematorium before we proposed our price to them.

## 7. NEW PROPOSALS

7.1 In order to prolong the life of the existing cremators and minimize potential breakdown and disruption it is proposed to carry out an extra service per year for each of the cremators, on top of the existing twice yearly service schedule, to ensure they are operating as effectively as possible. The revised schedule will see servicing take place during the months of February, June, and October. Whilst servicing is taking place cremation numbers will be reduced to 8 per day as each cremator is taken out of operation whilst being serviced, with the schedule set to avoid the busy Winter months as far as possible. Servicing follows a comprehensive inspection (See Appendix 2) and will highlight any potential issues within the chambers and flues refractory. Then an estimated time frame can be agreed when/if a high-value repair will be needed.

## 8. COMMERCIAL INNOVATION

8.1 The new memorial options are now being promoted with the more popular memorial being the memorial tree leaves. The team will continue to promote a wider range of benches, in addition to the granite benches, including wood and Polywood. This is to provide options to meet differing budgets. The proposed fees for memorials are set out in detail in Appendix 1.

## 9. CREMATION DATA

9.1 The throughput figures will continue to be reviewed monthly and any further changes will be reflected in the budgetary forecasts.

9.2 The table below shows a comparison per Quarter over the last 2 years. This is a working table and will be populated per quarter.

Year	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Q1	565	745	533	
Q2	505	511	558	
Q3	579	640	607	
Q4	660	838		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,309</b>	<b>2,734</b>	<b>1,718 (to date)</b>	

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Revised Fees and Charges for 22/23.**

**Appendix 2 – Matthews Engineers Report Example.**