

12 March 2019

NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM BOARD

12 March 2019 at 10.00 am

MEMBERS: Councillor Michael Ryder (Chair), and Councillors Pauline Cowper, Rosemary Birchall, Terry Walsh and Tony Belton

ABSENT Councillor(s) Marsie Skeete, David Simpson, Graeme Henderson, Jean Crosby and Vincent Galligan

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Henderson.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record subject to the date on page 4 being amended from March to June, and signed by the Chair.

30. REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR

Clive Andrews, the Surveyor introduced the report, which provided an update on activities covering the quarter to March 2019 relating to the management agreement between North East Surrey Crematorium Board and Wandsworth Council and the responsibilities carried out by Enable Leisure and Culture. Members attention was drawn to the following points:

Business Level activity shown in Appendix A showed there were 175 cremations in Feb compared to 199 in the same period last year, but still an overall 2% increase compared to this time last year. Taking into account of the figures the Surveyor forecast 1,950 cremations to be reached or perhaps slightly exceeded for the financial year.

Quality Control - One further complaint had been received regarding a problem with a microphone, leading to a conversation being overheard during a service. Following a full investigation, measures taken to prevent this happening again, and a response sent to the complainant, this matter was satisfactorily concluded.

In respect of the action plan Members were updated on the latest position. The Surveyor confirmed Putney Vale do not need abated cremations going forward. Therefore to continue

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to obtain some income the Board were advised that it had been decided to join the CAMEO scheme. A registration fee of £1000 was to be paid to join the scheme. Under the current burden sharing agreement the board generated £24K of income, this has now ended and the budget for next year has been brought to zero, as confirmed by the Treasurer.

Regarding the creation of a new ashes lawn, it was confirmed that a site visit had taken place on 26 Feb 2019. A report will be brought to the June 2019 meeting with a full estimate of costs for the two options to create a new ashes lawn, with the expectation that the work will be started in Summer 2020. It was confirmed that 3 quotations will be obtained.

Members posed questions regarding meetings with funeral directors and also how many requests are received to arrange funerals privately without the services of a funeral director. The Surveyor confirmed meetings with the funeral directors are held biannually. He advised that very few members of the public choose to arrange a funeral without the services of a funeral director.

The Board were advised that a Ground Water Survey had been carried out for Battersea New Cemetery, which included the Garden of Remembrance, to establish any risk from surface level activities. The intention is for the existing drainage system to be regularly checked and maintained with any new proposed schemes, where appropriate, to include a water drainage system.

In debate Members queried the necessity of the appendix regarding the performance of Enable Culture and Leisure being exempt and the Surveyor agreed to consider this further before his next report.

RESOLVED:

That the report as an overview of the Surveyors findings for the management of the crematorium in the past three months (January - March 2019) be noted.

31. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Mark Davies, the Treasurer to the Board presented the report on the performance against the Management Agreement Annual Budget as approved in December 2018. He provided an update to the Board on the latest Interim accounts and forecast for the 2018 / 19 financial year. He also highlighted Appendix A, the management agreement performance. Members were advised the budget was indicating an underspend for the year, so far, and the areas where underspending occurred were highlighted to the board. Members raised queries regarding staff salaries and ground maintenance and the Treasurer responded accordingly.

Members also queried the breakdown of costs for the annual memorial service and Simon Ingyon Executive Director Parks and Leisure, Enable Leisure and Culture confirmed the Board approved the costs in December 2018 and the total figures included set up and provision of furniture and music. The Board were advised that 250 people had attended.

The Treasurer spoke through the interim accounts showing transactions compared to the estimates approved by the board. He drew Members attention to line 22 showing total income received as at end Feb and the revised estimate of numbers of cremations.

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He advised that there is expected to be an operating surplus of £470K at the end of the financial year. Members queried the value of the investment income shown. The Treasurer confirmed the investment income is made up of a 7 day rate of return on balances which are invested on behalf of the Board by Wandsworth Council. Members asked if higher earning longer term investment could be considered in the future.

RESOLVED:

1. The Management Agreement performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 January 2019 attached at Appendix A were noted
2. The Interim Accounts for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 January 2019 attached at appendix B were noted.

32. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Ryder motioned that: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

This was seconded by Councillor Birchall.

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

All Members of the Public and Enable Staff left the room.

33. JOINT REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND THE SURVEYOR ON THE POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF NEW LAND

RESOLVED: That there be a separate exempt minute created in respect of the exempt discussion.

34. ANY URGENT ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on 11 June at 10am at the Crematorium Chapel.

The meeting ended at 11.35 am

Chair:

Date: