

Bretby Crematorium Joint Committee

C. G. WARD
CLERK

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To: Members of the East Staffordshire Borough Council
and South Derbyshire District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

In pursuance of Clause 20 of the Agreement of 1st April, 1974, the Bretby Crematorium Joint Committee submit the following report to each of the Constituent Authorities:

1. CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor J. T. Ford (South Derbyshire District Council) was appointed Chairman and Councillor T. M. Dawn (East Staffordshire Borough Council) was appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2001/2002 year.

2. SCRUTINY PANEL - REVIEWS

The First Report of the Scrutiny Panel on fees and charges and comparative running costs was approved by the Joint Committee at its Meeting on 28th November 2001. A copy of the Report is attached for each of the Constituent Authorities.

The Second Review will cover the following:

- a) Charter Mark, benchmarking and the Charter for the Bereaved
- b) Service provision, delivery options and customer feedback

3. **STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

Year ending 31st March, 2001 – 30,524 cremations
Year ending 31st March, 2002 – 31,928 cremations

Between the opening of the Crematorium on 15th March, 1975 and 7 June 2002 there have been a total of 32,171 cremations.

The number of entries in the Book of Remembrance have increased over the past twelve months.

4. **VISITS**

During the year the Crematorium has continued to attract visitors.

5. **WOODLAND FUND**

The Woodland Fund continues to attract support. The Fund has helped with the development of the Millennium Wood, path improvements, bulb planting and tree work.

To date, 185 trees have been purchased and planted in the Millennium Wood by members of the public as memorials to deceased relatives and friends.

6. **CREMATORIUM OPEN DAY AND MEMORIAL SERVICE**

The Crematorium Open Day was held on Sunday 9 September, 2001 and once again it was a most successful occasion. Approximately 120 members of the public were shown around the Crematorium.

A separate Memorial Service was held in the Carnarvon Chapel on Sunday 2 December 2001 when approximately 50 members of the public attended.

7. **REVENUE BUDGET AND FEES AND CHARGES**

The Committee has now moved towards a balanced budget. In order to help to achieve this, fees and charges were increased by an average of 3% with effect from 1st April, 2002.

8. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE**

The following Members from the two Constituent Authorities have been appointed to serve on the Joint Committee for the ensuing year:

**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Councillor T. M. Dawn
Councillor J. E. Galbraith
Councillor P. Haynes
Councillor Mrs. E. J. Staples
Councillor Ms. A. White

**SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Councillor W. Dunn
Councillor W. Routledge
Councillor R. W. Southern
Councillor Mrs. H. K. Wheeler

BY ORDER OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

ANNEXE 'B'

THE BRETBY CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Bretby Crematorium Scrutiny Panel held in the Blantyre Room at the Town Hall, Burton upon Trent on Wednesday 19 June 2002.

PRESENT

for East Staffordshire Borough Council

Councillor Ms A White
Councillor P Haynes
Councillor Mrs E J Staples

for South Derbyshire District Council

Councillor W Dunn
Councillor W Routledge

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J E Galbraith and R W Southern

Also Present

Councillor T M Dawn
Councillor Mrs H K Wheeler
Mr. P. G. Davies (Clerk to the Scrutiny Panel)
Mr. N. French (Senior Crematorium Officer)
Ms R McGoldrick – South Derbyshire District Council

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved:

That Councillor Ms A White be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved:

That Councillor W Dunn be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989 –
MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Clerk advised that Councillor W Routledge had replaced Councillor Mrs H K Wheeler as a member of the Scrutiny Panel.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Panel held on 10 April 2002 were approved and signed as a correct record.

SECOND SCRUTINY PANEL REVIEW

(a) Staff Consultation Summary

The Scrutiny Panel noted the contents of a report prepared following the Staff Consultation exercise. Councillor Mrs H K Wheeler in introducing the report referred to the very positive feedback she had received from staff at the Crematorium.

The Senior Crematorium Officer was preparing a report including costings in respect of further staff training and he would present this to the next meeting. He would also investigate the practicalities of providing First Aid training for all staff at the Crematorium.

(b) Visit to Telford Crematorium

Members concurred that the visit to Telford had been successful as it provided an opportunity to compare the facilities in a private Crematorium with those available at Bretby.

The Senior Crematorium Officer had written to the Manager at Telford requesting her to complete a questionnaire on benchmarking. He hoped to be in a position to report her response to the next Meeting.

The Senior Crematorium Officer would also report on progress towards achieving the Charter Mark at Bretby.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

That the next Meeting be held on 31 July at 3.00pm at the offices of South Derbyshire District Council.

Chairman.

Report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel

Visit to Telford Crematorium

On Tuesday 21 May 2002 members of the Scrutiny Panel visited Telford Crematorium. Telford is a privately owned facility that opened in January 2000. The Panel wished to compare the service provision at Bretby with a privately owned crematorium to determine whether Bretby Crematorium provides a 'Best Value' service.

Telford has one chapel with seating for 150 mourners. The chapel is equipped with a full sound system (for CDs and tapes) and a traditional organ is also available.

At present, there is only one cremator; there is, however, space for a second to be fitted when the need arises. The cremator room is also equipped with an automatic charging bier to ensure that coffins can safely be charged into the cremator by a single operator.

The Gardens of Rest cover an area of approximately 15 acres and, although they are not fully established, have been laid out as a natural woodland site that will be sympathetic to the surrounding environment. The grounds are currently maintained by an outside contractor.

The Crematorium offers various types of memorial ranging from the Book of Remembrance to trees (on a 10 year lease), to plaques and Cremated Remains plots.

There are two office staff (including the manager), one chapel attendant and one cremator operator. The Crematorium is carrying out approximately 800 cremations p.a. but expects that figure to increase. This will necessitate the recruitment of additional staff.

Summary and Conclusion

The Scrutiny Panel were impressed with the high standards set by Telford Crematorium and by the dedication and commitment of the manager and her staff. The private financing of the build had clearly benefited the local authorities in the area by the provision of a crematorium that has been awarded for the quality of its architecture. It is the aim of the staff to reflect that quality in their service delivery.

The Panel are, however, of the opinion that the main benefit was in the financing of the build itself and that the standards of day-to-day service delivery in privately operated crematoria do not exceed the high standards set at Bretby.

Service Provision

Bretby Crematorium Joint Committee may recommend to the constituent authorities (ESBC and SDDC) one of the following options regarding the provision of a cremation service:

- To continue its present policy whereby the Crematorium is operated on a balanced budget or a budget with surplus income that is placed in reserves to fund building maintenance and further improvements to the service.
- To enter a partnership for the funding and operation of the service.
- To place the Crematorium as a going concern on the market, inviting offers from the private sector.

The Scrutiny Panel, having visited Loughborough and Telford crematoria (both of which are privately operated) recommend that the present policy be continued. The Panel is aware, however, that legislation relating to crematoria emissions may require significant additional expenditure in the future and therefore also recommends that service provision be reviewed in that eventuality.

Charter for the Bereaved: Best Value Assessment

The Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration provide a detailed Best Value assessment document as a benchmarking aid for crematoria. Bretby's results will be circulated at the meeting with areas for improvement being highlighted.

Training

The options available for implementing staff suggestions for further training are being investigated and a training programme will be reported to the Panel at a later date.

