

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Joint Committee held in the Collingwood Room, Civic Offices, Fareham on Monday 26 September 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Joanne Bull (Chairman)
Councillor Susan Walker

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor Alan Durrant
Councillor Alan Scard

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Lulu Bowerman
Councillor Tim Pike (Vice Chairman)

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Lee Hunt
Councillor Steve Pitt

Apologies for Absence (AI 1) - None

950 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2) – None

951 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 June 2022 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 June 2022 be signed as a correct record.

952 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 4)

Minute 941 – Proposed crematorium development , Lee-on-the-Solent

Arising out of questions about the developer's proposal for a crematorium facility to serve the Gosport area and discussion about current progress, members were advised that it was thought a planning application might be submitted sometime in 2023. It was important to keep the scheme under review and members **AGREED** that it would be appropriate for officers to seek a meeting with the developer to fully understand the proposal and related matters.

953 Clerk's Items (AI 5) - None

954 Portchester Crematorium Carbon Footprint Report 2021/2022 (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER AND THE
CREMATORIUM MANAGER)

The Property Manger explained that the purpose of this report was to provide a carbon footprint base line to compare with future years to monitor progress in reducing carbon emissions. In discussing the report and arising from questions, members were advised of the present procurement arrangements for the supply of electricity and gas.

A further report would be prepared for the Joint Committee outlining initiatives that are currently or could be pursued as part of a climate action plan for Portchester Crematorium.

RESOLVED that there content of the report be noted.

955 Feasibility Study into Cremator Replacement (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

The Property Manager in submitting his report on the results of the feasibility study into the replacement of the cremators at the Crematorium gave members a power point presentation of the key findings, including –

- The existing cremators were 33 years old, having been well maintained, but were now at the end of their useful life and reliable parts were becoming difficult to source – the equipment had to be replaced;
- A comparison of new technologies such as Hydrogen, Resomation, and Natural Organic Reduction, none of which were suitable for the crematorium's current requirements;
- A comparison of proven technologies, being natural gas, Bio LPG gas, and electric;
- Four gas cremators would be required and these would fit in the existing space and meet the expected number of funerals;
- Bio LPG generated a high level of CO₂; required space for remote storage tanks and the fuel was significantly more expensive;
- Available space within the building could only accommodate 3 electric cremators; there would be additional unknown cost of power supply upgrade; 3 electric cremators could not fulfil current demand without significant changes in working practices and neither would they provide contingency capacity for maintenance or breakdown periods;
- Whilst current technology could reduce the carbon produced in the cremation process it was still not possible to achieve zero emissions;
- The recommended option was to proceed with installing 4 natural gas cremators, which would ensure reliability of delivery, and to look to reduce carbon emissions with more efficient use of the cremators and with energy recovery.

Arising from consideration and discussion of the report the following main matters were highlighted –

- The existing cremation equipment is nearing the end of its life and must be replaced using an established technology;

- Electric cremation took longer than gas cremation;
- Electric cremators by nature of their metal construction cooled more quickly than gas cremators which retained their heat and were more efficient and enabled a greater number of cremations each working day once at their working temperature;
- New natural gas cremators had an expected life of between 15 and 20 years;
- Facilities for holding over cremations (to the next day) would enable greater efficiency of the new equipment assisting in the reduction of the crematorium's carbon footprint;
- In some countries cremators operated for up to 24 hours a day for peak efficiency but this was not envisaged at Portchester;
- Ways and means for converting surplus heat into electricity on site would need to be investigated;
- The need to pursue more environmentally friendly methods as and when alternative cremation technologies become established;
- As part of the replacement the equipment would be capable of taking bariatric cremations;
- Encouraging funeral directors to promote eco-friendly coffins to assist carbon reduction, and for the Joint Committee to consider financial ways of achieving this when settling fees and charges;
- The need to build a capital reserve of sufficient size to exploit at the appropriate time one of the new technologies when it becomes proven;
- Nationally there had been increases in gas prices but the current 2022/23 crematorium budget was unlikely to be affected, although it might be necessary to have a slightly higher cremation fee in 2023/24;
- An action plan would be submitted to the next meeting on ways and means of off-setting the crematorium's carbon footprint, which could include memorial tree planting and a fund established for sustainable 'greening and treeing' to be used within each of the 4 authorities areas;
- The Joint Committee's capital budget for new cremators and related works currently included £3.5m, but on information presently available a budget of between £3m and £4.5m should be allowed.

(NB - the information contained within the appendix to the report was not treated as exempt)

RESOLVED (1) that the Joint Committee unanimously approves proceeding with the option for the supply and installation of four natural gas cremators;

(2) that authority be given to work with the professional team to design and then obtain tenders for further consideration by the Joint Committee;

(3) that a budget of between £3m and £4.5m be allocated for these works;

(4) that it be noted that an action plan will be submitted to the next meeting on ways and means of off-setting the crematorium's carbon footprint.

956 Crematorium Grounds - Provision of a Memorial Tree (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE CREMATORIUM MANAGER)

In submitting the report the Manager and Registrar outlined the detail of the three options for the provision of various forms of memorial, additional to the Book of Remembrance. It was explained that provision of a memorial tree, sited close to the Book Room, was an initiative recommended for support at this stage which would also enable public response to be gauged.

Arising from discussion members indicated support for all three suggestions as each had merit, it being noted that it was envisaged the Metal Wall art and Post Box memorials could be incorporated within a future scheme as part of the development of the present fountain area.

RESOLVED that the option for provision of a memorial tree in the area close to the present Book of Remembrance Room be approved, and added to the Capital Programme for 2002/23, and that provision also be made in a future budget for the metal wall art and post box memorials.

957 Building Repairs and Renewal Programme (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

958 Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 10) - General Statistical Report for June – August 2022

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

959 Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

In submitting his report Ashley Humphrey, the Horticultural Consultant, was pleased to advise that the cause of the intermittent leak on the pond had now been found and repaired. The tree sculptor would be carrying out work at the crematorium shortly.

Portchester Crematorium had again won the Gold Award in the South and South East in Bloom Awards, and this was presented to Ashley.

Members paid tribute to the hard work of all the staff involved and asked that their thanks be conveyed to them.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

960 Date of Next Meeting (AI 12)

The next meeting of the Joint Committee will be at 2pm on Monday 12 December 2022 at Portchester Crematorium.

The meeting concluded at 3.50 pm.

Chairman

JH/me
3 October 2022
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