



A monthly review of news and events from within the bereavement sector



The Cremation Society continues to work with colleagues at the APCC, FBCA, FSA, ICCM, NAFD and SAIF as part of the **Deceased Management Advisory Group** (DMAG). After working together via online meetings during the course of the pandemic, the Group met in-person to discuss its future plans and to establish just some of the issues that would be worked on together. For more information, please see page 3.

Deceased Management
Advisory Group

I am not sure where the year is going but it is hardly possible to think September is almost upon us!

We are delighted to bring you this month's news review which includes news from overseas as well as news closer to home.

We hope you will find this month's review informative and interesting.

Wendy Buchan
Executive Officer & Secretary to
The Cremation Society



CREMATION SOCIETY NEWS

Bishop Christopher Foster joins the Council of The Cremation Society

The Cremation Society is delighted to announce the appointment of Bishop Christopher Foster to its Council.

Christopher chairs the Churches Funerals' Group. He was Church of England Bishop of Portsmouth (and previously of Hertford) and a Lord Spiritual until May 2021. With over forty years of ordained ministry, after a short time as an academic economist in two universities, he has wide experience of diverse people and communities. His pastoral understanding of the sensitivities and challenges at and around the time of death and bereavement mean that he is committed to the best provision possible by all those involved in funerals. During his time as a member of House of Lords he frequently spoke on matters of fairness and respect.

Christopher is a non-executive director of NHS Somerset, chairing the Remuneration Committee, and a board member and trustee at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, chairing its ethics committee.

Christopher said: "I am delighted to be joining the Society's Council. As chair of the Churches Funerals' Group I work alongside many other colleagues involved in bereavement and in funerals, crematoria and cemeteries, as well as clergy and ministers. I have benefitted from the quality of the Society's conferences and publications, providing information, education and advice both to the professions and to the public. . Now I welcome the opportunity to contribute directly to this very important task of maintaining respectful and ethical high standards in this vital service to those who've died and those close to them.'





Deceased Management Advisory Group

Members of the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG) established at the start of the pandemic, met in-person to discuss the future working of the Group and the ongoing issues facing the sector.

The Group has worked closely with Government representatives during the pandemic and worked closely to represent the funeral sector in addressing many of the urgent and fast-changing issues that arose during that challenging time.

The Group intends to continue to work together to present a strong, collaborative voice in tackling just some of the topics that are on-going, including the implementation of the national medical examiner scheme, the review of the Process Guidance Notes for crematoria, and the re-use of graves. The Group is also concerned to engage with Government representatives over the energy price crisis, the possibility of increased deaths from winter flu, as well as other issues that are emerging.



NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

An Angus farmer's bid to reverse a refusal for a new crematorium on land north of Dundee has been delayed. **Guthrie Batchelor** wants to build the facility on farmland near **Duntrune House** close to the border with the city, but has been opposed by locals who have now forced **Angus Council** to hold off on making a final decision. It came after they highlighted "serious discrepancies" in a near 3,500-page report due to be considered by councillors. Campaigners say there were several major errors in the report put before Angus development management review committee, saying that more than 100 valid objections were missed off the report and invalid ones included. For more on this story, please visit: [The Courier's website.](#)

City of York Council has granted approval for a waiting room to be built at **York Crematorium**. A report by council planners said the new waiting room would be located within the tree landscaped grounds of the crematorium, between its main public entrance and the car park. The current waiting room can only take 20 people, whilst the new waiting room will be seven times bigger and will potentially allow for gatherings of up to 140 people. However, the application site is in the Green Belt, which means 'very special circumstances' are needed for projects to gain approval. These circumstances centred on the existing waiting room being too small to accommodate those attending larger funerals. Moreover, the new building would mitigate situations where mourners are waiting or queueing outside. Recommending approval, the council planning staff concluded that: "the development is considered acceptable and would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area", whilst York funeral director **Hayley Owen** said the new waiting room will be "a much-needed improvement to the service the crematorium offers." For further details on this story, please visit: [The York Press article.](#)

CREMATORIA NEWS

A crematorium has opened in Staffordshire – four years later than scheduled. Sited at the **Chase & District Memorial Park in Burntwood**, it was originally due to open in 2018. However, bosses say they were forced to relocate their original plans to another site within the park. This required 'significant additional investment' to get the proposals back on track, but it has now come to fruition. The independently-run memorial park is situated within nine acres of tranquil grounds, with a range of cremation services available for both individuals and through funeral directors. The chapel offers a space for up to 35 attendees to hold services, has an Obitus sound system and live streaming technologies. **John Connell**, director of The Chase & District Memorial Park, said: "I'm delighted that after many years of struggle, what was previously dubbed the 'crematorium that never opened' is now fully operational and run by a passionate team of dedicated people to help those during their time of need. The relocation of the crematorium was required, and whilst this delayed our opening by years and required significant additional investment, it has absolutely secured the operation of the park for years to come and truly demonstrates my personal dedication to providing an independent, high-end service to the local community and respect to the land itself." Further plans include additional landscaping and creating a woodland burial area, where ashes can be planted together with saplings. For the full article, please visit: [The Express and Star website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

An empty lodge at **Grimsby Crematorium** has been renovated into a stylish new café and function room called **Reflections**. The newly transformed **Crematorium Lodge** will offer refreshments to people attending funerals and visitors to the cemetery and crematorium. The upstairs area will be available to hire out for wakes, meetings and other gatherings. The new café is being run by **North East Lincolnshire Council's** Bereavement Services team and the refurbishment was designed and managed by the council's regeneration services partner **Equans**. "It's fantastic to see Reflections welcome its first customers. It's a wonderful new venue and I'm grateful to the project team who have done a terrific job in bringing an empty building back into use," said **Cllr Stewart Swinburn**, portfolio holder for Environment and Transport at North East Lincolnshire Council. "Reflections is the latest part in an ongoing transformation project to improve our services for bereaved families and the wider community. Recent improvements include the launch of the Treasured Memories pet crematorium, the car park extension and the restoration of the Chapel and cemetery gates. The next stage of the project is the restoration of the Scartho Cemetery Lodge, which has stood empty for about 15 years." For more information: please visit: [The Grimsby Telegraph's website](#).

Plymouth City Council has revealed that the new purpose built crematorium, located on the eastern edge of the city, will have a new café. The added addition to the state-of-the-art facility will provide refreshments for those attending funerals and also for people visiting the site to pay their respects. The council has confirmed the new café will be open all day and there will be an added facility available that families can hire for wakes. The new crematorium is needed in order to continue to be the main crematoria for the city. Plymouth City Council has said building work on the site continues at pace. The project is in its early stages roads and car parks are now in place and, attention is now turning to the beginnings of the main buildings. Plymouth limestone will be used and windows will provide lots of light and views out over the water and the landscape beyond. When the new crematorium is built, it will replace existing facilities at Efford and Weston Mill, which will continue to be active for burial and memorials with the chapels available for bookings. For more on this development, please visit the [Plymouth Live article](#).

CREMATORIA NEWS

Extra funding has been committed for the second time in six months to ensure a **Somerset crematorium** will remain fit for purpose in the coming decades. **South Somerset District Council** is the public body responsible for **Yeovil Crematorium**, which currently averages 1,700 cremations per year. The council has aimed for several years to upgrade the facility, which was completed in 1970, to provide more room for mourners and to enable the building to handle more services. Its district executive committee voted in February to provide an additional £800,000 towards upgrading the facility, in light of high inflation within the construction industry and repairs carried out before the coronavirus pandemic. The same committee agreed on 4th August to provide a further £185,400 to ensure the project can be successfully completed - with local councillors warning any further increases in costs may be difficult to fund. Originally the council intended to construct a new chapel, waiting room, a smaller secondary chapel and improved parking facilities, as well as replacing the existing cremators. A total of £4m was allocated to this project, which was then increased to £4.921 million in August 2019 following the initial tenders being received and then to £5.721 million once the additional funding was approved. Of the £185,400 of further funding being committed to the project, £165,000 will come from the district council, with the parish council providing the remaining £20,400. To prevent further cost increases, a number of changes have been made to the plans, with the existing chapel of remembrance not being demolished and the planned changes to the offices and toilets area no longer going ahead. For the full article, please visit: [Somerset County Gazette's website](#).

SECTOR NEWS



The trustees of the Child Funeral Charity are very sad to report the death of the charity's patron Baroness Sally Greengross OBE, member of the House of Lords since 2000, who died in June 2022 aged 86. Her work as a campaigner was remarkable and we were very proud that she supported our work as a patron of our Charity. Obituaries to her have included the words 'Inspirational, popular and determined' and recognition has been given to the many roles where she made such a difference with her passionate commitment to ageing and demographic change issues.

As Director General of Age Concern from 1987, a position she held until 2000. She founded the International Longevity Centre in 1997 and was its Chief Executive until shortly before her death.



FREE Guide to Funding for Child and Baby Funerals



The Child Funeral Charity is pleased to have published a new 'Guide to Funding for Child and Baby Funerals' which is free on request.

The booklet covers, in-depth, all aspects of the Children's Funeral Fund, what it pays for and how to apply. It also gives links to other charities and details how the Child Funeral Charity can help when bereaved parents are arranging a funeral for their child or baby.

If you would like a copy for your offices so that all staff have access to this then please contact us on 01480 276088 or email enquiries@childfuneralcharity.org.uk

NEWS REVIEW

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Germans more often than not choose to be cremated when they die - which would be a problem if Russia turns off the gas. Businesses, including crematoriums, are developing contingency plans to cope with rising gas costs and the risk it is unavailable at any price. **Svend-Joerk Sobolewski**, Germany's **cremation consortium chairman**, said in the event of any rationing, the sector should be prioritised because, without gas, most crematoriums cannot function. "You cannot switch off death," he said. Of the roughly one million people who die every year in Germany, nearly three quarters are cremated, figures from Germany's undertakers' association show. Compared with other European countries, that is a high percentage, **Stephan Neuser**, the association's head told Reuters. It stemmed in part, he said, from a tradition in the former east Germany, where nearly all burials were through cremation, and it continued as families that relocate and an ageing population prefer urns to graves that they would be unable to visit and maintain. Longer term, changing from gas to electricity could be an option, but Neuser said that could not happen quickly. In the immediate term, one possibility would be to reduce ovens' average temperature to 750 degrees Celsius (1,382°F) from the current 850C, which could save between 10% to 20% of gas, but he said the measure needed a special permit from states' authorities. Crematoriums are also switching off some ovens, while keeping others running constantly, so they don't cool down and require more gas to be reheated. "In the event of a gas failure, we would be able to continue operating the plants that are hot ... That means we could then continue to work with reduced power," **Karl-Heinz Koensgen**, who manages a crematorium in Dachsenhausen, western Germany, told Reuters. Sobolewski of Germany's cremation consortium said the measure could reduce the amount of gas used by up to 80%, but that not all crematoriums have sufficient demand to justify the model. Cooperation across the sector could help, he said. Germany's **environment ministry** said in a statement it was working with states' authorities on issuing guidelines for possible minimum temperature exceptions. To read the full article, please visit: [the Reuters website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A **Planning Authority** review of policy regulating cemeteries will consider new rules for cremation facilities outside cemeteries. A new policy is being drafted by the Planning Authority with the aim of finding ‘suitable locations’ for stand-alone cremation facilities which are not part of an existing cemetery. A 2015 policy had approved extending existing cemeteries, outside development zones, but banned the creation of new cemeteries. The existing policy already refers to “alternative funerary techniques” like cremation, saying these can be accommodated inside an cemetery or premises, as long as they are in conformity with development plans. This effectively excluded the erection of cremation facilities outside the building zones if these were not part of an existing cemetery. But the Planning Authority has now been requested by the government to initiate a review of the **Cemeteries Policy and Design Guidance (2015)**, in the wake of the approval of the **Cremation Act in 2019**. Stating that the “Government is of the opinion that, following the enactment of the Cremation Act, the development of standalone crematoria, including additional facilities for the internment of ashes and other supporting infrastructure, should be afforded favourable consideration.” The public has until August 31 to give its submissions on the policy update. For the full article, please visit: [Malta Today](#).



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PlotBox is an international death care management solution that facilitates cemeteries and crematoria in operating to world-class standards through integrated software and georectified mapping modules.



Treske - one of the UK's leading makers and suppliers of bespoke crematorium furniture and soft furnishings.



Welters - interment and memorial specialists.

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