



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **MARGAM JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE**

### **JOINT REPORT OF THE CLERK, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR AND THE SUPERINTENDENT REGISTRAR TO MARGAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

#### **Matter for Decision**

#### **Update on works identified in Margam Crematorium Service Level Business Plan 2023/2024**

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

1. To provide an update to members on the implementation of programmes of work detailed in the Margam Crematorium Service Level Business Plan 2023/2024 and to seek approval of certain decisions to enable officers to progress work streams.

#### **Executive Summary:**

2. At its meeting in June 2023 and as part of the consideration of the work programme for the coming financial year at Margam Crematorium it was considered appropriate to formally document the current services that are offered at Margam Crematorium and to highlight specifically what the coming work will be at the Margam Crematorium over the coming financial year to ensure that Margam Crematorium continues to provide an effective and efficient service to people suffering bereavement and to deliver cremation services to the highest standard ensuring that choice is offered to those commiserating those they have loved.
3. Included in this report is a summary of the capital works programmes that are being embarked and where appropriate decisions sought by

members on potential options to enable officers to progress workstreams and undertake capital works.

**Background:**

4. At its meeting in June 2023 and as part of the consideration of the work programme for the coming financial year at Margam Crematorium it was considered appropriate to formally document the current services that are offered at Margam Crematorium and to highlight specifically what the coming work will be at the Margam Crematorium over the coming financial year to ensure that Margam Crematorium continues to provide an effective and efficient service to people suffering bereavement and to deliver cremation services to the highest standard ensuring that choice is offered to those commiserating those they have loved.
5. Included in this report is a summary of the capital works programmes that are being embarked and where appropriate decisions sought by members on potential options to enable officers to progress workstreams and undertake capital works.
6. As indicated above, included in the Service Level Business Plan are the service proposals planned for implementation in this financial year. These include the following:

	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
1	To continually develop our business continuity strategy and identify the main opportunities, threats and constraints that the services face	<p>This work remains ongoing with Margam Crematorium constantly reviewing its policies to ensure business continuity and to identify forthcoming pressures. Liaising with the national organisations and local based services such as the Health Board allows Margam Crematorium to keep itself abreast of recent developments.</p> <p>Throughout Summer 2023, a health and safety review of Margam Crematorium by the NPT Corporate Health and Safety Team saw small changes to risk assessments and working practices to ensure</p>

		compliance with all current legislative responsibilities.
2	<p>Develop the Margam Crematorium Website providing increased information to members of the public on the range of services offered, offer an online diary of services undertaken at the Crematorium on a weekly basis and provide facilities for individuals to be able to purchase or renew memorials, tributes and book of remembrance requests.</p> <p>As part of this recognition will be given to the development of a social media platform in order to communicate messages direct to the public.</p>	<p>An interim design has been created by Crematorium Officers and this is currently being considered by the Council's Digital Services Team to ensure the design meets appropriate statutory requirements in respect of accessibility and to embed the appropriate software to enable these facilities to be implemented. It is estimated that this work will be concluded Winter 2023 and into early 2024 and a demonstration of the website will be brought to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.</p>
3	<p>Replace the current Book of Remembrance Cabinet and undertake decorative work to the Small Chapel where it is located. As part of this an online book of remembrance will be created to allow individuals to view the book of remembrance without having to travel to Margam Crematorium</p>	<p>Discussions have been ongoing with one of the leading manufacturers in this area of work and we are currently awaiting a site visit from the representative to discuss needs and requirements to enable the order to be made. The turnaround time from order to installation is likely to be short and it is hoped that the new cabinet will be in place by the end of the calendar year with the digital records embedded into the website as per the above update.</p>
4	<p>Develop a forum of consultation with Funeral Directors in the locality to ensure needs of Crematorium are conveyed and service changes are regularly updated to them and continue to develop good customer liaison and working practices. Stakeholders will be encouraged to comment on how their needs have been met or can be met and to make any suggestions on how they feel the service could be improved.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing and a meeting will be convened before the end of the calendar year.</p> <p>It was originally though this meeting would take place in early Autumn, however, further guidance is expected shortly on the role of Medical Referees and it was thought more advantageous to include all such matters in forum towards the end of the year when more information would be available. In addition, there</p>

		<p>will shortly be some updated forms which must be completed for the cremation process and the forum will provide an opportunity for training to funeral directors how to complete.</p> <p>In addition, following discussions between the Clerk, Superintendent Registrar and Strategic Registration Manager at Neath Register Office it was highlighted a joint meeting to not only discuss crematorium matters but also the development of the civil celebrant service at Neath Register Office would be advantageous and the Strategic Registration Manager is currently finalising the civil celebrant service to be presented to funeral directors.</p>
5	Further development of record systems (i.e. electronic point of sales systems) to ensure information can be processed efficiently and accurately utilising electronic means in order to enhance service delivery	<p>The Apex Debtor System was first trialled with one large firm of Funeral Directors at the beginning of June 2023 and subsequently rolled out to the remaining firms during July 2023. An invoice is now issued when Cremation Certificates are received and payment can be made via a variety of options prior to the date of the funeral. The system is working well with funeral directors commenting on the ease associated with the system.</p>
6	Refurbishment of Outside Toilet Block	<p>As part of the consideration of the way forward, officers proposed two alternative courses of action (1) the first being a refurbishment of the current toilet block or (2) demolition of the existing block and a rebuild.</p> <p>However, it would appear that the listed building status of Margam Crematorium would also apply to the</p>

		<p>toilet block therefore a demolition and rebuild would not be feasible.</p> <p>A meeting was held with CADW to discuss various development ideas, and whilst they could not pass any official guidance they did offer advice in what in their view would be allowable.</p> <p>In relation to the toilet block they suggested that a straightforward refurbishment / modernisation of the existing layout would be best as it currently fulfils the needs.</p> <p>Any structural alterations would need full listed building consent and detailed justification.</p> <p>As a result of this officers are now progressing design work with the aim that refurbishment can take place in due course.</p> <p>This will require the current toilet block to be unavailable for a limited period of time but alternative facilities will be available within the building and any impact will be kept to a minimum.</p>
7	Landscaping of external area to Chapel	<p>A topographical survey has now been undertaken and an initial design produced.</p> <p>Members will recall that comments were made about the canopy location in a previous meeting. These were discussed with a representative of CADW and unfortunately it was suggested that a large canopy on the</p>

		<p>right of the path as individuals exit would not be feasible as the visual impact would be too great, and take away from the building design.</p> <p>Any proposed works will require full listed building consent once signed off.</p> <p>Officers of the NPT Property and Regeneration Section have added this work to its Forward Work Programme and a full design and estimate will be brought before the Joint Committee for approval</p>
8	<p>General Decorative Work – Painting of building and general decorative work in Chapel</p>	<p>It was originally thought that the external coating was a simple masonry paint however further investigations have revealed that it has previously been coated with a concrete protection coating. The technical officer from Sika (the manufacturer of the existing coating) has been to site and raised concerns about the current surface and its bonding to the concrete in certain areas. Also CADW noticed that there were areas of concrete spalling that needed addressing.</p> <p>In order to progress it is proposed that we engage a Sika approved contractor to produce a full schedule of repairs and quantify the products and specification for tendering purposes.</p> <p>Officers are currently awaiting a quotation for this work. Delegated authority is sought from the Joint Committee for the Technical Director to approve this quotation in consultation with the Chair of the Joint</p>

		Committee subject to the works being within the existing budget allocation.
9	Development of memorial garden area	As previously indicated an area along the driveway has been identified for potential development opportunity and options such as memorial area have been considered. Officers are now working with the NPT Biodiversity team to look at ways to enhance the area whilst at the same time preserving the natural biodiversity of the grounds and a report with options will be presented to the Joint Committee in due course.
10	Enhancement to Wifi to ensure a more resilient service and to minimise service disruption	<p>All significant laying of fibre cables has now been undertaken and the final element of work will be for the connection to enter into the building.</p> <p>The organisation undertaking this work is the Public Services Broadband Aggregation has overseen this project with the aim of connecting public sector organisations in the country to a private secure Information and Communications Technology Wide Area Network. PSBA is Welsh Government funded and delivered by BT.</p> <p>The final stage of installation will take place imminently, whereupon the existing Airband contract will come to an end.</p>
11	Investigation to energy efficiency measures	Following reports commissioned on the Civic Centres within Neath Port Talbot, Faithful & Gould have been asked to produce a road map to Net Zero report for Margam Crematorium and once in receipt of this it will be reported to the Joint Committee with options for consideration.

12	Ongoing training of staff in all aspects of service delivery including all staff undertaking refresher training with the FBCA and being entered on to the Register of Certified Cremator Technicians	<p>The Certificate of Proficiency in the Practical and Ethical Operation of Cremation Equipment recognises the competency of individuals to operate cremation equipment in an efficient manner, with full regard for environmental regulations currently in force and in accordance with the ethical standards prescribed within the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) Code of Cremation Practice.</p> <p>By the end of December 2023, it is envisaged that all staff at Margam Crematorium will have achieved this qualification and refresher training will commence into 2024 and at the frequency identified by the FBCA.</p> <p>To provide added value and to maintain more accurate records, the Executive of the FBCA has agreed to the creation of a Register of FBCA Certificate of Proficiency Qualified Crematorium Technicians. The Register will be accessible to FBCA Officers and Member Cremation Authorities via the Members Section of the FBCA Website, allowing those who wish to do so to verify that a technician's qualification skills are current. This registration can be used as part of the Technician's qualifications for the purpose of the Process Guidance Note 5/2 (12) including where setting up an environmental management system (EMS) which includes training, or when demonstrating a technician's qualifications during an FBCA Inspection visit. All staff who have this</p>
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		<p>qualification have been encouraged to register with the FBCA in respect of this, recognising that the decision in respect of registration vests in individual staff alone but any costs associated with the same will be met by Margam Crematorium to facilitate registration.</p>
13	<p>Development of an open day to enable members of the public to attend a tour of Margam Crematorium</p>	<p>As a result of ongoing work programmes and the uncertainty of dates as to when the internet connection will be finalised or any re-decorative works will be undertaken has meant the identification of date for this open day has not been possible. Margam Crematorium remains committed to facilitate an open day and the identification of a date will be made once confirmation of dates when no construction or physical works are taking place.</p>

**Financial Impacts:**

7. At its meeting in February 2023, members agreed the provision of £250,000 for capital works, therefore a budget has been allocated to enable provision of the works identified above.

**Integrated Impact Assessment:**

8. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment for this report as it relates to an update and to progress work programmes previous agreed by members.

**Valleys Communities Impacts:**

9. No implications

**Workforce Impacts:**

10. No implications

**Legal Impacts:**

11. No implications

**Consultation:**

12. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

**Recommendations:**

13. It is recommended that members note the current work programme update and that delegated authority be granted to the Technical Officer of Margam Crematorium in consultation with the Chair of the Joint Committee to (a) progress the toilet block refurbishment as identified in this report and (b) engage a Sika approved contractor to produce a full schedule of repairs and quantify the products and specification for tendering purposes for general external decoration, provided at all times that such costs are within the existing budget allocation for capital works.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

14. To provide an update to members on the current work programme and to agree next steps to enable the programme to be implemented.

**Implementation of Decision:**

15. The decision is proposed for implementation immediately.

**Appendices:**

16. None

**List of Background Papers:**

17. None

**Officer Contact:**

Mr Craig Griffiths  
Clerk to the Joint Committee of Margam Crematorium

Mr Clive Phillips  
Superintendent Registrar

Mr Simon Brennan  
Neath Port Talbot – Head of Property and Regeneration

Mr Richard Jenkins  
Neath Port Talbot – Corporate Facilities Manager