

**NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM BOARD**

**Minutes of the Meeting held at Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton  
on 10 March 2015 at 10.00 am**

- MEMBERS (\*absent)** Merton: Councillors Philip Jones, Brian Lewis-Lavender and Geraldine Stanford.
- Sutton: Councillors Vincent Galligan, Tony Shields\* and Paul Wingfield\*.
- Wandsworth: Councillors Claire Clay, Sallyann Ephson\*, Candida Jones, Piers McCausland\* and Mike Ryder\*.
- OFFICERS** Clive Andrews (Bereavement Services Manager – Wandsworth)  
Jean Stevenson (Treasurer)  
Paul McCue (Surveyor)  
Susanne Wicks (Clerk)

**23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies from Councillors Sallyann Ephson, Piers McCausland and Mike Ryder.

**25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**26. CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:**

That Angela Guest be appointed clerk to the Board.

**27. REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR**

Paul McCue introduced his report. He briefly summarised each section of the report, and invited comments and questions.

With regard to business level activity, Councillor Candida Jones asked for further details on the loss of revenue following the 4% fall in activity. Jean Stevenson advised that it may amount to as much as £400 per additional service as the fixed costs are covered by the current activity level. She also noted that there would not have been 12 services per day every day. Clive Andrews expressed confidence that when the cap is removed, activity will return to maximum capacity.

**North East Surrey Crematorium Board  
10 March 2015**

Paul McCue described in further detail the procurement process for the replacement of cremators, and outlined the need to meet the three bidders in order to receive presentations and to give them the opportunity to answer questions. 24 questions have been sent to the three bidders, so they can be answered in advance of, and explored further at the meeting on 24 March. The meeting with the three bidders will cause some slippage to the original timetable, and will require a special meeting of the Board, but this will enable a full tender evaluation to be carried out. In response to questions, Paul McCue confirmed that all three bidders are aware of the date and are on standby pending permission from the Board to proceed as suggested.

Councillor Philip Jones asked for reassurance that adequate checks will be made on each bidder's financial position and resilience. Paul McCue confirmed that initial checks have not raised any cause for concern, but in addition to the tender evaluation, officers will report on issues such as company structure and UK presence. Councillor Philip Jones suggested that a full meeting of the Board be arranged to consider the award of contract, rather than just four members as suggested in the report.

Councillor Candida Jones asked about lessons learned from the last tender process. Paul McCue advised that the consultant involved in the current process has a background in crematoria so has the specific knowledge required.

With regard to the request for additional staffing, Paul McCue explained that an additional staff member will reduce overtime and additional hours costs and ensure there is cover during office hours. He confirmed there is budget available for an extra staff member.

With regard to acquiring land for new cremated remains circles, Paul McCue confirmed that a full report is expected to be available at the next meeting.

Paul McCue referred to the initial draft of a 2015/16 action plan which will be updated for each meeting.

Councillor Candida Jones asked why there was a drop in cremations in April 2014. Officers suggested it could be for a range of reasons but undertook to check if there was any specific reason and report back.

Councillor Philip Jones asked about any possible impact arising from the reorganisation at LB Wandsworth. Paul McCue confirmed that the Board's contract will remain with LB Wandsworth, and undertook to keep them updated.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Board:

1. Agrees the arrangements for deciding on tender acceptance.
2. Agrees that a special meeting of the Board should take place on 15 April 2015 to decide on the award of contract.

**28. REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Jean Stevenson introduced her report. She advised that the budget is largely on track and invited comment and questions.

Councillor Candida Jones asked for further clarification on tradeable mercury abatement credits; Jean Stevenson explained that credits are currently purchased for the crematorium and some sold to LB Wandsworth for use by Putney Vale Crematorium. When the new equipment is installed there will be no need to purchase credits, and sufficient abatement will be produced to continue to sell to LB Wandsworth.

Councillor Claire Clay questioned why the printing budget has increased, given the improved website and increased focus on electronic communication. Clive Andrews advised that people seem to prefer a hard copy brochure, which is also distributed as advertising.

Jean Stevenson pointed the Board to the internal control review, which resulted in a "Qualified Assurance" outcome. She amended paragraph 32 of her report to reflect the outcome. She highlighted the requirement of External Audit for the Board to note their formal appointment of Wandsworth's Internal Audit Section as their internal auditor.

Jean Stevenson drew the Board's attention to the recent letter from the Audit Commission regarding the end of the appointment of BDO LLP at completion of the 2014/15 accounts. Jean Stevenson outlined a range of companies that may be able to undertake this work, and undertook to approach them for information and bring a report back to the Board.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Board confirms the appointment of LB Wandsworth's Internal Audit Section as the internal auditor for North East Surrey Crematorium.

**29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

A special meeting of the Board will take place on 15 April 2015 at 10.30 am.

The next ordinary meeting will take place on 9 June 2015.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am

Chair: .....

Date: .....

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