

CABINET

DATE	10 March 2021
REPORT OF	Councillor Stewart Swinburn - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Sharon Wroot - Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources
SUBJECT	Pet Crematorium Charges
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	GENERAL EXCEPTION Not included on Forward Plan and to be considered under the General Exception rules of the Constitution

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Council's key strategic priority is to deliver a Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities, with Bereavement Services contributing to this through the outcome of all people in North East Lincolnshire enjoy & benefit from a strong economy, with the creation of employment, learning and apprenticeship opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's Bereavement Services has been working on a 3-year project, which aims to make improvements to service provision and ensure that this service provision has the family of the bereaved at its core. This report outlines the work on the establishment of the Pet Crematorium and seeks approval to implement a charging policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Approve the implementation of the Pet Crematorium charges, as set out in the Appendix to this report.
3. Delegates responsibility to the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, to deal with all arrangements and matters relating to, and arising from, the annual review of Pet Crematorium Charges, including but not limited to, the implementation of changes to the charging policy.

REASONS FOR DECISION

In line with the Council's vision for a Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities, the Council's Commercial Strategy sets out the need for the Council to become more commercial in the future. This means looking to achieve best value for money at the same time as delivering key social outcomes for residents and meeting the needs of residents. The Pet Crematorium charges have arisen from the work on the

Bereavement Services project, considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2019, which aims to make improvements to service provision and ensure that this service provision has the family of the bereaved at its core.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Authority's Bereavement Services has been working on a 3-year project, to undertake commercial improvements, which will improve facilities, bring buildings back into use and most importantly, increase options and outcomes for the local community. Cabinet originally approved the project at their meeting on 13 February 2019.
- 1.2 One of the elements of the project is the establishment of the Pet Crematorium. There are only a small number of pet crematoriums in operation, most of which are private and very few are owned by local authorities. There are no pet crematoriums in North East Lincolnshire and there is a growing market for this type of provision, with the pet funeral industry nationally being worth over £100 million a year.
- 1.3 Construction work on the new Pet crematorium, which is located adjacent to Grimsby Crematorium and has its own separate entrance, has now been completed. An additional chapel has been incorporated into the design, which can be used if pet owners wish to have a memorial/farewell service and can also be utilised as an additional chapel for small funeral services. A Pet Incineration Licence, from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, has been applied for and this will be granted once the site inspection visit takes place in the next few weeks.
- 1.4 As the new Pet Crematorium is due to open during April 2021, the charges need to be agreed. The Authority's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the principle of recovery of costs associated with the provision of discretionary services. The setting of the charges has been completed using the following rationale:
 - Charges need to be set to a level where full cost recovery is achieved, with these costs including staffing, building, equipment and materials.
 - Benchmarking of charges undertaken to provide reassurance that all charges are reasonable and provide good value.
- 1.5 Finance officers have been involved in all elements of the Bereavement Services project and attend the monthly project meetings.
- 1.6 Bereavement Services has undertaken benchmarking against other pet cremation providers, with the the average prices ranging from £57 to £206. Some local public engagement was carried out on the use of the Pet Crematorium and the fee structure for pet cremations. The comments indicated that the public would prefer fixed prices for small, medium and large animals, with a maximum charge in the region of £150.
- 1.7 At this stage, there are no plans to offer pet collection from private homes, but this may be an addition to service provision that is considered in future years.

- 1.8 As it is best practice to review fees and charges on a regular basis, this will be undertaken on an annual basis. It is proposed that Bereavement Services undertakes this, with the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, approving any proposed changes.
- 1.9 The Appendix to this report outlines the Pet Crematorium charges, which Cabinet is recommended to approve.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The main risk is:

- The Pet Crematorium does not generate sufficient income.

The main opportunities are:

- To implement an innovative proposal which will place the Council ahead of many local authorities.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The other option considered was for the Council to do nothing. However, this would not allow the Council to have a direct impact on improving choice for the public or allow for any surplus generated to be invested back into Council services, for the benefit of the wider local community.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 With regards to reputational considerations, the Council needs to be seen to be improving bereavement choice and options for the local community.
- 4.2 With regards to communications considerations, work will be undertaken, with guidance from the Council's Communications Team, on how the new charges will be communicated.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Pet Crematorium will be income generating and any surplus generated will be re-invested into service provision for the local community.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of these charges is not thought to create any additional climate change and environmental implications.

7. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

No specific consultation has been undertaken with Scrutiny Panels on the Pet Crematorium charges.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The income generated is estimated to cover costs of providing the service and then, once the facility is fully established, also contribute towards wider local services.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Discretionary services are those which an authority has the power to, but is not obliged to, provide. Section 3 of the Localism Act 2011 allows authorities to charge for discretionary services offered under their general power of competence.
- 9.2 Fees and charges for discretionary services are to be set in order to be reasonable and proportionate and to fully recover the cost of delivery.
- 9.3 It is best practice to regularly review such fees and charges, for example on an annual basis.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no major HR implications, however, should the Pet Crematorium charges not cover some of the increased staffing costs then this could result in a review of the teams. This would be undertaken with HR advice and support and following the Change Management policy, ensuring engagement with staff and trade unions.

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

Potentially impacts on all wards.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Proposed improvements to Bereavement Services Cabinet Report 13 February 2019 – Exempt Agenda Item

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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COUNCILLOR STEWART SWINBURN

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT



Pet Crematorium Charging Policy

Charges 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022

Cremation Fees:	£
Cremation – Small pet / Rabbit	58.00
Cremation – Toy Dog / Cat	93.00
Cremation – Small Dog	116.00
Cremation - Medium Dog	135.00
Cremation – Large Dog	159.00
Use of Treasured Memories Chapel	200.00
Obitus Music System:	
Music (per service)	35.00
Webcast Services:	
Live Webcast	35.00

Live Webcast + 28 Day Downloadable (<i>A live webcast plus access to the recording of a webcast to watch for 28 days</i>)	45.00
Keepsake Copy - DVD/Blu-Ray/USB Stick (<i>A recording of the webcast on your chosen format</i>)	50.00
Visual Tribute Services:	
Single Photograph (<i>Shown throughout the service or at a time of your choosing</i>)	Free
Slideshow (<i>Up to 25 photos with simple fade transitions, played on a loop or at the time of your choosing</i>)	38.00
Pro Tribute (<i>up to 25 photos set to music, professionally edited into a video-style tribute, and shown at a time of your choosing</i>)	70.00
Family-made (<i>checking and preparation of a video created by you, shown at a time of your choosing</i>)	18.00
Keepsake copy of Visual Tribute – DVD/Blu-Ray/USB Stick	26.75
Downloadable copy of Visual Tribute	10.00
Variations:	
Additional Keepsake copies (<i>for each additional copy of a DVD/Blu-Ray/USB Stick already ordered</i>)	25.50
Each extra 25 photos (<i>For each 25 extra photos on a 'Slideshow' or 'Pro tribute'</i>)	21.00
Extra work (<i>For adding video to the 'Pro tribute', any revisions, or any major departure from a standard product</i>)	21.00
Disposal of Ashes:	
Scattering of ashes in Woodlands	Free
Interment of ashes in Woodlands	105.00