

Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee



Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Phone 01935 382424
E-mail Town.Clerk@yeovil.gov.uk

Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee

Wednesday 8th March 2023

6:00pm

Town House, 19 Union Street, YEOVIL

Amanda Card
Clerk to the Committee
1st March 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Card', written over a horizontal line.

This information is also available on our website: www.yeovil.gov.uk

Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee

Members of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee are summoned to attend:

Vyvyenne Burt Yeovil Without Parish Council

Nicola Clark South Somerset District Council

Graham Oakes South Somerset District Council

Ashley Richards Yeovil Town Council

Jeny Snell Yeovil Town Council

John Snell Yeovil Without Parish Council

Rob Stickland South Somerset District Council

Liam Watts Yeovil Town Council

Clive Wakely (Funeral Directors' Representative - co-opted non-voting)

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- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Race
Disability	Religion or Belief
Gender Reassignment	Sex
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity	

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A G E N D A

Public Comment (at the Chair's discretion up to 15 minutes)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

3. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th October 2022 attached at pages 2 to 5.

4. **CREMATORIUM UPDATE**

To consider the report of the Bereavement Specialist at South Somerset District Council as attached at pages 6 to 9.

5. **YEOVIL CEMETERY UPDATE**

To consider the report from the Operational Section Lead at the Cemetery attached at pages 10 to 11.

6. **IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW**

To consider the verbal report from the Lead Specialist – Finance at South Somerset District Council concerning the impact of Somerset Council on this Committee.

7. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE**

To consider the membership of this Committee, reviewing the Terms of Reference as attached at pages 12 to 13.

8. **FORWARD PLAN**

To approve the forward plan as attached at page 14.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Public Comment (at the Chair's discretion up to 15 minutes)

Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee



Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 12th October 2022 at 6:00pm at Yeovil Crematorium, Bunford Lane, Yeovil.

Present:

Vyvyenne Burt Yeovil Without Parish Council
Nicola Clark South Somerset District Council
Ashley Richards Yeovil Town Council
Rob Stickland South Somerset District Council

In Attendance:

Amanda Card Yeovil Town Council Clerk/Clerk to the Committee
Glenn Ford Operational Section Lead – Cemetery
Paul Matravers Lead Specialist - Finance (Deputy S151 Officer) – South Somerset District Council
John Ranger Specialist Bereavement Services – South Somerset District Council

The Committee were given a tour of the Crematorium before the meeting commenced.

Public Comment

6:25pm - the meeting commenced.

(1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Graham Oakes and Liam Watts.

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies

(2) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this time.

Councillor	Reason	Interest
Cllr N Clark	Member of: Somerset County Council South Somerset District Council	Personal
Cllr R Stickland	Member of: South Somerset District Council Yeovil Town Council Yeovil Without Parish Council	Personal
Cllr A Richards	Member of: Yeovil Town Council	Personal
Cllr V Burt	Member of: Yeovil Without Parish Council	Personal

(3) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was highlighted that the word “chairman” should be “chair” and Cllr N Clark should not have an ‘e’ on the end. (2) Election of Vice Chair should read that Cllr N Clark be elected to serve as the Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on 13th July 2022 with the above-mentioned amendments be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

(4) AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING 2020/21 EXTERNAL AUDIT

The External Auditor has highlighted 2 issues:

- There is not an approved signed copy of the 2019/20 accounts.
- There was an omission of in the 2020/21 original report submitted to the committee of expenses relating to ‘Medical References’ within the figures of the Cemetery Outturn.

RESOLVED: (1) to approve and sign the 2019/20 accounts; (2) that the Clerk to the Committee scan the signed copy and forward to the South Somerset District Council.

(5) CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 (MONTHS 1 -6)

The Committee considered the Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 for Months 1 to 6 from the Finance Specialist – South Somerset District Council which was introduced by the Lead Specialist - Finance (Deputy S151 Officer) – South Somerset District Council.

He highlighted that staffing costs for both the Cemetery and Crematorium were underspent. This was due to the Cemetery not using agency staff and that no overtime had been paid, and for the Crematorium, due to current vacancies and also no overtime being paid.

The income for the Crematorium looked to be underbudget however this is a timing difference due to invoices being raised in October for service relating to September.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 for months 1 – 6; and (2) to agree to the appointing of Darkin Miller Limited to carry out the external examination for 2022/23.

(6) CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24

The Committee considered the report from the Finance Specialist regarding the Draft Budget for 2023/24.

RESOLVED: to approve and recommend to Yeovil Town Council, Yeovil Without Parish Council and South Somerset District Council as appropriate: (a) the Cemetery and Crematorium draft Budgets; (b) the allocation of the draft cemetery deficit (£96,938) for inclusion in the Parish Precepts when setting the 2022/23 Council Tax (£73,638 Yeovil Town Council and £22,760 Yeovil Without Parish Council); (c) the proposed fee increases for the cemetery and the crematorium; (d) the Cemetery and Crematorium Service Level Agreement and charges for 2022/23; and (e) to note the Reserve Balances.

(7) FEES AND CHARGES MID-YEAR REVIEW 2022/23

The Committee considered the report from the Finance Specialist regarding the proposed changes to the Crematorium Fees and Charges for 2022/23. At the previous meeting of this Committee it had already been agreed to recommend the respective Councils (Yeovil Without Parish Council and South Somerset District Council) that the prices for a cremation be increased by £50 and that future changes in prices will follow the market. This has since been agreed at the respective Councils. This means that a standard service will now increase to £875.

The report also proposed increasing the number of morning drop off services from two to four daily slots which would result in a discounted service of £450. The Committee said they would be interested in the take up of that service.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the amended Standard Service price of £875; (2) to note the Drop of Service frequency and price of £450; and (3) to include in future Crematorium Update reports the uptake for the “Drop Off Service”.

(8) CREMATORIUM UPDATE

The Chair thanked the Bereavement Specialist for the Tour of the Crematorium prior to the meeting.

The Bereavement Specialist at South Somerset District Council presented his report, giving a comparison of the gas used for cremating which had reduced due to continuously

developing best practice. The number of cremations had generally increased each month with the exception of June and this was due to the reduction of operating days which had resulted from the new cremators being fitted.

The Committee noted the retirement of a member of staff and requested that thanks was minuted for the commitment of that member of staff.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

(9) CEMETERY UPDATE

The Chair thanked the Operational Section Lead Cemetery for the Tour of the Cemetery that he led on 28th September 2022.

The Operational Section Lead Cemetery introduced the report to the Committee. He informed the Committee that the Common Grave Programme was on schedule. It is estimated that the Cemetery will be full to new burials by 2025. There would be a 50-60 year running time of the Cemetery due to pre-purchases, re-opening and the laying of ashes.

The Clerk to the Committee updated the Committee that she had contacted Somerset County Council to enquire whether they had any land which would be suitable. She had not heard back yet. Cllr N Clark stated that she would also contact Somerset County Council.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that both the Clerk to the Committee and Cllr N Clark contact Somerset County Council to see if there was any suitable land; and (3) that Land Availability be a standing item on the agenda going forward.

(10) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Clerk to the Committee proposed the following dates: 11th January 2023; 12th April 2023; 12th July 2023; and 11th October 2023 at 6pm.

It was suggested that the April meeting be brought forward to March since the Unitary Council would have to appoint representatives to the Cemetery and Crematorium Committee from April; and it is unlikely that this would be done as a priority.

RESOLVED: that future meetings will be held 11th January 2023; 8th March 2023; 12th July 2023; and 11th October 2023 at 6pm.

7:02pm – the meeting closed.

Signed: (Chair)

Date:

Crematorium Update Report

Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee

Compiled by; John Ranger

Completed; 28/02/23

Technology

The Cremators are now running as fully abated. The project Contractors FT are still dealing with a few snagging problems and the project will be signed off very shortly after the New Year. Works will continue on the cosmetic finishes within the Crematory, into the New Year.

Now we are fully abated, we will no longer have to pay a surcharge of £55 per Cremation to Cameo. Between 01.01.21 and 31.12.21 we were eligible to pay Cameo fees on 858 of our Cremations at a cost of £47,190. From January this year the surcharge is due to rise to £59, which would have seen the Crematorium pay £50,622 in fees for the year 2023.

For the year 2022, we will need to pay some surcharge on our Cremations prior to August. After this point we were running with our new abatement system. It is likely that we will also see a small return from the Cameo fund, to which all unabated Crematoria pay into and is subsequently divided between those sites which have abatement in place. Although we no longer must pay Cameo fees, there are still additional costs attached to the daily use and maintenance of the abatement system. Taking all these additional costs into account against previous Cameo charges, we find ourselves with an annual saving in the region of 60%, which does not include any returns we may receive from the Cameo fund.

Interments

After Easter 2023 we are no longer able to inter into the Memorial Garden due to the lack of space and unsuitability of existing ground. It is imperative that we do not recreate the excessive responsibilities and financial commitments of the existing Memorial Ground. A new site for interring has been identified, and based on current figures, would allow us 15/20 years of interments before becoming full. This is roughly the lifespan of our new Cremators. The position of the land was chosen to allow a greater level of choice for decision makers in 15/20 years' time.

The new interment land would have no Mementos, ornaments or flowers laid upon the ground, although there would be provision made for flowers around the site. The land will be kept as a meadow until full or the 20-year lease has expired, after which, the meadow may be planted to become a protected wooded area, which would guarantee a green space for both the community and wildlife in the future. Subject to the decisions made after 15/20 years, the lease on the land may possibly be extended.

This provision will not suit all, and I would ask to remove the inclusion of an interment fee from the current Cremation fee. I propose, Interments to be charged independently of the Cremation charge. This does not mean we have to adjust the cost of any of our services. Utility costs are predicted to rise by 6% in January 2023 and volatility surrounds further predictions for April's 2023 price review. By agreeing to remove the inclusion of an interment from the Cremation fee, it would allow us to absorb these

predicted price increases. The predicted January utility rises will see a combined annual increase on Cremator Gas, heating and electric of approximately £6,845. Additionally, the removal of an interment from the Cremation fee would also protect us from having to apply for any further increases to our pricing on the agreed 2% rise from April 2023.

We currently provide on average 300 interments a year. I would propose a fee of £29 for an interment at the Crematorium.

£50 Price rise in November 2022	6.06%
£29 Removal of interment charge from Cremation Charge	3.31%
Annual Rise	2%
Total Percentage increase 23/24	11.37%

As an alternative to an interment , we are offering a Sanctum Garden. The garden holds 72 Sanctums, which can each hold 4 sets of ashes. These will be provided on a leasehold agreement. In addition to this we are also offering Atlas pillars within the infinity garden. Each pillar holds 72 granite plaques, which may be inscribed. These will also be sold on a leasehold agreement.

Gas Usage

Month	Number of Cremations	2021 Gas consumption	2022 Gas consumption	Percentage Difference
July	+12.62%	97731	82720	15.35%
August	1.61%	98597	61865	37.25%
September	+11.85%	96393	75727	21.43%
October	+10.93%	100375	71846	28.42%
November	24%	102259	58135	43.14%
December	14%	97752.07	59990	62.94%
January	8.76%	101116.37	59958	68.64%

The % number of Cremations is a comparison between the years 2021/22 and 2022/23.

On average for the last 7 months, we have managed to reduce our gas consumption for Cremating by an average of 39.59 % per month. This has been due to adopting best practice techniques and the installation of the new abatement system.

Cremation Figures 2022

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
-8%	-12%	-17.00%	+9%	+1%	-22%
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
+13.00%	-1.61%	+12.00%	+11.00%	-24%	-14%

The Cremation Figures 2022 are in comparison with the Cremation Figures of 2021

January 2021 – **16.5%** had tested positive to Covid within 28 days prior to death. In comparison during February 2022 **6.2%** had tested positive to Covid 19 within 28 days of death.

February 2021 – **20.45%** had tested positive to Covid within 28 days prior to death. In comparison during February 2022 **5.16%** had tested positive to Covid 19 within 28 days of death.

March 2021 – **10.22%** had tested positive to Covid within 28 days prior to death. In comparison during February 2022 **3.16%** had tested positive to Covid 19 within 28 days of death. Reduced to 1 Cremator with no Bariatric Capacity.

June 2022 – Compared to the years 2020 and 2021 which had 22 Operational days, June 2022 had 17 operational days. This was due to the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations and a site closure for the Cremator project. Despite this we find June 2022 **4%** above the 3-year average.

November 2022 – a quiet month compared to November 2021, and this can be attributed to excessive covid numbers during 2021. 2022 figures are **2%** above the 2020 figure.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
-18%	-1%	-7%	-14%	-7%	-13%
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
+1%	+30%	+17%	+16%	+2%	-4%

The Cremation Figures 2022 are in comparison with the Cremation Figures of 2020

Lead Officer : Glenn Ford – Operational Section Lead Cemetery
James Divall - Income and Opportunities Manager

Contact details: glenn.ford@southsomerset.gov.uk 01935 423742
james.divall@southsomerset.gov.uk 01935 462261

Purpose of the report

To update and inform the Committee on the performance of the Cemetery team March 2023.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the report.

Report

The major focus of the service so far for this period are listed below.

Routine grave digging and ground maintenance.

Common grave programme.

The team has continued to follow the work programme and remains on schedule.

Since the January of 2023, we have carried out the following burial service.

MONTH	NEW GRAVES	RE-OPEN	ASHES	CHILD
JANUARY	1	2	3	0
FEBUARY	1	0	3	0
MARCH				

Fiveways county land

This site is now not being considered for burial.

Covid 19

The cemetery does still offer masks and hand sanitisers for those who wish to use them when a chapel service takes place. At this time we are operating a normal service with the public and undertakers following government guide lines when required.

Common grave programme

This is the final update on the common grave burial plot situation at Yeovil Cemetery, at this present time we have available ninety burial plots. We will have dug and checked a total of one hundred and forty two plots for usage bringing to a close the three year programme.

The common grave programme will be finished by the middle March the plots dug and depth checked and added to the total available above, the burial plots that we have remaining are single this would mean one burial into the plot then ashes to follow, or the alternative of a side by side burial for those requiring this service.

As of the end of February 2023 we have used fifty two common grave plots seventeen double and thirty five single including six set aside for side by side burial. The first common grave was used in May 2020. This gives a usage of around twenty plots a year at this time. The availability of common graves should be around the three to four year period this means that availability will not be in place from the end of 2025. This time period is service requirement lead so could vary to the projected time line.

This programme will be finished by March 2023.

Hedge management programme

The cemetery hedge that runs along the Fiveways boundary has had work carried out on it over this winter and depending on the usage of the fiveways site that is for sale the hedge will be cut accordingly.

Health and safety

No incidents to report at the cemetery.

What's coming next

Undertake the 2023/24 work programmes.

Glenn Ford

Operational Section Lead Cemetery

Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee



Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee has been appointed to consider the operations of the Yeovil Crematorium and Yeovil Cemetery and make recommendations to the appropriate Membership Authorities. Although a non-decision-making body, it may operate and make decisions within the budgets approved by the Membership Authorities.

Membership

The Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee will comprise:

- 3 x Councillors South Somerset District Council
- 3 x Councillors Yeovil Town Council
- 2 x Councillors Yeovil Without Parish Council
- 1 x Funeral Directors' Representative (co-opted non-voting)
- 1 x Clergy Representative (co-opted non-voting)

Officers

- Specialist – Bereavement Services, South Somerset District Council
- Specialist – Finance, South Somerset District Council
- Town Clerk – Yeovil Town Council
- Clerk – Yeovil Without Parish Council

Roles and Responsibilities

- To receive updates regarding Yeovil Crematorium
- To receive updates regarding Yeovil Cemetery
- To regularly receive budget monitoring reports for both Yeovil Crematorium and Yeovil Cemetery

- To receive the Outturn Position of both Yeovil Crematorium and Yeovil Cemetery
- To receive the Statement of Accounts for both Yeovil Crematorium and Yeovil Cemetery
- Consultees for operational decisions
- To recommend to South Somerset District Council, Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council as appropriate the draft budget (October meeting) and final budget (January meeting) for the following year for both Yeovil Crematorium and Yeovil Cemetery
- To recommend to South Somerset District Council, Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council as appropriate support or non-support for decisions for both financial and non-financial matters for both Yeovil Crematorium and Yeovil Cemetery.

Meetings

- There will be four meetings per year – January, April, July, October (however, it is likely that the April meeting will be cancelled in an election year)
- All meetings will be chaired by the Chairperson who will be elected each July.
- The Clerk to the Committee will be the Town Clerk of Yeovil Town Council.

FORWARD PLAN

Date	Item
Wednesday 12 th July 2023 6pm	Tour of Yeovil Crematorium Outturn Report 2022/23 Financial Statements 2022/23 Cemetery Update Crematorium Update
Wednesday 11 th October 2023 6pm	Budget Monitoring 2023/24 Month 1 – 6 Draft Budget 2024/25 Cemetery Update Crematorium Update
Wednesday 10 th January 2024 6pm	Budget 2024/25 Cemetery Update Crematorium Update Dates of Future Meetings