

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Joint Committee held at Portchester Crematorium on Monday 23 September 2019 at 2.00 pm.

Present

Fareham Borough Council

Councillor Simon Martin

Gosport Borough Council

Councillor June Cully
Councillor Kathleen Jones

Havant Borough Council

Councillor Tim Pike (Chairman)

Portsmouth City Council

Councillor Lee Hunt

Joint Committee Membership & Introductions

Councillor Lee Hunt (Portsmouth CC) was welcomed to the meeting, replacing Councillor Jeanette Smith, who was no longer a member of Portsmouth's Executive.

Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Steve Pitt (Portsmouth CC) on other council business, Councillor Leah Turner (Havant BC), and Councillor Keith Evans (Fareham BC).

833 Appointment of Vice-Chairman (AI 2)

RESOLVED that Councillor June Cully (Gosport BC), be appointed vice-chairman, for the municipal year 2019/20.

834 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 3) – None

835 Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2019 (AI 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 24 June 2019 be signed as a correct record.

836 Matters Arising from the Minutes not specifically referred to on the Agenda (AI 5) - None

837 Clerk's Items (AI 6)

The Clerk to the Joint Committee reported that a grounds clearance was undertaken recently, following one month's advance notice during August. A considerable amount of memorial items and related material were removed and placed into store, to await collection by families. He reported receipt of correspondence from a Gosport resident complaining about the way in which the clearance had been undertaken and the way in which items had been stored.

The Manager and Registrar explained the procedure that was followed by staff in removing items from the grounds and placing them into large crates, which were then placed on shelves in a small store room, to await public collection. Anything not collected by the time of the next clearance was treated as abandoned and then disposed of. The recent clearance was the first for 12 months, and there had been a number of instances of staff being subjected to verbal abuse, both in person and by telephone.

Members discussed the issues arising and the long standing policy that no permanent memorials, plaques and other ornaments are permitted to be left in the grounds. This requirement was made clear on the forms signed by relatives at the time of booking a funeral. Signs to this effect were also displayed in the grounds.

Whilst members understood why some families wished to try and leave lasting tributes, there was concern at the appearance of such items and the effect upon the gardens. Arising from discussion it was agreed that the officers bring forward for consideration at a future meeting options for addressing the problems arising from the unauthorised deposit of memorials, plaques and similar items in the grounds of the crematorium.

RESOLVED that the Clerk to the Joint Committee, in consultation with the other officers, bring forward a report for consideration on options for addressing the problems arising from the unauthorised deposit of memorials, plaques and similar items in the grounds of the crematorium.

838 Risk Management (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE TREASURER)

The Deputy Treasurer amplified the contents of the report and answered questions from members, including confirming that there were no new budgetary pressures as financial provision had already been made for any items that had been identified as requiring action.

The Clerk to the Joint Committee advised that a staffing report in respect of business continuity would be brought forward to the next meeting.

RESOLVED (1) that the Risk Management Strategic Framework and Policy as set out in Appendices A & B of the report be approved;

(2) that the Risk Management progress report set out in Appendix C be noted.

839 Building Works Programme (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER)

In presenting his report the Property Manager mentioned specifically the Book Room refurbishment and the Water Feature Feasibility study, and answered questions from members.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

840 Manager and Registrar's Report (AI 9)

(a) General Statistical Report

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

Arising from his report and questions, the Manager and Registrar commented generally on the statistical information.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(b) Any other items of topical interest – public comments register

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR)

RESOLVED that the report be noted with interest.

(c) Any other matters –

Recycling of Metals Charitable Scheme - Nominations

RESOLVED (1) that in the current round Naomi House Children's Hospice be nominated for an award under the scheme;

(2) that in preparation for the next round the officers consider and check with the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) whether a local suicide prevention charity could be nominated.

841 Horticultural Consultant's Report (AI 10)

(TAKE IN REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT)

In submitting his report the Horticultural Consultant said that the South and South East In Bloom judging took place on Friday 28 June, and that the Crematorium had recently been advised that it had received a gold award. Members expressed appreciation to the Brighstone Horticultural Team and its on-site supervisor for the special efforts in preparation for and on the day of the judging.

RESOLVED that the report be received and approved, and the congratulations of the Joint Committee be recorded and passed to the Horticultural team and Brighstone Landscapes, the grounds contractor.

842 Date of Next Meeting (AI 11)

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be held at 2pm on Monday 9 December 2019 at Portchester Crematorium.

The meeting concluded at 3 pm.

Chairman

JH/me
24 September 2019
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