



**REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE –
MONDAY 27 JUNE 2022**

REPORT BY: THE MANAGER AND REGISTRAR

CHANGE TO THE LENGTH OF SERVICE TIMES

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask members to approve a change to the length of all service times to 45 minutes.

2. RECOMMENDED that all service times be extended to 45 minutes for a trial period of 6 months.

3. Background

3.1 We currently offer a majority of 30 minutes time slots in our two chapels with only four 45 minute time slots that are available in the south chapel.

3.2 Having mostly 30 minute times slots causes regular issues with services running over when we have bookings one after the other. People are having services with more music and visual tributes that they squeeze in to 30 minutes, but in actual fact the service time in a 30 minute slot should only be around 20 minutes to allow time to enter and exit the chapel, so it is very easy to run over.

3.3 We are regularly asked to book double slots so they can have an hour for a service which we can't do here, as we have no separate fee for extra use of the chapel, and the 4 services that we do offer at 45 minutes in the South chapel are nearly always booked out weeks in advance.

3.4 The staff have been consulted and they all agree there would be a great benefit to ease the pressure on services overrunning. Once one service overruns it is almost impossible to catch up with the rest of the day running on time unless we are lucky enough to have another service that doesn't take the full 30 minutes.

3.5 Although there will still be the potential to overrun on a 45 minute service, as we know there will always be a minority that have to push the boundaries, the staff do report that the 45 minutes slots very rarely run over and it is often one of these slots in the South that allows for a small break in the pressure we are under on busy days.

3.6 Some of the latest statistics from the Cremation Society survey in 2021 shows most crematoria booking slots in 2021 are now 45 (34%) or 60 (38%) minutes. Only 10% of crematoria surveyed have 30 minute slots in 2021 compared to 42% in 2007

so this would suggest the change will keep us competitive within the industries current trends.

4. Current Service Times

| South | North |
|-------|---------------------|
| 09:00 | 09:15 |
| 09:30 | 09:45 |
| 10:00 | 10:15 |
| 10:30 | 10:45 |
| 11:15 | 11:15 |
| 12:00 | 11:45 |
| 12:30 | 12:15 |
| 13:00 | 12:45 |
| 13:45 | 13:15 |
| 14:30 | 13:45 |
| 15:00 | 14:15 |
| 15:30 | 14:45 |
| | 15:15 |
| | 15:45 (QA NVF Slot) |

We currently have 25 slots available and we take 4 walkthroughs within these slots. In a month with 31 days, 23 of which are weekdays, we have 575 slots available.

5. Proposed Service Times

| South | North |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 08:15 Walkthrough | 08:00 Walkthrough |
| 08:45 Walkthrough | 08:30 Walkthrough |
| 09:15 | 09:00 |
| 10:00 | 09:45 |
| 10:45 | 10:30 |
| 11:30 | 11:15 |
| 12:15 | 12:00 |
| 13:00 | 12:45 |
| 13:45 | 13:30 |
| 14:30 | 14:15 |
| 15:15 | 15:00 |
| | 15:45 (QA NVF Slot) |

We would have 18 service slots available. We would continue to take up to 4 walkthroughs at 8:30 each day but we would create separate diary booking slots to still give us a maximum of 22 cremations a day. We will still have a 15:45 slot that we make available for the Baby/NVF services that we provide in partnership with QA Hospital. In a month with 31 days, 23 of which are weekdays, we would have 506 slots available.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Looking at 2019 (pre pandemic figures) we carry out, on average, 264 cremations a month and 12 cremations a day so the reduction in service slots available can still meet demand. The most cremations we have carried out in one month in the last 5 years is 460, which was during the pandemic, so we could still easily accommodate this if needed with a change to 45 minutes time slots.

6.2 There is little difference now between the demand in the North and South Chapel. At the time of writing this report, week commencing 9 May 2022, the South Chapel has 35 services booked and the North Chapel has 32 services booked that week. The most services booked in a day in either chapel that week is 10 and that is only one day, all other days have 9 or less services in each chapel. We would still have 9 slots available in each chapel, each day moving to 45 minute services.

6.3 The 45 minute services in the South chapel are very popular with Funeral Directors and mourners arranging services. These are often booked a month in advance by Funeral Directors who want to ensure they can get a 45 minute slot because we only currently have the 4 available in the South. This does limit them to the South Chapel and we do have many families that prefer the North Chapel so allowing 45 minute services across both chapels would ensure mourners have a choice of chapel in all circumstances.

6.4 We now have the Obitus media system offering families the option of having more content with music and visual tributes so allowing slightly longer service times will accommodate families who want to fit more into a service as they could take a good 30 minutes for a service and still have 15 minutes to enter and exit the chapel.

6.5 There would be an added benefit in reducing the pressure on car parking as services would be more spread out.

6.6 Our closest neighbouring Crematoria all offer 45 minutes services as standard and only have 30-minute services offered at a reduced rate on 9:00 or 9:30 slots.

6.7 This report has set out to examine and consider changing the length of our service times and members are asked to approve the recommendation set out in Section 2 of this report.

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Victoria Hatton
Manager and Registrar

VH
11 May 2022