

## NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM BOARD

### Minutes of the Meeting held at North East Surrey Crematorium, Morden on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at 09.30 am

- MEMBERS** Merton: Councillors Philip Jones (Chairman)  
(\*absent) Margaret Brierly, Geraldine Stanford
- Sutton: Councillors Malcolm Brown (Vice-Chairman), Stanley  
Theed, and Roger Roberts\*
- Wandsworth: Councillors John Farebrother, Claire Clay,  
Mike Ryder, Liz Stokes, Piers McCausland\*

#### OFFICERS

Charles Ward (Clerk)  
Jean Stevenson (Treasurer)  
Tony McDonald (Surveyor)  
Sarah Gordon (Minute Taker)

Wandsworth Officers:  
Clive Andrews (Bereavement Services Manager)  
Margi Singh (Administration Manager)

#### 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2013/14

Councillor Clay welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for nominations from the Merton Members for the new Chairman. Councillor Brierly nominated Councillor Jones, who was seconded by Councillor Stokes. Councillor Brown was nominated by Councillor Theed as Vice-Chairman, who was seconded by Councillor Ryder.

Before stepping down as Chairman Councillor Clay conveyed the thanks received in a letter from St Raphael's Hospice for the kind donation raised by the metal recycling scheme.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors McCausland and Roberts.

#### 4. MINUTES (12<sup>th</sup> March 2013 Meeting)

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013 were approved without amendment.

## 5. REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk presented his report highlighting that the existing Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegations and other constitutional matters needed to be updated to enable payments to be processed electronically. He asked that the Board accept the track changed amendments outlined in the appendices to his report.

**Resolved: that the suggested amendments to the Board's existing Scheme of Delegations and Standing Orders be adopted with immediate effect.**

## 6. REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR

6.1 **Business Level Activity.** The Surveyor initially advised the Board of a correction to his report noting that Appendix 1 provided information in respect of cremation numbers for the past five years and for the first two months of this financial year as opposed to eleven months as written.

He noted that business level activity for the financial year 2012/2013 was 7% higher than the previous year. April and May were 18% up on the five year average for those months. The estimates for 2013/2014 had, however, been maintained at 1,670 for the moment.

**Resolved: that this item be received for information.**

### 6.2 Performance Monitoring.

#### Financial Matters

No financial issues needed to be drawn to Member's attention.

#### Quality Control Issues

The Surveyor reported to the Board that one complaint had been received regarding the water logged ashes lawn. In response the difficulties throughout the cemetery due to weather conditions, London clay and the high water table were explained to the complainant.

The Surveyor reminded the Board about the electrical power surges reported at the previous meeting. He confirmed that the electrical installations had been inspected and assurance given that the circuits were not overloaded. The key areas investigated were the audio system, lighting, curtains and the cremators. All actions required to ensure that service delivery would not be affected if there was a power surge have now been taken.

### Cooling Tower

The Surveyor informed the Board that following routine maintenance an issue regarding the cooling towers had arisen. It was reported that they were not operating under the correct guidelines. On receipt of this information the cooling towers were switched off, all of the necessary procedures were put in place and the towers were registered with the local council (Merton). The cooling towers were switched back on once these corrective measures had been actioned. Cremations were still able to take place, however, they were unabated.

**Resolved: that this item be received for information**

Councillor Stokes raised the issue of the crematorium sign on the roundabout leading to the Crematorium. The Bereavement Services Manager confirmed that this matter had been pursued with Merton Council, however, with no real progress. He had heard that Merton Council generally were reluctant to erect new signs and that he would be grateful if anyone could assist in moving the matter forward.

General discussion ensued regarding the importance of having a directional road sign on the roundabout .

Councillor Jones noted that Merton Councillors could take the matter up with their fellow Councillors responsible for the Highways Department. The Surveyor said that he would also take the matter up with his counterparts at Merton.

Councillor Clay spoke of the lack of a map on the Crematorium's website providing adequate detail if travelling to the Crematorium from a distance. It was confirmed that the website did display a map which had the facility to be enlarged.

**Resolved: that this item be received for information.**

6.3 **Action Plan – Business Plan.** The Surveyor had no specific issues to highlight to Members. Councillor Jones mentioned the 10 minute virtual tour of the Crematorium's facilities, the filming of which had been postponed due to poor weather conditions. The Surveyor confirmed that filming would take place later in the summer.

**Resolved: that this item be received for information.**

6.4 **Mercury Abatement.** The Surveyor informed the Board that the local burden sharing arrangement with Wandsworth Council (Putney Vale Crematorium) was working well.

6.5 **Recycling of Metals Following Cremation.** Members were asked to consider whether they wished to continue to support St Raphael's Hospice or nominate another charity to receive funding from the



Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management's (ICCM) national recycling scheme.

**Resolved: that Members wish to continue to fund St Raphael's Hospice with monies raised from the recycling scheme.**

6.6 **Review of Memorials.** The Surveyor confirmed that Officers had explored the options available for the development of the Tree of Life and that examples of memorials would be on display for Members to view and make a decision on after the meeting.

**Resolved: that two new forms of memorialisation be pursued with the following provisos:**

1. **All three different cremated remains mausoleum's designs be available for the public to choose.**
2. **The largest leaf (black lettering on metal) be chosen as the most suitable and legible inscription. The leaf needs to be opaque rather than have a stainless steel finish.**
3. **Additional branches be attached to the main body of the fountain arching up and over the fountain and protruding down to eye level around the circumference of the fountain base.**
4. **Options for butterflies and doves be included for memorial inscription.**

6.7 **Repair and Renewal – Routine Works.** The Surveyor advised Members that they needed to consider maintenance costs of the cremators. General discussion then followed regarding the service Crawfords provide and the length of the current contract.

Officers confirmed that the life expectancy of a cremator was 15 – 20 years. Officers felt that there was no reason to look at different crematorium plant as everything was in good working condition.

The Bereavement Services Manager gave an example of Putney Vale Crematorium who have a different arrangement and are charged an extra fee for breakdowns. Crawfords' annual charge covers services, breakdowns and emergencies.

**Resolved: that the Board authorise Officers to negotiate a revised fee per cremation.**

## **7. REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

7.1 **Performance against the 2012/13 Annual Budget under the Management Agreement.** The Treasurer advised the Board there had been an approximate £10,000 underspend mainly due to reduced

salaries expenditure. This had been as a result of vacant posts not needing to be filled by agency workers due to staff working very hard and covering the workload.

There had been an overspend on some other items, however, business level activity had been higher than expected with 50 more cremations than the revised estimate.

**Resolved: that this item be received for information.**

**7.2 The Board's Accounts for 2012/13.** Total expenditure was less than expected mainly due to the underspend on the Management Account. Some extra costs were incurred on works, however, they were offset by planned expenditure not taking place due to weather conditions.

Total income was higher than the budget due to the increase in business activity.

The Treasurer confirmed that overall the net surplus for the year was greater than expected at just short of £40,000.

Councillor Clay queried the high postage expenditure. The Administration Manager noted that unless the bereaved specifically say they do not want one, brochures are dispatched to them. Receipts are also sent by post. Councillor Clay asked whether receipts could be emailed and she was not clear as to why more was being spent on stamps than the materials being sent. On this point the Treasurer confirmed that the Crematorium held a stock of brochures, therefore printing costs were not necessarily incurred in the year. The Administration Manager confirmed that due to the age profile of the bereaved, a hard copy receipt is preferred.

The Bereavement Services Manager highlighted the fact that the brochures were a marketing tool and when the income for memorials was taken into account £2,500 spent on postage was money well spent.

General discussion on sending out emailed material or hard copy ensued.

**Resolved:**

- 1. that Officers report on marketing costs compared with memorial income at a future meeting.**
- 2. that the Board's Accounts for 2012/13 be approved and signed off by the Chairman.**

**7.3 Annual Return for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.** As a smaller relevant body, the Board was subject to a less stringent audit requiring

the approval of an Annual Return, sooner than a full set of accounts. Section 1 (Accounting Statements) and Section 2 (Annual Governance Statement) were presented to the Board for approval.

**Resolved: that Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return (the Accounting Statements and Annual Governance Statement) be approved by the Board.**

**8. URGENT ITEMS**

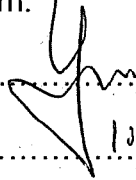
No urgent items were discussed.

**9. DATES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS FOR 2013/14.**

Dates for the 2014 meetings will be scheduled at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.10 am.

Chairman:  .....

Dated:  10/9/13 ..... 2013