

# Minutes



## Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

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Date: 16 December 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors Y Forsey, L Lacey, Lane, S Evans and J Taylor

Joanne Hazlewood, Paul Dundon, Anne Jenkins, Neil Barnett and Emily Mayger

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### 1 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Julian Simmonds, Cllr Tudor Thomas, Karl Donovan

### 2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

### 3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were accepted as a true record.

### 4 Review of Budget Performance 2022/23

#### Joanne Hazlewood – Finance Business Partner

The Finance Business Partner introduced the report which stated the financial position for the end of the November period and asked the committee to reflect on any potential impact of the position. The Finance Business Partner noted that the budget will be set at the next meeting and that the updates provided are for information purposes. The Finance Business Partner stated that the forecast presented had been based on actual cremations during the April to November period. The Finance Business Partner stated that with the projections from the December to March the total would be 1,558 as well as extra income that is accounted for from additional sales etc. The Finance Business Partner noted that when the budget was set there was a surplus and so the distribution had been reduced and the figures were revised and now their position is more favourable.

The Finance Business Partner highlighted some of the variances in the budget such as the underspend in employees due to a vacant post, the increase in premises costs over the last 4 years and the issues due to the age of the equipment in the crematorium. The Finance Business Partner added that they had introduced a Repairs and Renewals Fund and that as it would be a new reserve the budget for it should be reviewed when the wider budget is set. The Finance Business Partner added that there was also an underspend in the supplies and services due to a surplus from a previous bulk order but that this would also need to be reviewed when the budget is set.

The Finance Business Partner stated that there was more income than originally budgeted for at the end of November and added that there had been more cremations compared to the same period the year before. The Finance Business Partner stated that they had made some improvements to help remain competitive. The Finance Business Partner noted that they would continue to monitor the position but that they were projecting an increase in cremations compared to the year before meaning an additional £86,000 as well as any extras or additional items that may be purchased. The Finance Business Partner wished to highlight that the tables in this report were done on the financial year and so would not match to the Manager report due to that being based on the January to December year.

The Finance Business Partner summarised that when the budget had been set they had been unaware of the cremation numbers but this has now been revised, the service duration times have been revised from 20 minutes to 40 and the projections had been cautious however income levels had stabilised. The Finance Business Partner added that they had been facing challenges with increasing contract prices costs and this must be considered when setting the budget.

The Finance Business Partner stated that the committee note the financial position for 22/23 and recommended that the committee notes the reduced distribution and that any shortfall can be funded from the reserves if required.

## **5 Facilities Management**

The representative for Newport NORSE K. Donovan sent his apologies and submitted a brief statement which was read out. The statement noted that the tender for the refurbishment of the toilet and waiting area as well as the book of remembrance room would be live that day. K. Donovan also added that due to the usual 2-week Christmas shutdown for most contractors they would allow a return date of noon on Friday 20th January 2023 to allow the evaluation and scoring to take place on Monday 23rd of January. K. Donovan noted that he would attend the budget meeting that had been programmed for the 25<sup>th</sup> January in person to present the results of the tender and to seek permission to award the contract.

## **6 Funeral Director's Report**

No Report Received.

## **7 Manager's Report - to follow**

### **Paul Dundon – Team Manager**

The Team Manager noted that sales had been buoyant and stated that the cost of living crisis had been expected to affect sales however they were not that different to previous years. The Team Manager highlighted that the cremation numbers were also looking favourable but that there would be some variance in the December figures as bookings were still being taken for that period but that the numbers looked as expected. The Team Manager added that the relining of the cremators was ongoing due to delays from contractors. The Team Manager added that Cremator Number 3 should be finished in the next week and so would be recommissioned just before or after Christmas and that the Number 4 cremator would be done in the new year. The Team Manager added that the work had been done with very little disruptive effect.

## **8 Live Event Link**

The meeting terminated at 10.14am