



Report to: **Mansfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee**

Date: Monday 20th May 2024 (10.00 am)

Director Lead: Mansfield District Council, Sarah Troman, Head of Neighbourhood Services, 01623 463036

Lead Officer: Mansfield District Council, Nada Colclough, Crematorium and Cemeteries Manager and Registrar, 01623 463882

| Report Summary | |
|-------------------|--|
| Type of report | Open Report |
| Report Title | Operations Report |
| Purpose of Report | This report seeks to provide an update on staff and the current operation of the crematorium |
| Recommendations | 1. That the committee note the report |

1.0 Background

The previous report was presented to the committee in January 2024. This report provides the committee with an update on progress since the last meeting.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendation

2.1 Staffing

2.1.1 The proposed staffing restructure for the crematorium has progressed and staff have been notified of the proposals with final consultation feedback due on May 1st. The details of the proposed restructure can be seen within Appendix 1. The focus of the restructure is to ensure a more efficient and effective bereavement service, allowing for a more fluid approach to teams working more closely together and the reopening of the service on weekends. The service has experienced increased complaints from member of the public following the decision to not reopen the Book of remembrance room at weekends following the pandemic, in 2021. In that time, it has become more and more evident that families have been significantly impacted with the closure and the inability to be able to view the Book of Remembrance. Under the current arrangement the Book Room is only open Monday to Friday and on Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas Day. This meaning that for certain days throughout the

- year, families would never be able to view the Book of remembrance on their remembrance date. This would be the case if your date was Boxing Day for example.
- 2.1.2 In addition to the re-opening of the service on weekends, the restructure will also see the responsibility of the ground's maintenance being transferred to MDC parks team which allows for a more resilient provision given the accessibility for a wider pool of staff.
- 2.1.3 The proposed restructure will also see an efficiency saving of 1.31 FTE from the establishment, equating to a saving of £41,086.20 annually. This saving is made up of a gardener post and a vacant administration part time post. The administrator post is no longer required due to the efficiency savings that have already been made with digitalising administrative processes.

2.2 Cremator and Ancillary Equipment

- 2.2.1 The service continues to feel the challenges of the ageing cremators with planned maintenance being of importance, to ensure that the service can remain operational without the need to reduce capacity any further.
- 2.2.2 All three cremators are currently operational and this allows for a daily capacity of 12 cremations with the use of the Holdover Policy to ensure that cremations are planned to reduce pressure of on the cremators and manage energy efficiency.
- 2.2.3 Number 2 cremator has recently had a full re line with number 3 cremator is planned in for the same work in July. This will see capacity reduced for the duration of the work but as the work is being carried out during the summer means that the impact on expected revenue is limited.
- 2.2.4 Number 4 cremator has experienced issues with the operational software and while this has been rectified, the software is old and the developer is no longer in business meaning there is a risk of future failure, without the expertise to be able to guarantee repair with any future software breakdowns.

2.4 Events Calendar

- 2.4.1 The crematorium hosted the first Mother's Day Service in March, and this was very well received with around 100 attendees. The feedback from families was positive with families sharing their appreciation for us providing a space for families to come together to remember on such a poignant day.
- 2.4.2 Given the success of Mother's Day service this will now be replicated on Father's Day with the service taking place on 16th June 2024.
- 2.4.3 With each service that takes place, celebrants and Funeral Directors that support with the day, do so in their own time, limiting the expenses to the authority which allows for the events to take place.
- 2.4.4 The Christmas memorial service is currently being planned and will take place on Saturday 14th December.
- 2.4.5 Additional services are also being considered: A carol service and children's memorial service in Mansfield Cemetery and a children's bereavement Christmas craft session. These events taking place will be dependent on the support that can be gained from the wider bereavement service community and relevant charities.

2.8 Cremation Data

- 2.8.1 Cremation numbers decreased during the last quarter in comparison to Q4 in 2022/23, seeing a 15% reduction. Cremation capacity has been reduced during this period to accommodate the loss of cremator 2 while the reline works were outstanding.

While cremator breakdowns continue to impact the service, which can be seen in the Q4 data for 2023/24, another contributing factor to the reduced numbers that needs to be considered is that the excess deaths data for January 2024 were below the five-

year average nationally. How this is reflected in the regional data will not be seen until the statistics are released by the cremation society later in the year.

| Year | 2019/2020 | 2020/2021 | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 | 2023/2024 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Q1 | 565 | 745 | 533 | 576 | 561 |
| Q2 | 505 | 511 | 558 | 595 | 476 |
| Q3 | 579 | 640 | 607 | 512 | 521 |
| Q4 | 660 | 838 | 601 | 691 | 586 |
| Total | 2309 | 2734 | 2299 | 2374 | 2144 |

Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation's officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have referred to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

1. Appendix 1 – Proposed New Staff Structure