

NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM BOARD**Report by the Surveyor to the Board – March 2017****1. BUSINESS LEVEL ACTIVITY**

- 1.1 Appendix 1 to this report provides information on cremation numbers for the past five years and for the first eleven months of this financial year. Appendix 2 shows the same information in a graph.

This item is for information.

2. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 2.1 The performance report for Enable Leisure and Culture, contract year 2, quarter 2 (February 2017) is sent under separate cover to the surveyors report. Notably, since opening in 1958, the crematorium reached its 100,000th cremation in January 2017. Random samples for the administration of cremations and exhumations licenses were all found to be accurate and in accordance with crematorium and cemetery law. The new smoke alarms are now installed and working in the main office building and the chapel. The cremators and abatement equipment continue to meet the criteria set out in the crematoriums permit to cremate. The garden of remembrance was found to be in a very good standard of maintenance.

This item is for information.

- 3.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS** All financial matters have been correctly reported and there are no issues needing to be drawn to members' attention.

- 4.0 QUALITY CONTROL ISSUES** One complaint (January 17') was received in the past quarter regarding the arrangements in place at the end of a service for vacating the chapel. The complainant took objection to being ushered from the chapel who, at the time, felt rushed. A letter of reply was sent explaining the role of both the crematorium staff and the Funeral Director at the end of a service and an apology was given for any unintentional stress this may have caused at the time.

This item is for information.

- 5.0 EMPLOYEE MATTERS.** Members are asked to note the following:

- 5.1 Barbara Ward was appointed as Bereavement Services Manager in January 2017. Barbara had previously managed South London Cemetery and Crematorium for Dignity Funerals for the past nine years and brings valuable operational and administrative experience to the crematorium.
- 5.3 Following the resignation of Mark Ferguson from Wandsworth's Design Services, interim arrangements are in place to cover the various technical knowledge required for the ongoing repairs / renewals and capital works projects for the crematorium. The Design Services Head of Service, Hussein El Bahrawy, now has the responsibility of the role and will delegate those duties

as appropriate to his officers until a replacement member of staff is in place. Member's of staff will be introduced to the Board as part of this meeting.

This item is for information.

6.0 CUSTOMER STATISTICS. All statistics have been produced as required.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS.

7.1 In the past quarter, there have been no reported Health and Safety issues at the crematorium or within its grounds.

This item is for information.

8. MUSIC PROVISION AT NORTH EAST SURREY CREMATORIUM

8.1 In September 2015, a number of visits were carried out to Funeral Directors in the local area. The visits form part of the NESC action plan by holding regular focus group meetings with Funeral Directors.

8.2 At the time, representatives from each of the Funeral Directors were asked a number of questions about the development of the services and the future plans for the crematorium. One these were investigations into the introduction of digital internet based music as part of services at the chapel. Based upon their positive experiences of other crematoriums in the area that use this type of system, Funeral Directors were encouraged to know that this was being considered. All of them were in full support of a move toward this type of music provision.

8.3 The digital music system is designed to improve the music facilities at the crematorium, which would continue to work alongside the traditional organ and organist. The intention is to provide the bereaved with an enhanced quality of music and at the same time maintain a traditional form of music provision.

8.4 Currently Randall's Park, South London, Mortlake ,Lambeth and Croydon crematoria now have an internet based music system in place with Kingston and Putney Vale crematorium's continuing to rely upon CD's and iPod to provide music as part of the service. Putney Vale is looking to introduce an internet based music system later this year.

8.5 In addition to the crematorium being able to both meet Funeral Directors expectations and compete with the modern facilities that other crematoria in the area now provide. There are a number of issues that members need to consider with the current method of playing music as part of the service:

- a. A member of staff has to monitor the public address system throughout the entire service, ejecting, replacing and cueing different Cd's or iPod's/MP3's. This is considered to be a poor use of resources. The situation is exasperated when the crematorium is short staffed due to annual leave or sickness.
- b. The crematorium can facilitate up to 12 services each day with staff having to play a number of different CD's and/or operate a range of different iPod's and MP3's during a

service . Consequently, there is a continued risk that an incorrect piece of music will be played.

- c. Staff are often presented with a 'home produced' CD just before the service is to take place, without the opportunity to test the CD on the public address system. This can lead to the CD being incompatible with the crematoriums PA system and not playing during a service.
 - d. There is currently no provision to broadcast a service to another venue via the internet or to record the service. This restricts choice to the bereaved and the opportunity for the crematorium to provide an additional income option.
- 8.6 Members were provided with a demonstration of one of the internet based systems at the March 2016 meeting and as a result, arrangements were made to carry out a procurement exercise to obtain the associated costs for this type of system.
- 8.7 A specification was produced and Enable Leisure and Culture have carried out a procurement exercise with the two known providers, Wesley Music and Vividia Limited (Obitus) The specification included additional options and associated costs for visual tributes to be played on LED screens and the provision of real time live broadcasting with the option to record the service. These options can be considered as part of the tender bid or deferred for decision at a later date based on requests from the public for these particular elements of the service.
- 8.8 At the time of preparing the report, Enable LC had just received the associated costs as a result of the tendering process. The method of evaluating the tender submissions, which includes seeking references relating to both companies, is now in process and will be ready for discussion with members at this meeting.
- 8.9 The Surveyor and officers from Enable Leisure and Culture are on hand to answer questions and Board members are then asked to decide if they wish to proceed with the installation of the system.

This item is for decision.

9. CREMATED REMAINS GRAVE AREAS / ABOVE GROUND NICHES

- 9.1 I am pleased to advise board members, the two new areas within the garden of Remembrance are completed and available to the public. Staff are receiving very favourable comments about the location and its general appearance. Appendices 3 ,4,5 and 6 show a selection of photographs of the new cremated remains grave area.
- 9.2 I am also pleased to report that following the initial assessment of the number of grave spaces originally planned for the area, amendments to the design and placement of the cremated remains graves have resulted in an additional 30 graves being allocated to the area. A total of 120 graves are now allocated. As result, this will prolong the use of the area whilst further arrangements are made for the acquisition of land for new memorials.

10. ACTION PLAN – BUSINESS PLAN

- 10.1 Appendix 7 provides the Board's current 2016/17 action plans, updated in bold to reflect actions taken since the last meeting.

11. REPAIR AND RENEWAL – ROUTINE WORKS

- 11.1 Appendix 8 provides information on the repairs and renewals revenue programme for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

This item is for information.

12. REPAIR AND RENEWAL – CAPITAL WORKS

- 12.1 Appendix 9 provides information on the repairs and renewals capital programme with expenditure requirements forecast through until 2025/26. Major projects for this year are the installation of a new heating system at the crematorium which will include a heat exchanger and the resurfacing of the main driveway. Both projects are planned for this summer.

This item is for information.

14th March 2017

Clive Andrews
Surveyor to the Board