



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

Date: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 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	
<b>Type of report</b>	Open Report
<b>Report Title</b>	Children's Funeral Fund
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	This report seeks to provide an update on the planned Children's Fund spend
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That the committee note the report

### 1.0 **Background**

Funeral services for children under the age of 18 are free at the point of sale, for bereaved parents. Crematorium and burial authority operators can claim back any costs associated with a child funeral service from the Government Child Funeral Fund. Reclaimed funds are in line with current fees and charges.

To improve bereavement service provision for the parents of deceased children and children who experience bereavement, in September 2023 the committee approved that any funds that are claimed back can be repurposed to improve the children's bereavement services at the crematorium, on an ongoing basis, rather than these funds being utilised as income. This report sets out the planned projects and anticipated spend.

### 2.0 **Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendations**

#### 2.1 **Funds Claimed Back**

Funds were first claimed in June 2022 and in that time the following funds have been received:

Year	Number of funerals	Total Claim Value
2022	19	£4,961.00
2023	21	£4,918.50
2024	8	£1908.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£11,787.00</b>

2.2 The value per child cremation is made up of the cremation fee and the medical referee fee. The medical referee authorises the cremation to take place, following inspection of medical records.

2.3 **Replacement Memorial Stone**

Within the crematorium grounds there is a location dedicated to the scattering of children and baby cremated remains. Within the location is a memorial stone with an appropriate inscription in memory of lost children with families often leave flowers and mementos in the area. It not surprisingly attracts a lot of flowers being left and often there is insufficient room for families to leave flowers, without spoiling the aesthetic of the area.

2.4 While the stone has been in place for several years this has become worn and in its current location it does not leave sufficient space for enough families to be able to leave tributes. A replacement stone is therefore been replaced with the addition of several flower vases, allowing families to leave tributes in a more fitting way. The improved design can be seen in Appendix 1.

2.5 Although the stone will be relocated to allow for the additional flower vases, this will remain in the same vicinity of the scattering area.

2.6 The total price for the new stone with additional vases is £1293.33. Reducing the total remaining spend available to £10,493.00.

2.7 The original stone has also been refurbished and placed within the different location, within the children's scattering area.

2.8 **Children's Bereavement Book Consideration**

At the Crematorium we often receive requests from families for suitable literature to be able to give to children to help them to understand grief and loss. While we can signpost families to suitable charities there is a distinct lack of literature that is readily available.

2.9 Previously there has been a book produced called 'Someone has died suddenly' and this was a book designed for children and adults to read together that explained all aspects of death and bereavement for children. Also incorporated into the book were several activities for readers to complete as they read through the book. This was originally produced by a national funeral director in conjunction with a bereavement charity, however this is no longer being produced and circulation ceased a couple of years ago.

2.10 Given the lack of literature available it was considered that something could be produced by the crematorium in conjunction with several stakeholders. A meeting has taken place between The Children's Bereavement Centre, a local children's bereavement charity that supports bereaved children in Newark and Sherwood, Mansfield and Ashfield only. After discussion it was identified that the charity are already progressing with a project to develop their own literature and therefore it was felt that the crematorium could support in other ways.

2.11 The charity hold an annual Daisy Appeal which is an annual community event of remembrance, that has previously been held in Newark for a number of years, very successfully. In line with the charities hope to be able to support more families in the Mansfield and Ashfield areas, we are investigating how we

could support with such an event in 2025 in order for the charity to be able to fund a number of children's counselling sessions. Work is ongoing to understand how the crematorium may be able to support with such an event and the target of increased support services for bereaved children and families in Mansfield.

- 2.12 Importantly the meeting identified what is needed within Mansfield, Ashfield and Newark and Sherwood and the counselling sessions are most in need and can evidence the biggest positive impact for children and families. Conversations are continuing as to cost implications for supporting with a number of counselling sessions within each of the district council areas and authority to proceed with this will be sought at the next committee meeting.

### **3.0 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.

Appendix 1 – Memorial Stone Design