

MANSFIELD AND DISTRICT JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

7 SEPTEMBER 2020

OPERATIONS UPDATE REPORT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on the staff restructure and current operational issues.

2. RESTRUCTURE

2.1 The Chief Executive Officer approved the following structure that was due to come into effect on the 1st July 2020, but has been delayed due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 The post of Supervisor / Assistant Registrar and Clerical Assistant were deleted and an Operational Supervisor and Administrative Supervisor were created, to provide line management to the operational and administrative teams.

2.3 The new Administrative Supervisor commenced on the 3rd August 2020 and the Operational Supervisor has been offered, but is currently awaiting an official commencement date.

2.4 Interviews have also taken place for the part time and full time Administrative Assistants to fill vacant posts, and the successful candidates are awaiting clearance.

2.5 The Gardener / Relief Technicians have been re-graded and those posts have been re-designated to Gardener / Technician. There is now a requirement for these staff to complete their technician accreditation within 12 months of being appointed to post, to provide additional resilience to the technical team. One member of staff has been registered with the ICCM and training has begun, an assessment will be carried out on the other two members of staff with a view to registering them within the next couple of months.

2.6 A copy of the old and new structure charts can be found at Appendix 1 and 2.

2.7 The new structure and working hours will reduce overtime by an anticipated £9,565 and an overall projected annual saving of £33,828 is expected through the restructure.

2.8 The overtime saving will be realised by incorporating weekend working into the normal working week, for example: if they work a Saturday they take a day off in the week to compensate, rather than being paid for additional hours as overtime.

3. DIRECTOR & REGISTRAR – CREMATORIUM

3.1 It is with great sadness that we have to inform you that Sally Curtis lost her fight with cancer on the 5th August 2020, she fought long and hard against this awful disease, whilst continuing to carry out her duties almost to the end. I'm sure you will agree that her dedication and professionalism to her work will be greatly missed by all who knew her and we would like to thank everyone for their condolences. Our thoughts are with her family at this time, especially her husband Ian and her son Matthew.

3.2 As an interim measure and to provide stability for the service and staff, Julie Snowdon, Town Centre Manager has been asked to provide temporary cover for the day to day operations of the service.

4. COVID-19

4.1 The number of funerals have now returned to a normal pre-Covid level for the time of year, with the majority of services being booked for the Thoresby Chapel due to higher capacity levels.

4.2 The staff have worked throughout the lockdown and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of their hard work and dedication during the first two months of the pandemic as they worked long hours to keep the service running in very difficult circumstances.

4.3 As from week commencing 10 August the staff have returned to working full hours, whilst continuing to work in two separate bubbles to provide resilience for the service, should anyone develop symptoms.

4.4 During lockdown the grounds have suffered greatly from lack of maintenance as all staff were required inside to ensure they could meet all of the service demands. Now the levels have returned to normal and staff are back on full hours they are working hard to bring the grounds back up to standard as quickly as possible.

4.5 Witnessed strewing's have also recommenced and the administration staff have been contacting the families to arrange appointments for these to be carried out.

This has already reduced the backlog significantly and we are now able to offer witnessed strewings for services straight away again.

4.6 It is planned that the Book of Remembrance will re-open to the public from the 1st September and families will be able to make an appointment to view a specific date from the lockdown period. Safety measures will be implemented to reduce the risk to staff and visitors. However, the floral hall will remain closed to visitors, other than service attendees.

4.7 Work has also been done to install a screen in the reception area, for staff to deal with funeral directors and visitors who arrive despite the signage advising them not to. Face coverings in public areas are now a requirement for both staff and visitors, in line with MDC procedures.

5. New Proposals

5.1 We are currently reviewing the internet and phone supplier contracts with a view to negotiating a better deal, improving connectivity and reducing cost to the service. The contract has been in place for some time, and as such a review of what is necessary is likely to yield positive results.

5.2 In order to improve efficiency of the service we are reviewing both the Obitus and BACAS systems with a view to enabling funeral directors to book their own services and music, which is in-line with the majority of other crematoriums and reduces the amount of paperwork that is processed. Naturally there is a cost associated with facilitating this, which is being reviewed to evaluate the potential benefit that could be derived, and how savings could be generated as a result.

6. Recommendation

6.1 That members note the report.