

NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held at Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton 9 June 2015 at 10.00 am

MEMBERS Merton: Councillors Philip Jones, Abdul Latif and Geraldine Stanford.

Sutton: Councillors Vincent Galligan and Paul Wingfield.

Wandsworth: Councillors Claire Clay, Sallyann Ephson, Candida Jones, Mike Ryder and Stuart Thom.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Sallyann Ephson and seconded by Councillor Philip Jones that Councillor Candida Jones be elected Chair for the municipal year 2015/16.

It was proposed by Councillor Claire Clay and seconded by Councillor Mike Ryder that Councillor Stuart Thom be elected Chair for the municipal year 2015/16.

A vote was taken and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Candida Jones be elected Chair for the municipal year 2015/16

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Philip Jones, seconded by Councillor Geraldine Stanford and:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Abdul Latif be elected Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2015/16.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR (INCL. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE SUPPORT FROM WANDSWORTH COUNCIL/STAFF MUTUAL)

Paul McCue presented his report, and went through it in detail.

Paul McCue reported that a complaint had been received regarding the cremation of an infant that took place 18 years ago. He explained that in the past it has been common for there to be no remains when a baby or infant is cremated. In 2014, the crematorium introduced the use of a tray in which the coffin is placed, to collect any ashes. He also advised that the new replacement cremators will also increase the likelihood of there being some remains. Clive Andrews confirmed that people are always warned that there may not be any remains.

The Board discussed this issue in depth and noted the need to ensure the bereaved are informed in a sensitive way. Clive Andrews confirmed that all crematorium staff treat all customers appropriately. Board members suggested that funeral directors have a role to play, and Paul McCue confirmed this would be discussed at upcoming meetings with them.

Paul McCue confirmed that a response to the complaint will be sent and if escalated, firstly he will address it and then, if not resolved, the Chair of the Board will need to consider the matter and respond.

Paul McCue pointed the Board to the two items for decision: (1) to confirm their agreement for LB Wandsworth, via Enable staff mutual group, to continue to provide operational support for the North East Surrey Crematorium; and (2) whether or not the Board wish to retain Paul McCue as the surveyor, or to ask LB Wandsworth to appoint another senior office to assume the role, who does not have line management responsibility for Bereavement Services and is outside of the Enable staff mutual group.

At the request of the Chair, Paul McCue and Clive Andrews left the meeting at 11 am so the Board could discuss their preferred approach in full. They were invited to return to the meeting at 11.20 am.

Councillor Candida Jones outlined the decisions made by the Board, but noted that the decision to ask LB Wandsworth to appoint another senior officer as Surveyor was no reflection on the performance of Paul McCue and noted that his input had been very highly regarded.

RESOLVED:

1. That LB Wandsworth, via Enable staff mutual group, will continue to provide operational support for the North East Surrey Crematorium for one year. If contractually possible, the Board will review the arrangement after one year and decide if the support should continue.
2. That LB Wandsworth appoint as Surveyor a senior officer who does not have line management responsibility for Bereavement Services and is outside of the Enable staff mutual group.

8. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

The Treasurer, Jean Stevenson, presented her report and highlighted the requirement for the Board to approve the Annual Return so it can be submitted to the external auditor (BDO) by 30 June 2015.

Councillor Claire Clay asked if the £1.2m surplus in the budget would increase when the new cremators are up and running and the Crematorium can carry out up to 12 cremations per day. Clive Andrews advised that currently a maximum of 8 per day are carried out, but this could possibly increase given the demand by funeral directors.

Councillor Candida Jones asked if the Board could decide to reduce the charge for cremations, and it was advised that the Board set the charges on an annual basis, so a reduction could be considered as part of that process. However, Councillor Geraldine Stanford noted that wider funeral costs can prove challenging for people, rather than the charge for cremation.

RESOLVED:

That the Statement of Accounts and Statement of Governance are approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

9. COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

This report was presented by the Clerk.

Report received.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on 8 September 2015 at 10 am in Sutton Civic Offices.

The meeting ended at 11.45 am

Chair:
Date: