

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Crematorium Annual Update
Committee : Services Committee
Date : 8 February 2021
Author : Neil Lucas, Crematorium & Cemeteries Manager

1. Report Summary:

1.1. This report gives general details on the Crematorium operation, details of the users and cold storage arrangements.

2. General Update:

2.1. The table below shows the adult cremation figures for the past three financial years.

Financial Year	Cremations
2018/2019	1,458
2019/2020	1,303
2020/2021	1,385 (Estimated)

2.2. For information the table¹ below shows the number of registered deaths over the last five years. The number of cremations that SCC can conduct is linked to the number of deaths.

Year	No of Deaths Registered in England and Wales	Change against previous year	No of Deaths Registered in Wiltshire*	No of Deaths Registered In Salisbury	Change against previous year*
2020	Info Not Yet Available	-	4,353	*	-
2019	530,841	2.0% decrease	3,678	1,563	2.7% decrease
2018	541,589	1.6% increase	3,781	1,640	0.6% decrease
2017	533,253	1.6% increase	3,793	1,723	4.9% increase
2016	525,048	0.9% decrease	3,612	1,592	1.6% decrease
2015	529,655	5.6% increase	3,780	1,623	11.7% increase

*Since March 2020 Registrations from Salisbury were mainly done through the Chippenham and Trowbridge offices due to COVID restrictions.

- 2.3. The Council must strive to be the best local crematorium in order to conduct the most cremations possible.
- 2.4. The new crematoria operating at Romsey and Andover, Hampshire is affecting us with a reduction of up to approximately 15% of our cremations and this is happening throughout the country. Webpages and printed information, our 'advertising' are constantly being reviewed and kept up to date. We also continue to give tours to users and the public where practicable due to the current restrictions in staff areas.
- 2.5. Service improvements continue with high maintenance standards in the Garden of Remembrance, Webcasting facilities are now in place in the chapel and are being well received. A Tribute Screen is due to be installed in the chapel in the very near future and ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the crematorium building is overseen by the Crematorium & Cemeteries Manager.
- 2.6. The Memorials at Salisbury Crematorium Guidelines, which were introduced by this Committee in 2014, have been used to good effect. Aged and damaged memorials/ flowers continue to be removed promptly and overall the grounds remain to be tidy and managed well.
- 2.7. The Parks Team have continued to improve and refine the management of the crematorium grounds with a programme of tree works and other changes to the Parks management regime.
- 2.8. The Cemeteries Management plan programme continues to tidy up and improve both London Road and Devizes Road Cemeteries.
- 2.9. The new Avenue Cemetery is being received very well by users and the public. Currently 48 interments have taken place there since its opening in October 2019.

3. Users of the Crematorium:

- 3.1. The Funeral Directors who mainly use the crematorium are from Salisbury equating to around 72%. The remainder are mainly from the north, south and west areas to Salisbury. There is also a new crematorium operating in North Wiltshire at Royal Wootton Bassett.
- 3.2. The crematorium continues receiving more cremations from the south which is made up with the Blandford Forum area.
- 3.3. With Andover and Romsey crematoria we have lost approximately 140 cremations per year. Meetings have continued to be held with funeral directors in this region and they still conclude by saying that families will not drive past a local crematorium to then proceed to ours (32 mile round trip).
- 3.4. This is also unfortunately reinforced when families re-visit the crematorium close to where they live on an anniversary or to just spend a quiet moment there in remembrance.
- 3.5. Historically we will continue to have the families that have had a loved one cremated here in the past.

4. Storage of Bodies:

- 4.1. The Council manages the storage of bodies in accordance with its agreed Code of Practice, which is in turn in accordance with the Federation of British Cremation Authorities best practice.
- 4.2. The Crematorium & Cemeteries Manager is required to report to this Committee the usage and customer feedback from families/Funeral Directors related to the cold storage facility.

- 4.3. Since the introduction of cold storage in October 2016, 247 bodies have been held in this facility to date out of 6,235 cremations (Oct 2016 – January 2021). This represents 3.96% of those cremated. From an operational point of view this has allowed the cremators to operate more efficiently.
- 4.4. Overall feedback from Funeral Directors and families has been positive, or non-committal. This scheme has not been a source of complaint. Funeral Directors continue to fill out the necessary paperwork required.
- 4.5. Families can opt out of the scheme if they so wish and during the dates mentioned in 4.3, 194 (3.11%) of 6,235 cremations opted out.
- 4.6. The table below shows the number of cremations that were carried out under the age of 21 years and Non-Viable Foetus'. There continues to be no cremation fee which was agreed by this Committee in 2017 for this age group.

Year (Jan-Dec)	Under 21	NVF's
2019	3	171
2020	12	188

5. Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 5.1. Note this report.

6. Background papers: Nil

7. Implications:

- 7.1. **Financial:** As outlined in the report.
- 7.2. **Legal:** As outlined in the report
- 7.3. **Personnel:** None in relation to this report
- 7.4. **Environmental Impact:** None in relation to this report
- 7.5. **Equality Impact Statement:** None in relation to this report

¹ Data from Office for National Statistics