

LLWYDCOED CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

13TH JULY 2020

REPORT OF THE BEREAVEMENT SERVICES MANAGER

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of the Report is to bring Member's up to date and in particular actions and events during the pandemic.
- 1.2. The following actions were taken in order to mitigate as much as possible the transmission of the Covid-19 virus:
 - Chapels – The smaller chapel were closed to the public immediately to create a storage area for additional stock. Cushions and hymn books were immediately removed from the main chapel. The cleaning of the chapel was increased so that all surfaces were cleaned between each service. This progressed to removing pews from Capel Mair, spacing the remaining pews so as to encourage correct social distancing. 2m reminder stickers were placed on the pews at appropriate, spaced, measured areas throughout the area, from entry courtyard through the chapel and into the exit courtyard. Hand sanitisers stations were placed at the entry and exit of the chapel.
 - Waiting room and toilets – Seating was removed and stored, in an attempt to reduce risk but also encourage families to stay in their cars prior to a cortege arriving at the chapel. Toilets have continued to be in use throughout this period. Appropriate corporate signage is placed throughout these areas. The toilets and waiting rooms are cleaned after every service paying special attention to door handles, taps, flushes and push buttons.
 - Attendance at services – Initially chapel attendance was reduced to 10 mourners. However, this has since been increased to 15 mourners, plus Funeral Director, Minister/officiant.
 - Office – The office closed to the public and locked its doors with contact and queries encouraged via telephone or email. The nature of the office

in particular the reception, has made it incredibly difficult to allow this to change while ensuring the safety of our staff, who are a very small team. This is working very well and all our statutory paperwork is now received electronically, so there is very little interaction with Funeral Directors. Also the prospect of dealing with paperwork possibly having been contaminated has been removed due to receiving it electronically.

- Staff – All staff have been kept aware of requirements under the new guidelines and have dealt with the extra burden and uncertainty incredibly well. Measures have been put into place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all our staff. Rotas have been set up to ensure that no staff members work longer than their 37 hours even at our busiest times. In order to deal with the figures that were expected at the beginning of the pandemic, we decided to train 2 extra members of staff in the operation of our cremators. This training is ongoing and will prove very useful to the service area going forward.
- Planning and figures – in order to prepare for the unknown possible surge of service demand, a decision was made throughout Bereavement Services to suspend all family attending of cremated remains at both crematoria and RCT cemeteries. This decision was made due to the increased workload of the service and to keep staff and members of the public as safe as possible. Due to the falling number of cremations and burials we have now re-instated this service. During the height of the pandemic, two additional cremation time slots were added to the diary, 16:30 and 17:15. This gave potential to undertake 60 cremations per week if required. This number was achieved on many occasions.
- Below is a table providing the increased cremation numbers due to Covid-19:

Month	Recorded Covid-19 deaths
April	41
May	64
June	14
Total	119

- Below is a table providing the number of cremations at Llwydcoed during April, May and June in each of the last 4 years

April-June 2017	339
April –June 2018	394
April-June 2019	366
April-June 2020	555

Across the three years 2017-2019 we have averaged 28 cremations per week at Llwydcoed. During the first half of 2020 we have averaged 38 cremations per week.

Maintenance and grounds

- Grass cutting and hedges – the cutting of grass on site began early this year and our staff have continued with this throughout the pandemic. Hedges have all had their early cut and will have an extra cut at the end of the season.
- Spraying and weeding – Pathways and edges have all been sprayed throughout the site.
- Rose garden – The rose gardens are continually weeded throughout the growing season, with the plants being dead headed regularly. The beds have all been fed with organic matter prior to the growing season.
- Walls and stone paths – The repointing and repair of wall particularly around the car parks continues as does the re-laying of paving slabs as necessary.
- Drainage – the drainage around the outside of the Cedar Lawn and West Lawn along with the new paths have been laid are working well. However, due to the nature of the long rows of burial plots improvements can be made in particular to the right hand side of Cedar Lawn. In the coming weeks we will be spiking the turf to a depth of 3-4” across all of the burial plots. When this is done we will be spreading sand and sweeping in into the turf. This process will need to be completed annually to help raise certain areas of the plots and to change the subsoil, providing firmer conditions in our wettest of winters.

Unfortunately, due to the problems we have inherited, there is no easy fix, although works to this point have improved the area greatly.

However, there are more works to be done.

- Baby and Infant Memorial Garden – Extra planting is required in the garden, we have received a quotation in the sum of £987.00 and this will be completed as soon as possible.
- Painting exterior of Main Building and Garage Block – The paint quality of the exterior of the main building and garage block has deteriorated very quickly in the last couple of months and requires attention. We have received quotations for the work with detailed plans to prepare the walled areas properly before painting as this doesn't appear to have been done previously. The quotations received are as follows:

Sections	Low pressure sandblasting and clean up	Materials and labour at weekends and evenings
North Facing lower walls	£4,000	£10,500
East facing lower walls	£4,500	£11,500
South facing lower walls	£3,500	£12,500
West facing lower walls	£1,500	£7,500
Garage block	£4,000	£10,000

This equates to a total cost of £69,000. All works are priced to take place in the evenings or at weekends so as not to disrupt service schedules.

This plan excludes work on the upper rear portion of the building and the stack which we would suggest is looked at in the next financial year. Moving forward it is proposed that having a section looked at each year although having the work undertaken properly will reduce future costs.

1.3. RECOMMENDATION:

That members note the report and approve the quotation for painting of the outbuildings.

- Meeting Room/caretakers house

We are pleased to advise that we are expecting to take back this building following completion of the works on Tuesday 7th July 2020, when it is anticipated that all works will be completed.

2. Bereavement Services Officer

- 2.1. Since last summer we have experienced various absence issues with administration staff at Llwydcoed Crematorium for varying reasons, resulting in a continual shortage of administration staff at the facility.
- 2.2. Due to this it was essential to engage a member of staff via a Recruitment Agency to assist. Due to the pandemic, it was felt prudent to ask the agency staff member to remain with the service whilst the surge in service demand was met. During this period all salary costs were reclaimable from Welsh Government under the Covid-19 bill. However, this is unlikely to remain the case with cremation figures dropping consistently at the moment.
- 2.3. The staff member remained with the service throughout the period of increased workload, to assist with meeting the extra burden placed on the service area.
- 2.4. This member of staff is now a fully trained member of the administration team and has been an enormous help in assisting during the increase in workload.
- 2.5. As we are unsure if there may be a resurgence of the virus during the forthcoming autumn/winter months, the Committee are asked to consider retaining this staff member for a further period as a contingency measure, in the sad event that we do experience a resurgence of the virus during the forthcoming autumn/winter months.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the agency staff member be retained as a contingency measure, in the event of a resurgence of the virus during the autumn/winter months, as this is already an extremely busy period of the year for the service under normal circumstances. This staff member will also assist in the event of staff requiring to self-isolating and or taking leave.

3. Statistics (Appendix A)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the statistical report be noted.

Appendix A

Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee

Statistics and Performance Report of the Bereavement Services Manager

Cremations	
1970-2015	50038
2016	1258
2017	1480
2018	1527
2019	1458
Jan – March 2020	444
April 2020	196
May 2020	213
June 2020	146
Total to date	56760
Year to 31 March 2021	
Adults	553
Children	2
Stillbirths	0
NVF's	23
Body organs	0
Scattered	12
Interred	35
Released	508
Applications for memorials	
Book of Remembrance	3
Memorial Cards	0
Plaques on Plots	20
Plaques in Garden	0
Rose Bushes	8
Memorial Leaves	2

RECOMMENDATION:
To note the report

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