



Report to:	North East Surrey Crematorium Board	Date:	12 June 2019
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 June 2019 relating to the management agreement between North East Surrey Crematorium Board (NESC) and Wandsworth Council. The day to day management responsibilities are carried out on behalf of the Council by Enable Leisure and Culture.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The (NESC) is recommended to approve the report as an overview of the Surveyors findings for the management of the crematorium for the past three months (April - June 2019)

3. Background and Issues

3.1 Business Level Activity

Appendix A to this report provides information on cremation numbers for the past five years and to the end of the last financial year. Appendix B shows the same information in a graph.

3.2 Performance Monitoring

The following is a summary of the services provided for the past quarter in respect of the day to day management of the facilities and management of the crematorium by Enable Leisure and Culture under contract with Wandsworth Council:

Exterior - adequate parking, directional signage, notice boards, CCTV, seating and litter receptacles were all in a good state of repair and free of graffiti. The exterior of the buildings including, fencing, gates, roads, pathways, the main drive and the recent improvements to the lighting were found to be in good order. The exception being a proportion of the pathways in the Garden of Remembrance which have a number of potholes. These are scheduled to be re - surfaced this summer as part of the capital scheme.

Interior - the intruder alarm had been tested and serviced in accordance with the schedule of maintenance. The chapel, remembrance building, and crematory is in good order. Similarly, the public toilets were found to be clean and available for use with adequate supplies of consumables.



Maintenance and Equipment - All previous recommendations from the fire risk assessment have been actioned and all electrical appliances tested January 2019. No new equipment had been purchased or disposed of in the past quarter with all appropriate items' security marked. Fire safety equipment has been serviced to schedule. The intruder alarm is due to be upgraded which will include the remembrance building.

Following a recent insurance review of the buildings and contents, the books of remembrance which are not display are now stored in a fire proof cabinet. Quarterly hazard control items and water testing has been carried out and recorded in accordance with the programme. Copies of the emergency plan and COSHH assessments are kept on file.

Legislation - The crematorium and its associated equipment continues to comply with the crematoriums permit to cremate. Monthly emissions report's up to and including April 2019 had been submitted to Merton Councils environmental officer. Information technology samples were taken from cremators 1 and 2 showing satisfactory, gas usage, CO2 emissions and efficiency ratings.

The annual testing of the cremators and flue gas abatement equipment, in accordance with the crematoriums' permit was carried out March 2019. A copy of the subsequent report was received May 2019 and circulated to Merton Environmental Health. The report was seen to be satisfactory with no actions required.

Three random samples of statutory paperwork relating to cremations carried out in the past quarter were found to have been correctly administered. Registration, medical forms and confirmatory certificates were all signed by the medical profession and relevant parties, with the appropriate fees applied. One exhumation of ashes was carried out in the past quarter, with the associated statutory forms correctly applied and signed. All confidential and documents of a sensitive nature were found to be stored in safe and secure facilities.

Operations - The daily olfactory report was shown to be completed on the day of inspection (14.05.19) with previous daily entries showing no cause for concern.

Facilities - There are no planned closures for the forthcoming three months. The website and associated links from the constituent Councils websites are up to date and operational.

General Observations

Land for the placement of new memorials continues to be used up. Recommendations from the forthcoming land survey for both the Garden of Remembrance and the portion of block J will be considered for the future management of memorials as part of the forthcoming land survey.

The Surveyor and ELC management team are available after the meeting for those members who wish to tour the facilities whilst at the crematorium.

3.3 Financial Matters

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

3.4 Quality Control

No complaints have been received in the past quarter.

3.5 Employee matters

Arrangements are in place to recruitment a replacement for one of the bereavement services administrators who recently left the service. It should be noted that office staff have continued to manage the workload whilst one member of the team was on long term sickness.

An additional cremator technician is also advertised to help in the crematory and with associated duties. At the time of writing the report, both posts are currently out to advert.

3.6 Customer Statistics

All statistics have been produced as required.

3.7 Health and Safety

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

3.8 Action Plan

The action plan forms appendix C of this report and the Surveyor will comment on the updates.

3.9 Repair and Renewal – Routine Works and Capital

Appendices D and E provide information on repairs, renewals and capital programmes. The Surveyor will provide updates on the programme for 2019/20.

3.10 The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium (ICCM) Charter for the Bereaved

I am pleased to report that the crematorium has retained its 'gold status' for this year's charter for the bereaved submission. The charter sets standards for the industry and is used as a benchmarking tool to compare services provided by crematoria and cemeteries throughout the UK.

North East Surrey crematorium has been a charter member for the past 14 years and to retain its membership and status a series of pre-set questions are required to be answered relating to the delivery of services provided by the crematorium. These services are explored by means of a questionnaire and range from health and safety and the environment to the crematoriums systems and procedures. Each question is attributed a point's score and crematoria are graded from the total points score to either gold, silver or bronze status.

The overriding aim of the charter is to meet the expectations of the bereaved and wherever possible improve on the systems currently in place. Further information on the charter and the national



rankings of crematoria can be obtained by visiting www.iccm.co.uk under 'guidance' 'charter for the bereaved'

3.11 The Recycling of Metals Scheme

The Board previously approved their chosen charity as a beneficiary from the scheme from each of the three constituent boroughs. This year St Raphael's hospice will be the recipient and a recent cheque of £8,000 has been received for donation to the hospice.

3.12 The Establishment of a New Ashes Lawn

Introduction

Due to the highlighted dwindling available space in the ashes' lawn. Members agreed for £75,000 to be added into the 2018/19 capital budget for provision of a new ashes' lawn and the original plan was to raise the level of the current ashes lawn by constructing a perimeter retaining wall, approximately 1 metre above ground level and infilling with graded soil to create a new elevated lawn. Crematorium staff were informed of the project and discussed the idea with members of the public who already had loved one's ashes interred in the lawn. Those approached welcomed this idea as an opportunity to continue to inter ashes of a loved one in the same location with other family members which would not be able to continue with the lawn at near capacity.

Following the June 2018 Board meeting, I escorted Members of the Board around the gardens to further explain the proposals when concerns were expressed over the project due to the general potential upset this may cause visitors to find their loved one's ashes location covered over with additional soil. Therefore, an alternative location for a new ashes' lawn was identified and both options presented to the Board as part of my September 2018 report. At the time, Members requested a meeting onsite to further examine the two areas and to discuss both options in further detail. I was also asked to determine estimated costs for both options prior to the procurement process. In the interim, the budget was slipped into 2019/20.

At the time, members requested a meeting onsite to examine the two areas and to discuss both options in further detail. Option 1 was discussed and the consequences of raising the level of the current ashes' lawn and the potential adverse attention this may bring to the crematorium.

In addition to seeking planning permission for this option, the proposal was to carry out a consultation exercise by contacting families who, in the past few years, have had loved one's ashes interred in the lawn as to their views on the proposals. The consultation would also be included on the crematorium's website for response.

Signage would be placed around the crematorium grounds, some months before the works commenced, informing people of the proposals including the crematoriums' contact details allowing their views to be expressed.

Concerns over the preservation of the mature tree within the lawn were also discussed which would need to be satisfied as part of the planning application. Suitable protection of the tree would be contained within the specification for the works by the provision of a surface retaining wall to shield the tree from the additional soil.

In addition to full disabled access to the raised lawn a hand rail would be required along the top of the wall. Reference was made to its appearance and the need to be aesthetically pleasing. This

would be addressed by the inclusion of bespoke railings in the specification in keeping with the surroundings.

Option 2, establishing a new ashes area within the gardens was also discussed. This is the only suitable section of land still remaining within the gardens for the placement of the ashes' lawn. The area is adjacent quite close to the main drive and is well used by both pedestrians and vehicles. Consequently, it was thought that the busy thoroughfare may potentially intrude on the seclusion required when interring ashes. This would be addressed in the specification by planting a hedge along the perimeter to maintain privacy and in addition to the avenue of mature trees would screen traffic noise and pedestrian traffic.

Wandsworth Councils Design Services were commissioned to obtain associated costs for both projects which includes the matters discussed at the meeting onsite in February 2019. I can advise that I have received estimated costs which include all associated professional fees:

- Option 1- The raising of the ashes' lawn - £160,000
- Option 2 - To establish a new ashes lawn - £35,000

Both options provide much needed additional provision for the placement of ashes. Option 1 would provide adequate space for another fifty years without using any valuable unused land within the Garden of Remembrance. There are tens of thousands of sets of ashes currently interred in the lawn and this would allow the continued interment of ashes in the same location which would be a comfort to families who want burial with a loved one.

There is currently no income derived from the ashes' lawn, although should this be the preferred option then a suitable memorial plaque scheme could be considered around the periphery of the lawn for commemoration. This would be explored further as part of the forthcoming land survey once the acquisition of the new parcel of land, block J, has been completed.

No other public sector crematorium has carried out a project of this nature which involves major construction works and consequential disruption in a very sensitive area. Adverse impact to the scheme therefore remains unknown. To assess the potential impact of the scheme a full consultation would be carried out to identify public opinion before commencement of the works.

The current estimated costs for this option is in excess of £80,000 of the approved capital budget. The Treasurer comments that although the cost of this option is in excess of the currently approved budget there is sufficient scope within the financial plan to meet this additional cost without significant impact on the distribution of surplus's which will be considered at the December 2019 meeting. Currently the interment of ashes derives no financial benefit but options for future income generation, including a potential memorial scheme around the lawn, will be considered during the future land capacity survey.

Option 2 involves using land which could be used for other purposes and further proposals for its use would form part of the forthcoming land survey. There would be minimal disruption in establishing a new ashes lawn albeit it would only serve the purpose for approximately fifteen years. However, once used it will effectively tie the land up for ever more.

The estimated cost of £35,000 would be well within the agreed capital sum.



Option 1 would not commence until Summer 2020 to allow the completion of the procurement process, the public consultation and for the construction works to be carried out at a suitable time of year. Option 2 in comparison would be a relatively straightforward project and expected completion by Autumn 2019. This would require slipping the budget onto 2020/21 and the approval of an additional £80,000 of capital expenditure.

Members are asked to decide as to which option they wish to progress and the Surveyor, Treasurer and ELC staff will be on hand to answer questions.

3.13 The Annual Memorial Service

This years' service will take place at the crematorium on Sunday 7th July at 3.00 pm. Invitations have been sent to the Mayors and their consorts from the three constituent boroughs. The service will be conducted by Ministers from St Lawrence's church and music provided by the crematorium's regular organist and a local scouts group. Refreshments will be made available after the service.

4 **Issues**

4.1 There are no other issues other than those contained as part of this report.

5 **Options Considered**

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

6. **Impacts and Implications**

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

Financial

6.2 The financial implications arising are contained within this report.

Legal

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

Other Impacts and Implications

6.4 There are no other impacts and implications arising from matters contained within this report.

7. **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

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 20th May 2019

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