

NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held at Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton on 8th March 2012 at 10.00 am

- MEMBERS** Merton: Councillors Margaret Brierly,
(*absent) Philip Jones, Geraldine Stanford
- Sutton: Councillors Stan Theed, two vacancies
- Wandsworth: Councillors Claire Clay, John Farebrother (Vice
Chairman), Angela Graham*, Jenny Browne and
Liz Stokes
- OFFICERS** Charles Ward (Clerk)
Mike Hall (Treasurer)
Peter Robinson (Surveyor)
- Wandsworth officers:
Clive Andrews (Bereavement Services Manager)
Susan Kerwick (Deputy Registrar)

Following the resignation of Councillor Campbell-Klumps as a Councillor and pending appointment of the new Board at the June 2012 Annual Meeting, Vice-Chairman Councillor John Farebrother chaired this meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apology received from Councillor Angela Graham as problems on the railway had forced her to turn back.

3. CLERK'S UPDATE

3.1 **Resignation of Councillor Campbell-Klumps.** The Board noted the resignation of Councillor Campbell-Klumps as a Sutton Councillor at the end of 2011 which has resulted in the Chair of this Board falling vacant. Councillor Theed said following the recent Worcester Park by-election, Councillor Roger Roberts had been elected and was now appointed to fill one of the Sutton vacancies. However as the appointment had only been made the previous Monday it was too late for Councillor Roberts to attend this meeting as a Sutton representative.

3.2 The Board noted the unanimous written resolution to accept the increased quotation of £2,532.65 plus VAT for the purchase and

installation of a camera and monitor to relay services to the outer lobby area of the Crematorium Chapel to cater for larger services where the bereaved were not all able to get in to the chapel.

4. MINUTES of the meeting held 8th December 2011

- 4.1 **Matters Arising.** On page 74 Councillor Farebrother pointed out that it was another Councillor who had pointed out spelling errors on the Board's website. It was therefore agreed to amend the relevant sentence to read, "a Member pointed out some spelling errors on the Board's website, which the Surveyor said would be corrected." In relation to page 79 the Surveyor said that the application had now been made to join CAMEO. In relation to page 80 there was the issue of exhaustion of land for cremated remains graves. He said that these were issues to consider at every Annual Meeting and that there should be a system of reminding the Board of long standing issues. The Treasurer said that the Board's Action Plan covered a range of such issues.

In relation to page 81 of the Minutes there were two issues. The Board noted that the Wimbledon final was not relevant to the 2012 Service of Remembrance. However Councillor Jones said that the two events had sometimes clashed and that it was then an issue for Members. Councillor Farebrother said that provided the public were given notice of the event, people would still come to the Service of Remembrance. Councillor Brierly said that she had attended in person the Service of Remembrance every year, however Members asked if there was a clash the Service could be put back. Councillor Jones said that bereaved families were used to attending the Service during the first Sunday in July. This year the Service would fall on Sunday 1st July 2012.

Members then discussed the issue of the 7th June Annual Meeting which clashed with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Resolved: that the Board's Annual Meeting be put back to Tuesday 12th June 2012 starting at 9.30 am at the Crematorium

5. REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR

- 5.1 **Business Level Activity.** The Surveyor reported on a 6% downturn which made it unlikely that the Board would achieve the estimated figures used in formulating the account.
- 5.2 **Performance Monitoring.** The Surveyor explained that Wandsworth Council's Bereavement Services Team provided services for the Board under contract and that monthly monitoring reports, in the form approved by the Board, were produced and scrutinised. Reports in

respect of December, January and February were appended to the Surveyors report and paragraphs 9 to 13 of the report summarised matters. There was nothing to report in relation to financial matters; employee matters or health and safety matters (paragraphs 9, 11 and 13). In terms of quality control issues (paragraph 10) it was reported that a cremator had been out of action for a short period to enable a fault to be corrected and in respect of customer statistics (paragraph 12, these were reported under item 1 of the Surveyors report

Members were asked to decide whether they wanted contract performance to be a Summary Report Only; a Summary Report plus Monitoring Forms or Monitoring Forms Only.

Resolved: that Board Members receive a summary report with the meeting agenda and that full monitoring reports be emailed separately to Members.

- 5.3 **Action Plan.** The Surveyor explained that this was updated each quarter. In relation to signage, Members asked whether the Surveyor had made contact with a Merton Council Officer. Councillor Jones said that the entrance was conspicuous from the roundabout. The Surveyor said that he was trying to pursue matters with the relevant officers.

Councillor Brierly said she received the same papers twice or sometimes three times. Councillor Farebrother said that the Agenda Reports could be received as email or hard copy. Councillor Clay said that she preferred hard copy reports as they were easier to manage. In relation to agenda delivery, the Treasurer explained that the Clerk sent out the first part of the Agenda and that the Surveyor and Treasurer sent out their reports separately. Following discussion regarding future Agenda dispatches:

Resolved: that instead of dispatching the Agenda and draft Minutes directly to Members, the Clerk will in future email across the first part of the Agenda to the Surveyor and Treasurer, who will then append their own respective reports. This will enable the complete Agenda and reports pack to be sent to Members instead of piecemeal as hitherto.

- 5.4 **Update on Mercury Abatement.** The Surveyor said that a report had been put to the relevant Committee at Wandsworth Council: who had also agreed to enter into a burden sharing scheme with the Board. The Surveyor had also made application to join CAMEO: to seek opportunity of maximising TMACs.
- 5.5 **Recycling.** The Board had now entered into an agreement with ICCM for which there will be a benefit. Proceeds from the scheme had to go to a death related local charity. Councillor Theed said that there was a

gap between that and when the new Chairman was appointed. Any distribution could be related to the financial year 1st April to 31st March in each year. Councillor Jones asked for an example of a death related charity. The Bereavement Services Manager suggested a charity related to terminally ill children. He also explained that the ICCM website specified local charities. Councillor Jones said that it was time to address the issue of which charity. The relevant Mayor's charity had been suggested as a default point. Councillor Farebrother asked how much money was involved? The Surveyor replied that the amount was not known, however the average for 2010 was £8,333.

Councillor Theed asked for clarification of the position when a Mayor steps out of office and to which mayoral year the money would be attributable. The Surveyor would look at the options and report back. Councillor Farebrother asked where references were laid down to "death related" charity.

Resolved: That a further report on this issue would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

6. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

The Treasurer introduced his report.

- 6.1 **Management Agreement.** The Treasurer explained that the report covered the period to 29th February. In relation to Appendix A the net total of £51,218.03 was yet to be invoiced by Wandsworth Council.
- 6.2 **Interim Accounts for the period 1st April 2011 to 29th February 2012.** The Treasurer explained that in the covering report referring to Appendix B line, reference to line 16 should read line 15, lines 22-37 should read 20-33. He explained that the Board's expenditure included the costs incurred under the Management Agreement with Wandsworth Council (as reported in the previous report). However the accounts were of concern as income was less than expected due to a lower number of cremations than estimated. The number of cremations was below the average for the last five years for the same period .
- 6.3 **Review of Internal Control.** The Treasurer explained that the annual audit undertaken by Wandsworth Council's Internal Audit Service had given a qualified assurance in two areas.

He explained that Priority 1 was most significant. Priority 1 related to the model publication scheme and the need to bring the Board's information onto its website. The Surveyor explained that this would be done within the forthcoming week. Priority 2 was the need for the Board to ensure that checks were undertaken as regards goods

received, and Wandsworth staff had already been asked to implement this with immediate effect

Councillor Clay asked about the numbers of cremations. She asked whether every crematorium was suffering in this way and why business was dropping off. The Treasurer indicated that a number of reasons had been put forward as to why there was a fall in the death rate, and therefore cremations. One theory was that this was attributable to premature deaths in World War II.

Councillor Jones said that the issue for the Board was whether it is meeting market share.

The Surveyor said that the Board was given information annually on performance compared with neighbouring crematoria. The Surveyor considered that the North East Surrey Crematorium was maintaining its position because of improvements in its facilities.

The Treasurer guided Members towards the back of the Information Pack, circulated at the beginning of the meeting, in which the Board had set a thirteen percent target for market share. Actual achievement was 14.4% in 2010, so he considered that the Crematorium was more than holding its own.

Councillor Clay asked if there would be a later catch up in the cremation figures. Councillor Browne asked whether if a deceased family lived in Wandsworth, the choice would be to go to Mortlake. The Treasurer indicated that the choice of crematorium was driven by many factors, but commonly was decided on the basis of a family connection with a particular crematorium. He also indicated that the cremation fee is a small part of the cost of a funeral.

The Treasurer updated Members on prospective changes to the Board's bank account. Like its contractor Wandsworth Council, the Board had a bank account with Barclays Bank, for which no charges were levied against the Board. However following competitive tendering, Wandsworth Council was now transferring its account to NatWest Bank. The Treasurer therefore sought approval from the Board to, if appropriate, change its bank account, to NatWest Bank in line with the Council's arrangements. He added that Wandsworth's account was changing from April 2012.

Resolved: that, if appropriate, the Treasurer be authorised to change the Board's accounts from Barclays Bank to NatWest Bank

7. **URGENT ITEMS.** There were none.

8. **DATES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS FOR 2012**

As attached, the Annual Meeting having been changed to 12th June 2012 at the Crematorium.

The meeting ended at 11.00 am

Chairman:

Dated:2012