

Part 'A'

WEST HERTFORDSHIRE CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

Manager & Registrar's Report January 2024

1. Statistics

Annual Totals (Jan- Dec 2023)

	2018 Total	2019 Total	2020 Total	2021 Total	2022 Total	2023 Total
Cremations	3115	3060	3347	2883	2893	2845 WHC + HH
Book of Remembrance	342	310	236	266	232	212
Memorials	540	514	477	535	513	676
Bulb Donations	126	117	107	103	91	110

Other Crematoria Figures

Crematorium	2020 COVID	2021	2022	2023	Difference
West Herts	3347	2883	2893	2590(WHC) + 255 (HH) = 2845	-48
Breakspears	3263	3237	2993	3015	+22
Luton	1866	1721	1710	1435	-275
Chilterns	3597	3296	3024	2867	-157
Bierton (Chilterns JC)	781	748	679	807	+128
Harwood Park	1757	1679	1553	1464	-89

2. Earth Burial and Cremation Comparisons

Information is obtained each year on the total number of earth burials and the burial of cremated remains carried out in each of the five constituent authorities'-controlled cemeteries.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Three Rivers	51 20 c/r	62 15 c/r	80 33 c/r	67 32 c/r	91 32 c/r
Watford	155 82 c/r	186 56 c/r	211 69 c/r	192 77 c/r	202 86 c/r
St Albans	139 61 c/r	153 67 cr	157 102 c/r	134 75 c/r	125 99 c/r
Dacorum	168 119 c/r	120 116 c/r	175 111 c/r	119 147 c/r	Not available
Hertsmere	62 73 c/r	84 67 c/r	62 49 c/r	52 71 c/r	54 64 c/r

3. Cremation fees

Each year I obtain cremation fees for the local crematoria.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	Difference to WHC
West Herts	£700 inc organist	£770 inc organist	£820 inc organist	£900	
Chilterns	£650	£670	£700	£790	-£110
North Herts (Hitchin)	n/a	£950	£995	£1075 - £1125	+£175-£225
Luton	£775	£785	£1025	£1020	+£120
Breakspears	£649	£649	£681	£851	-£49
Harwood Park	£1025	£1075	£1175	£1400	+£500
Woollansbrook	n/a	£985	£1095	£1170	+£270

Direct Cremation charges

Crematorium	West Herts	Chilterns	North Herts	Luton	Breakspears	Harwood Park	Woollansbrook
2021	£483	£418	£490	£435	£315	Not offered	£500
2022	£483	£320	£450	£475	£330	Not offered	£475
2023	£483	£320	£500	£530	£412	£395	£525

As you will note Harwood Park are now offering Direct Cremations.

RECOMMENDATION: "THAT THE INFORMATION BE NOTED"

4. Update on Hemel Hempstead Crematorium

As you are all aware the Hemel site opened for cremations at the end of August 2023 and to 31st December 2023 we had carried out 255 cremations. The site has become very popular with us carrying out up to 6 funerals a day. We are often having to bring staff over from the West Herts site to assist as we had not anticipated being so busy so quickly.

We have now planted the first of our rosebeds and scatterings of cremated remains started in the middle of January. Families were very keen for us to start the scattering process even though the grounds had been struggling in the wet weather.

Our Books of Remembrance are on order and will be arriving shortly. We are also looking into memorial options such as trees, benches and Leather Panels.

We continue to receive a lot of very positive feedback from Funeral Directors, ministers, celebrants and most importantly families. We received this feedback recently:-

I have recently attended the new Hemel Crematorium for my late wife's funeral. I felt I had to say what a lovely building it is. The glass waiting room was a touch of brilliance. It meant we could keep out of the poor weather without any anxiety about missing other mourners or the arrival of the cortege The main room for the service was spacious, tasteful and calming with the water feature.

In all, it made one of the hardest days of my life that much easier.

RECOMMENDATION: "THAT THE INFORMATION BE NOTED"

5. Service times at West Herts Crematorium

When Hemel Hempstead Crematorium was built it was always a hope that once the pressure had been taken off West Herts, we would be able to extend the service times to match the one hour slot offered at the Hemel site. This gives families a 40 minute service time in Chapel rather than the 25 minutes currently offered at West Herts. Most new crematoria are now offering the longer service time. The feedback I am receiving from Funeral Directors is that families are being driven by a longer service time when booking a Crematorium especially if there is not a huge difference in price.

North Herts, Harwood Park, Woollansbrook and the new crematorium in Hatfield have funerals services of between 35 – 45 minutes.

Currently at West Herts we offer 22 services a day. In the South Chapel the services start at 9.00 am and in the North Chapel at 9.20 am. The services run every forty minutes up to 3.40 pm and 4 pm. Even in the winter it is extremely rare to have the diary fully booked. If we changed the West Herts diary to one hour slots we could offer the North Chapel from 9.30 am – 3.30 pm (7 services) and in the South Chapel we could offer 8.30 am and 8.45 am for Direct Cremations and then services from 9.00 am – 3 pm (7 services). We would therefore be offering 16 services a day.

As you will see from the cremation figures Hemel Hempstead has become very popular quicker than we anticipated with most days booking 4-5 services. This has obviously eased the pressure at West Herts and it may now be time to consider extending the times to match at both sites.

Extending of the service times could be done at the same time as the price increase in April or before if the Joint Committee felt that was appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION: "THAT THE JOINT COMMITTEE CONSIDER CHANGING THE SERVICE TIMES AT WEST HERTS TO MATCH THOSE OF THE NEW HEMEL SITE"

6. Organist payments at West Herts

Organists are and always have been paid for each funeral they play on here at West Herts. This could be up to 11 services each day as our timings stand. The opening of Hemel Hempstead Crematorium has already reduced the number of services they play on and if West Herts were to change to an hour slot this would also lower the number of services therefore reducing their income. They are currently paid £20 for each service which lasts 25 minutes. If the service time was extended to 40 minutes the payment for each service would need to be reviewed accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION: "THAT THE JOINT COMMITTEE CONSIDER REVIEWING THE ORGANIST PAYMENTS IF THE SERVICE TIMES INCREASE TO ONE HOUR"

7. Fees and charges 2024/2025

The table below shows proposed charges for 2024/25, reflecting a couple of options in increases. It shows a £50 or £80 increase in cremation fees and a 3% or 5% increase in other charges, effective from 1st April 2024 – these are in line with the increase in charges approved by members 2019/20. As in previous years, all proposed increases are rounded to the nearest whole pound.

Members may wish to consider other levels of increase - if an increase other those shown for cremations and other charges, is approved by the Joint Committee, an amended table showing the approved charges will be circulated to members and officers shortly after the meeting.

Again I have not shown an increase in the Direct Cremation fee so as to remain competitive in this field.

<u>CREMATION FEE, for the cremation of the remains of (VAT exempt)</u>	2023/24	£50	£80
No fee is charged for Body Parts, NVF's, stillborn babies or any child or person under the age of 18 years at the time of death (with or without music)	£0	£0	£0
Direct Cremation. (Service with no attendance, No minister, no music) Monday & Tuesday 9.00 am or 9.15 am	£483	£483	£483
A person whose age at the time of death is 18 years or over	£900	£950	£980
A person whose age at the time of death exceeded 12 years and did not live in the areas of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Middlesex.	£939	£989	£1019
Cremation on a Saturday morning up to and including 11.00 am.	£1045	£1095	£1125
Cremation on a Saturday, from 11.20 am and up to and including 3.00 pm	£1106	£1156	£1186
Cremation on a Sunday or Bank Holiday (excluding Christmas Day) from 10.00 am up to and including 12.00 noon	£1163	£1213	£1243
	2022/23	3%	5%
To receive cremated remains from another Crematorium for either burial (where permissible) or scattering in the Gardens of Remembrance	£66	£68	£69
For the use of Chapel including the provision of music where required for a Memorial Service	£242	£249	£254
For the use of Chapel including the provision of music where required for a Memorial Service on a Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holiday	£316	£325	£332

	2023/24	3%	5%
For the use of Chapel including the provision of music where required for an additional length of service time MONDAY- FRIDAY	£242	£249	£254
For the use of Chapel including the provision of music where required for an additional length of service time Monday – Friday if the funeral service time is extended to one hour.	£500		
For the use of Chapel including the provision of music where required for an additional length of service time on a Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holiday	£285	£294	£299
For the use of Chapel including the provision of music where required for an additional length of service time on a Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holiday if the funeral service time is extended to an hour.	£500		
For the provision of a baby's or child's white metal urn	£10	£10	£11.00
For the forwarding of cremated remains contained in an urn or cardboard container to an address in the United Kingdom; no charge now payable for the container	POA	POA	POA
For the forwarding of cremated remains contained in a casket to an address in the United Kingdom	POA	POA	POA
<u>OTHER DEDICATED MEMORIALS (including VAT at 20% where applicable)</u>	2023/24	3%	5%
Lease of a Memorial Leather Panel Wall Space (5 years)	£139	£143	£146
Provision of new or replacement Inscription Panel	£89	£92	£93
Renewal of a lease of a Memorial Leather Panel Wall Space (5 years)	£139	£143	£146
Lease of a Cloister Wall Space (5 years)	£139	£143	£146
Provision of a Cloister Wall Inscription Panel	£100	£103	£105
Renewal of a lease of a Cloister Wall Space (5 years)	£139	£143	£146
Endowment of a Memorial Rose Bush (5 years)	£190	£196	£200
Renewal of the endowment of a Memorial Rose Bush (5 Years)	£190	£196	£200
Endowment of a Memorial Shrub or Tree (10 years)	£276	£284	£290
Renewal of the endowment of a Memorial Shrub or Tree (10 years)	£276	£284	£290
Provision of commemorative plaque; additional or replacement plaque for above Garden Memorial	£66	£68	£69
Endowment of a Memorial Garden Seat with one commemorative plaque (10 years)	£1046	£1077	£1098
Renewal of the endowment of a Memorial Garden Seat (10 years)	£855	£881	£898
Replacement Memorial Plaque for Garden Seat	£191	£197	£201
Garden Memorial and Bulb Scheme - Amounts as desired			

<u>MEMORIALISATION (including VAT at 20%)</u>	2023/24	3%	5%
Book of Remembrance Charges			
2 line entry	£61	£63	£64
5 line entry	£104	£107	£109
8 line entry	£127	£131	£133
5 line entry with floral emblem	£202	£208	£212
5 line entry with Badge, Crest, Bird or Animal	£223	£230	£234
8 line entry with floral emblem	£237	£244	£249
8 line entry with Badge, Crest, Bird or Animal	£255	£263	£268
8 line entry with full Coat of Arms	£277	£285	£291
Memorial Cards			
2 line entry	£44	£45	£46
5 line entry	£53	£55	£56
8 line entry	£71	£73	£75
Folded Remembrance Cards			
2 line entry	£45	£46	£47
5 line entry	£57	£59	£60
8 line entry	£74	£76	£78
Miniature Book of Remembrance			
2 line entry	£82	£84	£86
5 line entry	£105	£108	£110
8 line entry	£118	£122	£124
Additional Entry on existing Memorial Cards, Folded Card or Miniature Book of Remembrance			
2 line entry	£39	£40	£41
5 line entry	£46	£47	£48
8 line entry	£64	£66	£67

Emblems included in Memorial Cards, Folded Cards, Miniature Books of Remembrance and additional entries	2023/24	3%	5%
Floral Emblem	£109	£112	£114
Badge, Crest or Bird etc	£125	£129	£131
Full Coat of Arms	£173	£178	£182

Recommendation: That the Joint Committee determines the level of increase in charges relating to all types of cremations and memorials for 2024/2025.

8. Annual Open-Air Service of Remembrance and Christmas Trees

As usual the Open Air Service of Remembrance took place in July 2023. It was a lovely afternoon that was well attended. The retiring collection was for the Isabel Hospice in Welwyn Garden City and £544.67 was raised.

The Christmas Tree tags also raised £490.00 for the Hospice. The Hospice was also awarded £12,000 from the Recycling of Metals Scheme that the Crematorium belongs to.

The Hospice for 2024 is the Rennie Grove Peace Hospice Care.

RECOMMENDATION: “THAT THE INFORMATION BE NOTED”

9. Annual Emissions Testing

I continue to work closely with our Environmental Health Officer – Fay Rushby. The annual emissions testing are pencilled in to take place during March 2024. I will report the results to the Joint Committee in June.

RECOMMENDATION: “THAT THE INFORMATION BE NOTED”