

Report to:	North East Surrey Crematorium Board	Date:	11 September 2018
Report title:	Report of the Surveyor		
Chair of Committee/Lead Member:	Councillor Michael Ryder		
Author(s)/Contact Number(s):	Clive Andrews – Surveyor to the Board, 0208 871 7363		
Open/Exempt:	Open		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update to the board on activities in the quarter to September 2018 relating to the management agreement between North East Surrey Crematorium Board and Wandsworth Council. The day to day management responsibilities are carried out on behalf of the Council by Enable Leisure and Culture.

2. Recommendations

The North East Surrey Cemetery Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the report as an overview of the Surveyors findings for the management of the crematorium in the past three months (July – September 2018).

3. Business Level Activity

- 3.1 Appendix A to this report provides information on cremation numbers for the past five years and for the first four months of this financial year. Appendix B shows the same information in a graph.

This item is for information.

4. Performance Monitoring

- 4.1 The performance report for Enable Leisure and Culture, quarter 4, year 3 (August 2018) is sent under separate cover to the Surveyors report. The Surveyor will provide an overview of the performance report, highlighting updates on the previous quarter and matters of interest.

This item is for information.

5. Financial Matters

- 5.1 All financial matters have been correctly reported and are included in the Treasurers report.



6. Quality Control

- 6.1 Three complaints were received in the last quarter (July – September 2018). The first related to the quality of sound during a service. The system was subsequently checked by a sound engineer and was found to be in good working order. The second complaint relates to the Tree of Life memorial fountain not working and the third regarding the location of two memorial plaques and their placement in the Garden of Remembrance. The Tree of Life and memorial plaque complaints were referred to the Surveyor in accordance with the NESC complaints procedure.
- 6.2 The Surveyor found that substantial repairs had to be carried out to the fountain which took a considerable time to arrange and implement before it was returned to working order.
- 6.3 There was some confusion between staff over the location of one of the two plaques at the time of placement in the gardens. The plaque has now been placed in its required position. Replies were sent by the Surveyor to the complainants and both issues have now been resolved.

This item is for information.

7. Employee Matters

- 7.1 Andrew Hume, the crematorium manager, has now successfully mentored three staff in studies to qualify for the ICCM's Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme. The scheme is nationally recognised within the industry for crematorium staff. The ICCM has recognised Mr Hume's achievement by issuing him an accredited mentoring certificate.
- 7.2 Ryan Barnden has been recruited to the post of crematorium technician. Members are advised that ELC employ a total of ten staff to manage and operate both the crematorium and administrative functions of the crematorium.

This item is for information

8. Customer Statistics

- 8.1 All statistics have been produced as required.

This item is for information

9. Health and Safety

- 9.1 There have been no reportable Health and Safety issues in the past three months at the crematorium or within its grounds.

This item is for information

10. Action Plan

10.1 The Action Plan is reviewed annually. There are no further inclusions or deletions to the current list of items for the next year.

This item is for information

11. Repair and Renewal – Routine Works

11.1 Appendix D provides information on the repairs and renewals programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

This item is for information

12. Capital Works

12.1 Appendix E provides information on the capital programme with expenditure requirements forecast through until 2025/26. The Surveyor will advise members as to the progress with works taking place during 2018/19.

13. The Annual Memorial Service

13.1 The service took place on Sunday 2 July 2018, attended by the Mayor of Wandsworth and the Deputy Mayor of Merton. Approximately 250 members of the public attended the service. The service was addressed by ministers from St Laurence Church supported by a Civil Celebrant. The music was provided by a local scout band and the crematoriums resident organist.

13.2 To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the crematorium, refreshments were provided to all attendees who appreciated the preparations carried out by the staff and their assistance on the day.

This item is for information

14. Establishing A New Ashes Lawn

Summary



- 14.1 In keeping with crematoria throughout the UK, as an alternative to cremated remains being collected from the crematorium by the applicant for the cremation or placed in areas as part of memorial tribute. The crematorium sets aside an area for the placement of the ashes.
- 14.2 The renewal of the original ashes lawn forms part of the 2018/19 capital works programme. The exhaustion of available land within the Garden of Remembrance remains a key factor for the future management of the crematorium. Therefore the continued use of the existing ashes lawn was, at the time, seen as a way to preserve available land.
- 14.3 In accordance with the Boards Scheme of Delegation, I am required to report any projects that will exceed the agreed capital expenditure. Estimates indicate that the elevation of the ashes lawn will exceed the capital budget of £75,000 by a minimum of £25,000.
- 14.4 Following the meeting of the Board in June 2018, members were escorted around the Garden of Remembrance to show the range of memorials offered and further explain the repair / renewals and capital programmes for the coming year.
- 14.5 During the visit to the ashes lawn, members expressed concerns regarding the arrangements to elevate the original ashes lawn by mounding over the area with soil. Taking these comments on board the Surveyor decided to re-examine the proposal and seek to provide an alternative location to the original proposal.
- 14.6 A section of land suitable to establish a new communal ashes lawn has been identified which could provide an alternative to mounding over the original ashes lawn. Based upon the following information, members are asked to consider one of two options. Either to continue with the original proposal and elevate the original ashes lawn, alternatively, create a new communal ashes lawn elsewhere within the Garden of Remembrance. Both options provide the opportunity to install new memorials around the perimeter of the ashes lawn. Members will be advised as to the details of this new type of memorial once the preferred new ashes lawn is completed.

Option 1 – To continue with arrangements to mound over the original ashes lawn Appendix F.

This involves building a retaining wall approximately 1 metre above ground level along the boundary of the lawn to contain the soil. This would also require the installation of a perimeter handrail, ramps and steps in order to establish full disabled access.

Advantages

- The use of the existing lawn would avoid using any other land within the gardens.
- Due to the size of the existing lawn, this would allow further interments for approximately 50 years.
- Since agreement was reached to pursue the existing ashes lawn project, staff have advised a number of mourners of the plan to raise the level of the lawn. To date none have disagreed with the proposal.

Disadvantages

- Contact with the ICCM has confirmed that no other crematorium in the UK have carried out a project of this nature. Therefore the reputational risk to the crematorium remains unknown.
- Due to unforeseen costs relating to additional requirements for disabled access and the need for full planning permission. Revised estimates indicate the costs would now be a minimum of £100,000. (at least £25,000 more than the agreed capital sum)
- A review of the trees in and around the ashes lawn has been carried out by ELC's arboriculture section. A healthy mature Cypress tree, approximately 50 years of age, is within the ashes lawn. Should planning permission be sought to elevate the lawn an objection would be raised not to interfere with the tree. Consequently this would make the project difficult to pursue as the surrounding area could not be disturbed to protect the tree as it forms part of the ashes lawn.
- Disruption to the ashes lawn is considered significant as heavy machinery will be needed for the perimeter excavations and the construction of the retaining perimeter wall.

Option 2 – To create a new ashes lawn elsewhere in the garden Appendix G This involves using a piece of land adjacent to the cloister walkway, originally memorial rose beds. There are no ashes buried in this area and is therefore suitable for a new ashes lawn.

Advantages

- There would be little disturbance to the crematorium grounds.
- The cost to create a new communal ashes lawn would be contained within the allocated capital programme budget figure.
- The size of the area could possibly be extended at a later date by using adjacent memorial rose beds thus extending the capacity to inter remains.

Disadvantages

- Due to the size of the area, in comparison to option 1, estimates show this area would provide approximately 15 years of interments. Considerably less than developing the original ashes lawn.

Conclusion

14.7 Capacity for the interment of ashes in the original lawn has been re assessed and has revealed an area of the lawn as yet unused. As a result and based upon the number of interments carried out each year, there is capacity for a further 5 – 6 years of interments. This means that the



crematorium now has sufficient time to consider preparations to establish a new ashes lawn. These works are envisaged to take place during 2019.

- 14.8 The elevation of the existing ashes lawn (option 1) would provide capacity for the interment of ashes for a further fifty years. However the project is untested by any other crematorium in the UK. Potentially this poses a risk to the crematoriums reputation in terms of distress from the bereaved with major construction works taking place in a particularly sensitive area and the original ashes lawn submerged under a further layer of soil. Costs have also escalated considerably since the project was first agreed. There are also difficulties in preserving the existing tree which is within the lawn. Generally the project is now thought to be particularly challenging with a number of unknown risks attached.
- 14.9 The creation of a new ashes lawn (option 2) will provide land for the interment of ashes for a further 15 years, considerably less capacity than elevating the original ashes lawn. However a new ashes lawn does not represent a reputational risk to the crematorium and will be relatively easy and less costly to implement in comparison to option 1. Furthermore, by establishing a new ashes lawn, there is no requirement for planning permission and minimal adjustments to the lawn for disabled access. Potentially, the lawn could be made larger, at a later date, for additional interments by incorporating other memorial rose beds in the adjacent area.

This item is for decision

15. The Recycling of Metals Scheme

The Royal Marsden, Sutton, is the chosen local charity as a beneficiary from the scheme. A cheque for £5,000 was donated in the last quarter and the Chairman has received a letter of thanks from the charity.

This item is for information

16. Options Considered

There are no other options considered or recommended as part of this report.

17. Impacts and Implications

Financial

The financial implications arising are contained within this report.

18. Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the matters contained within this report.

Other impacts and implications

There are no other impact and implications arising from the matters contained within this report.

19. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	Cremation numbers for the past five years
B	Graph of cremation numbers for the past five years
C	Action Plan
D	Repairs and Renewals – Routine Works
E	Capital Works
F	Photograph of the existing ashes lawn (option1)
G	Photograph of the area proposed to create a new ashes lawn (option 2)

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 11 September 2018

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