

**Update on Mansfield and District Crematorium for the Joint Crematorium Committee**

30 June 2020

As previously reported the Team at Mansfield Crematorium continue to work hard to maintain service provision for customers, alongside providing key input into the County Excess Deaths Cell, which has oversight of strategic planning for a significant increase in deaths in the County, to be implemented if required. It looks like this may be reduced down, however it is felt that it is beneficial to the funeral industry to maintain those connections made and this will be followed through in the future to build on the existing Nottinghamshire Cemetery and Crematorium Managers group and include other factions of the bereavement industry.

**Current Situation**

**Cremator Breakdown**

- One of the cremators has required extensive repair work following a small fire, but was back up and running as of 24<sup>th</sup> June. This work is contained within existing budgets but an insurance claim has also been submitted.
- The Crematorium had been providing 12 funeral services per day, (with two cremators) which met current demand, but is now back to being able to provide up to 18 per day without amending work pattern from the end of this week

**Staff Impact from Covid-19**

- Throughout June 2020 the operational team have been working in independent bubbles on opposite shift patterns to reduce the level of contact between technicians in case of any confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis requiring all contacts to self-isolate for 14 days. In this scenario only one bubble would be required to self-isolate and the other bubble could continue to deliver services. This is being continuously reviewed dependent upon booking numbers and government guidelines on social distancing within the workplace.
- We continue to ensure that between each service each chapel and associated facilities are thoroughly cleaned by a member of staff redeployed from another service area, to reduce the risk of infection for mourners and staff.
- Crematorium chapel staff are maintaining social distancing during services and wearing gloves throughout. Further distancing measures have also been put in place by allowing the funeral director to move the coffin into the chapel and their staff retreat before mourners are then allowed in.
- Home working has been implemented to reduce the number of Admin staff in the office, to reduce the potential exposure to infection. The day to day

operation of the Crematorium is with the on-site team and Head of Neighbourhoods, while Sally is working reduced hours at home.

- Additional PPE over and above what is normally issued to staff carrying out cremations and working in the chapels has been put in place
- The operational team are being supported to cover sickness by a former member of staff who has been employed on a casual contract who is fully qualified as a technician and is currently undertaking additional duties to support service provision on site
- All staff vacancies at the crematorium have been advertised and interviewing will take place in July (1 x Operational Supervisor, 1 x Admin Supervisor, 1.6 x Admin Assistants and 0.16 Cleaner)
- Basic mowing and grounds maintenance work is being carried out, along with maintenance work where required

### **Customer Impact Covid-19**

- There continue to be restrictions on the number of mourners, however the recent government advice has allowed us to increase the numbers attending services in Thoresby Chapel and for burials in cemeteries to 30, while we remain at 15 attendees in Newstead Chapel. There have been some instances of the limited numbers being ignored, along with similar experiences at other facilities in the county, reminders have gone out to funeral directors around the number of attendees and advising that services cannot be relayed outside as they will impact on services taking place in the adjacent chapel. Families have been encouraged to find alternative ways of showing their respects where possible, e.g. lining the streets on the route of the cortege to show respect.
- There has been an increase in take-up of the web-casting facility to allow family and friends to watch the service live from their own device
- Only one request has been received for a Saturday funerals during this period with funeral directors concentrating on services during the week to ideally allow staff a little downtime as the weeks have been busy
- Additional time slots up to 5.15pm are available if needed during the week
- Furniture in both chapels has been rearranged to maximise social distancing, although funeral directors are aware that if attendees are from the same household they may move the seats together.
- The crematorium building remains closed to the public, other than those attending services, as per the Government directive, but there is pedestrian access to the grounds.
- The Book of Remembrance is available online at <https://mansfield.bookofremembrance.uk/>

## Cremated Remains Covid-19

- Cremated remains are collected by funeral directors from the office if requested
- Where families wish to witness the scattering of remains these have been postponed throughout the pandemic to date, however plans to provide an appointment only service to re-start with all forms completed in advance are underway
- In the event that families have instructed the Crematorium team to scatter remains unwitnessed then this is taking place as normal
- The interment of cremated remains within the cemeteries is able to go ahead following the same social distancing guidelines for full burials

## Future

- Further government guidelines around social distancing, funeral provision and attendance will be implemented as it emerges
- Consideration is underway to reinstating the standard fees for Saturday services and timing for direct cremations, which were amended at the beginning of lockdown
- In order to reduce the pull on admin and operational resources we are considering an upgrade to the music software to allow Funeral Directors to select and load their own music, which is how almost all other facilities operate. There is an additional fee for this service of £200 per month, however this is likely to save a minimum of 40 hours of staff time per month.

## Current Statistics

<b>Week Commencing:</b>	<b>No. of Cremations Undertaken</b>
30.3.2020	57
6.4.2020 (4 day week)	56
14.4.2020 (4 day week)	76
20.4.2020	86
27.4.2020	76
4.5.2020 (4 day week)	42
11.5.2020	73
18.5.2020	69
25.5.2020 (4 day week)	44
1.6.2020	41
8.6.2020	49
15.6.2020	42
<b>Total (12 weeks)</b>	<b>711</b>

To put this into perspective for the period 30.3.2019 21.6.2019 we undertook 505 cremations.