

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

Date: Monday 23rd February 2026 (10.00 am)

Director Lead: Mansfield District Council, Ady Selby, Assistant Director 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 the current operation of the crematorium
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the committee approves the replacement of the exiting crematorium software £52,572 over five years; £21,372.50 in year one and the annual support subscription costs, in subsequent years, to be financed from existing budgets. 2. That the committee note the report.

1.0 Background

The previous report was presented to the committee in September 2025. This report provides the committee with an update on the crematorium operation since then.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendation

2.1 Cremator and Ancillary Equipment

2.2 Winter servicing has been completed on the cremators, and this has identified the following concerns:

2.2 Cremator number 4 – The blast tube and a small number of tiles have been replaced which has provided a temporary repair. It is anticipated that the additional approved

spend of up to £60k, approved at the previous meeting, will be spent on the heath and the flu box. This work is being completed week commencing 16th February.

- 2.3 Cremator numbers 2 – The rake door keeps coming loose however we have spares available to repair this. Issues have been identified with the integrity of the brickwork which is being reviewed. Any required reline may render conversations that will determine the decommissioning of the cremator.

- 2.4 Number 3 cremator is operating as expected with no issues

2.5 Building Maintenance and Repair

- 2.6 The identified crack in the chimney stack that requires repair is still on hold due to the bat roosts. While ongoing monitoring of the roosts is required an amendment to the license is required prior to any works being carried out. The amendments to the licence are underway.

- 2.7 Bearing in mind the health and safety concerns, a referral has been made to building control to firstly provide confidence that there are no immediate concerns of collapse and secondly that advice sought may support the license for works to be carried out.

- 2.8 While there was no immediate concern for collapse identified we are advised that the stack works need to be remedied within a six-month period. Appointment of an appropriate contractor and the associated bat monitoring is being managed through MDC Design Services team.

2.9 Grounds Maintenance

- 2.10 Tree work detailed in the operations report from September '25 has now been completed with further tree works planned for the 26/27 financial year. This is in line with the new financial year but also to support permitted felling amounts per quarter.

- 2.11 The further tree work is required for tree management and to overcome challenges with tree cover effecting the growth of grass and shrubs.

2.12 Soil Management

- 2.13 At the meeting in September members were made aware of concerns with the soil quality within the crematorium grounds and the impact that this was having on the growth of memorial plants, shrubs and grass.

- 2.14 Issues have been identified specifically in areas where cremated remains are scattered due to the ashes being Very high in salts, high in pH (alkaline), low in organic matter, low in nutrients usable by plants and are mostly calcium phosphate and minerals. Because

of this, adding cremated remains directly to soil can harm or stunt plants unless it is handled appropriately.

- 2.15 The negative effects on soil & plants are that high salt levels can dehydrate roots, and a high pH can prevent nutrient uptake. Low organic material also means that soil structures are not improved.
- 2.16 Effectively diluted or treated remains can be included into soil safely and incorporated as part of memorial planting
- 2.17 To overcome the concerns a further extensive analysis of the soil is being carried out and an action plan will be provided.
- 2.18 We know from initial discussions with a specialist that significant watering can support the dilution of specific areas, and the notion of a watering system being installed was explored during the previous committee meeting.
- 2.19 While the Crematorium will take the initial steps to identify the action plan for the improvement of the soil, consideration will be taken to the implementation of a watering system in line with the proposed plans for water harvesting at the crematorium, following the refurbishment.

2.20 **Charity Engagement**

- 2.21 During the committee meeting in September charity engagement was discussed following the donation to the Children's Bereavement Centre. Members requested further information on the charities that the Crematorium currently engage with, and this prompted the need to formalise the Crematorium Charity Engagement Strategy.
- 2.22 While work with charities is pivotal in ensuring that bereaved families have access to robust bereavement support, this happens informally and doesn't allow for any indication of outcomes for families. While numbers are currently low for referrals this needs tracking effectively so that we can demonstrate the impact that the wider bereavement services have on families seeking support.
- 2.23 While referrals to support services is important, engagement with local and national charities to raise awareness to support local provision, this is also considered within the strategy that can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 2.24 There are some elements of the strategy that are unable to be implemented until the crematorium has improved facilities to be able to house support sessions of information days, but this is considered as part of the longer-term plan.

2.25 Communication and Digital Platforms – BACAS Upgrade

- 2.26** A proposal to replace the crematorium software was presented to the committee in late 2023, however given the uncertainty over the future of the crematorium this project was delayed so that funds were not spent unnecessarily while a decision was being taken.
- 2.27** This proposal is for the replacement of the crematorium and cemeteries software. The software serves both the crematorium and cemeteries and therefore the cost for the upgrade will be split between the crematorium and Mansfield District Council cemeteries, the split being determined by the modules utilised within each service. While the replacement of the existing BACAS system has already been approved by the committee, approval is sought for the increased costs. The increase is due to utilising a different supplier and accessing additional modules that will allow for a better customer and stakeholder experience and a reduced administrative burden.
- 2.28** The existing crematorium software (BACAS) was implemented around 25 years ago and while the system was never fully utilised to its full potential, it currently does not fair with more intelligent alternative options. The current system does not integrate well with Civica or Govmail systems and does not meet the requirements of the crematorium's digitalised service, without the need for investment in the existing software. Clear Skies who currently provide the BACAS software have recently been bought out and while improvements are being made to their system this is in its early stages and therefore market testing has taken place to understand the alternatives within the market.
- 2.29** The current system is not cloud based and therefore updates and 'fixes' to errors within the system become complex and issues cannot be resolved quickly. An upgrade to the existing system is to provide further manpower efficiency savings and streamline existing processes, including service bookings, memorial ordering, financial management to enhance stakeholder experience of the bereavement service. Key system requirements include:
- 2.29.1 Effective communication with the existing internal finance system to provide accurate accounting for the bereavement services provision; reducing the need for staff to work between two systems and minimising inaccuracies in the data
 - 2.29.2 Provide the ability for funeral directors to be able to book their own services online, reducing the time needed for administrative staff to man the crematorium phones; calls from funeral directors placing bookings, currently accounts for 75% of all incoming calls.
 - 2.29.3 Provide a facility to be able to map cemetery memorials and log results from memorial inspection surveys
 - 2.29.4 Provide cemetery mapping software that allow for members of the public to access cemetery information online, again reducing manpower requirements. Grave mapping is a statutory requirement and currently

paper-based cemetery maps are utilised creating bottle necks in processing of grave interments and errors from not having accurate grave information in real time.

2.29.5 Full suite of reporting tools allowing full control over changes within the reporting and the creation of system templates

- 2.30 While the service has made huge steps in digitalizing, further improvements can be made with the implementation of a more intelligent system.
- 2.31 The full business case presented to MDC transformation Group can be seen in exempt appendix 1
- 2.32 Initial set up costs for the crematorium element is £21,372.50 with the annual support subscription costs being £7,800 in subsequent years.
- 2.33 Costs from the new BACAS provider have increased, a discount was applied in year 1, and in the next contract period it will be an annual cost to the crematorium of £7,875. The current annual contract expires in September 2026.

2.34 Communication and Digital Platforms – Digital Presence

- 2.35 The hosting of the crematorium website is being transferred from ADC to MDC and considering this a full review of the crematorium digital presence has been carried out including information from the Google Business page, the crematorium website and any other platforms that share our information.
- 2.36 The review has identified that our current digital footprint is lacking in a lot of information and an action plan has been implemented and this can be seen in appendix 2, in order to ensure that service users have easily accessible information in relation to bereavement services provided.
- 2.37 In addition to the action plan for updating all of our digital information the crematorium website content is being updated in preparation for alignment to any rebranding following the refurbishment.
- 2.38 A crematorium Facebook page was launched at the end of 2025 and this is gaining momentum and proving to be beneficial in the sharing of important information and updates for service users in addition to offering information around support services and memorial events. This will also be used to provide important updates on the changes taking place during the refurbishment which will be really important when providing families with reassurance about the potential perceived impact to services.

2.39 Cremation Data

- 2.24 Numbers unexpectedly low for the summer period. Overall, 1399 cumulative total in year. equating to 87.35% of annual target (inclusive of cremations already booked in Q4). This is anticipated to improve during Q4 with 348 bookings already made, at the time of writing this report, with the increase expected to be seen in the remainder of February and March 2026

Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Q1	565	745	533	576	561	469	490
Q2	505	511	558	595	476	469	408
Q3	579	640	607	512	521	506	501
Q4	660	838	601	691	586	546	348
Total	2309	2734	2299	2374	2144	1990	1399

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.

NIL