

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LLWYDCOED CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee held at Civic Offices, Merthyr Tydfil on Thursday, 12 March 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councillors

A.Jones and A.Chaplin

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councillors

A.S.Fox and J.S.Ward

Officers in Attendance

Mr P. Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection

Mr A. Wilkins –Head of Legal - Democratic and Corporate

Mrs B.Gough – Senior Accountant

Ms J Parish- Administration Manager and Registrar

Mr.C.Pritchard – Assistant Cemetery Manager

29 CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, County Borough Councillor H.Boggis, the Vice-Chairman, County Borough Councillor A.Chaplin, took the Chair for the meeting.

30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors H.Boggis, A.Crimmings and K.Morgan (Rhondda-Cynon-Taf County Borough Council) and County Borough Councillors D.Isaac and K.Moran (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council).

31 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests in matters pertaining to the agenda.

32 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee held on 11 December 2014.

33 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

With the permission of the Chairman, a query was raised as to why members of the Joint Committee had not received any written details of the proposals for the new cremators at the Crematorium and the works involved at the site prior to today's meeting. In response, the Service Director, Public Health & Protection stated that he would be providing an oral update today and would also circulate details of both existing and proposed works at the premises following this meeting.

Reference was also made to the Christmas Carol Service that had been held at the Crematorium on 21 December 2014 and thanks were conveyed to all staff involved in making the event happen. However, attendance at the Service had been quite low and a Committee Member commented that had the Service been better advertised she felt more people would have attended and hoped that the coming Easter Service would be well promoted and advertised to maximise attendance.

34 ORAL UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT CREMATORS

Pursuant to Minute No.23 (Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee, 11 December 2015) the Service Director, Public Health & Protection provided the Committee with an oral update of progress in respect of the works planned for replacing the cremators and abatement equipment at the Llwydcoed Crematorium.

The Service Director reported that a meeting of the Project Steering Board took place earlier this week and he advised Members that a specialist Company had been appointed to provide the cremators and technical equipment. It was also necessary to appoint a construction contractor to undertake all operational works to run in parallel with work being undertaken by the cremator provider and tenders for this work would be invited and accepted in May/June 2015.

Revisions had been necessary to the planning and listed building applications to meet the specific requirements of CADW. The applications had paused but had not been restarted and the programme remains on target assuming consents are granted.

Subject to all consents being received, including that relating to ecology works concerning the bats roosting in the roof, it was anticipated work would commence on site the week commencing 27 July 2015. Once works commenced on site, there would be three consecutive 4 day closures to allow access to the cremators. These closures would be advertised and communicated appropriately and would include weekends to minimise disruption. There would then be a 10 day shut-down of the facility at the end of August to allow refurbishment works to be undertaken to the main chapel. All of these

dates were provisional and might change if there were delays in receiving listed building consent.

It was anticipated the contract would run for 8-9 months and during this period, it was planned to operate the facility 4 days a week and allow the contractors 3 days a week to be on site to undertake necessary works. Although the contractors would remain on site at all times, they would operate away from the main building during Funeral Services to allow for privacy and quiet. Plans were in place to minimise service disruption at the facility.

Members were informed that the projected completion date for the project was the week commencing 25th April 2016.

The Service Director stated he would provide Committee Members with full details of the planned programme of works, in writing, following this meeting. However, he pointed out that the programme was subject to change at any point in time.

The Chairman enquired as to the anticipated financial loss owing to closures during the contract period and was informed that at the moment the budget had been prepared on the basis of the service carrying on as normal but the situation would be monitored during the year owing to the planned closure of the facility. The Service Director, Public Health & Protection anticipated it would be possible to meet the majority of service requirements during the contract period to ensure minimum disruption with the exception of the 2 week shut-down period. At this point in time, the Service Director also anticipated the project being completed to budget provided no unforeseen circumstances arise.

A query was also raised regarding the need to maintain regular communication links with Funeral Directors during the contract period and Members were informed that an initial meeting will be arranged with Funeral Directors and once the work programme starts and closure dates are confirmed, another meeting would take place to provide them with firmer details.

A Member stressed the importance of keeping the Committee informed of developments at the Crematorium as works progress and raised concerns about any changes planned for the small chapel facility. The Member was informed that there were no plans to alter the small chapel but it was planned to improve the facilities it currently provides and promote it more for small funeral services in the future.

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection suggested that in order for Members to have a full understanding of what was planned at the Crematorium that a site meeting be convened with the Project Manager to run through the plans and proposals.

It was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note that the Service Director, Public Health & Protection would circulate details of the planned programme of works at the earliest opportunity.
- (2) That the Joint Committee undertake a site inspection with the Project Manager and relevant Officers to gain a fuller understanding of the planned works and that the Service Director, Public Health & Protection take the necessary action to allow this to happen during May 2015.

REPORTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION MANAGER AND REGISTRAR, BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

35 STATISTICS AND PERFORMANCE

The Administration Manager and Registrar of Bereavement Services presented her report providing Statistics and Performance relating to the operation of the Crematorium since the last meeting and it was **RESOLVED** to note the information.

36 SERVICE FOR PALM SUNDAY

The Administration Manager and Registrar of Bereavement Services informed Members that a Palm Sunday Service would take place at the Crematorium Chapel on 29 March 2015 commencing at 3.00 p.m. The Service would be conducted by Chaplain Eleanor Powell and refreshments would be served following the Service.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the information and in order to assist in raising public awareness of the Palm Sunday Service, posters of the event be circulated to all Committee Members for distribution within their communities.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

37 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR 2014-15 AND DRAFT REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR 2015-16

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer which provided details of the projected final outturn for 2014-15 and the draft Revenue Estimates for 2015-16.

Members were informed that following the last meeting and in accordance with Minute No.25, the Wales Audit Office had been asked to provide details of their costs for auditing the accounts and although an initial response had been received, a further more detailed response was being sought and details thereof would be reported back to the next meeting of the Committee.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** –

(1) To note the 2014-15 budget monitoring position.

(2) To approve the draft Revenue Estimates for 2015-16.

38 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.”

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

39 CREMATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY FEES AND CHARGES 2015-16

The Committee was asked to consider setting the fees and charges for 2015/16 including the annual uplift effective from 1st April 2015.

It was proposed to apply an increase of 6.1% across all fees and charges by the Council's Bereavement Services and Llwydcoed Crematorium and details of the existing and proposed fees were provided.

Members noted that the majority of other Crematoria and Bereavement Services across Wales had yet to set their fees and charges for 2015/16 but it was known that some were considering increases of between 10% and 20% in comparison.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that with effect from 1st April 2015, all bereavement and cremation related fees and charges be increased by 6.1%.

**A.CHAPLIN
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 3.05 p.m.