



We are pleased to bring you this month's round-up of news articles from across the cremation sector, including news of the Scottish Government's consultation on a number of areas affecting the funeral profession in Scotland. We also include the latest National Medical Examiner's update and we continue to work with our DMAG colleagues, and the Ministry of Justice team, to try to ensure the new system is implemented as quickly and smoothly as possible.

We will shortly be publishing the autumn issue of Pharos International which has an excellent selection of articles including the Law Commission's presentation from this year's CBCE event. If you don't already subscribe, please do visit [our website](#) for more details.

Wendy Buchan
Executive Officer & Secretary to
The Cremation Society

CREMATORIA NEWS

Working cremators could still be installed at **Poole Crematorium** under new proposals by **BCP Council**. A proposal has been brought forward by councillors to work with people of faith to collectively fund two new cremators. It had been recommended to pause plans to invest £2.7m in two electric cremators for the site at Gravel Hill. Speaking at a cabinet meeting held in early September, Cllr Millie Earl said she would like to see the Council moving forward to work with faiths in the area. She said: "Although we are all keen to see a cremator provision back in Poole, the paper really tells us that it is not going to be financially viable at this time. It is recommended to pause reinvestment, however, as an administration we have been very clear with ourselves and the public that we don't want to leave any stone unturned to try and get some cremator provision back at Poole crematorium." For the full article, please go to the: [Daily Echo website](#)

Plans for the major refurbishment of **Aldershot Crematorium** have been given the go-ahead by **Rushmoor Borough Council's Cabinet**, which unanimously supported £4.726m of funding for the work to start next year. The project will help the Council to make significant improvements, including the installation of a second cremator, a new roof, external cladding, extending the covered entrance and improving access for people with disabilities. The crematorium buildings will be closed to the public while the work is being carried out, but the Council is refurbishing the chapels at the Redan Road cemetery in Aldershot so that they can be used for services. The work at Aldershot Crematorium is expected to take around nine months to complete and the crematorium grounds will remain open to the public. Cremations will also still take place on-site. Final approval for funding from its capital programme will be considered by the full Council early next month. To read the full article, please head to the: [Hampshire Live website](#)

Oak Hill Lawn Cemetery and Crematorium has officially opened. A lawn cemetery has stood on the site since 1984, but redevelopment has seen a new state-of-the-art crematorium, large chapel for services, and landscaped gardens built. Cllr Max Holloway, executive member for community and leisure stated that: "The cemetery and new crematorium, and the award-winning landscaped gardens is a valuable asset for our community." The site - which is managed by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council - was awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award earlier this year. For the full article, please go to the: [Welwyn Hatfield Times website](#)

NEWS REVIEW



CREMATORIA NEWS

Green Party councillors have backed a bid to install electric cremators at **Astwood Crematorium** as part of a £6million refurbishment of the site. Detailed designs for the modernisation and refurbishment of Astwood Crematorium are to be drawn up, after councillors backed the proposed revamp in July. An initial study carried out earlier this year has ruled out the possibilities of building a new crematorium elsewhere and instead the current site will be upgraded and extended. Part of the scheme will be the replacement of its three current gas-fired cremators, which are reaching the end of their life. According to party chiefs, implementing electric cremators at Astwood would help Worcester become carbon neutral by 2030, as electric cremators produce up to 80 per cent less carbon than gas cremators when combined with green energy tariffs and selective catalytic reduction. In 2021/22, Astwood accounted for 18 per cent of Worcester Council's total emissions. By installing more efficient electric cremators, the crematorium would greatly improve Worcester's air quality. The crematorium is expected to continue providing its service throughout the installation process. To read the full article, please visit the: [**Worcester Observer website**](#)

A brand new crematorium has opened to serve the communities in and around Arundel, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Selsey and Worthing. **Arun Crematorium** is one of the most modern in the country, with a focus on providing exceptional care for the bereaved as well as the environment. The crematorium has been developed by **Westerleigh Group**, one of the UK's largest independent owners and operators of crematoria and cemeteries. At the heart of Arun Crematorium is a light, airy and welcoming contemporary chapel, capable of seating 112 people, with additional standing room. There are 120 parking spaces, including six allocated for disabled access. In addition, the chapel's portable catafalque, which supports the coffin, offers families an option to select its exact location in the chapel and provide more flexibility during the service. The chapel's size and décor provide an intimate environment for smaller gatherings, seeking privacy and seclusion, while larger congregations benefit from its overall seating capacity. Arun also offers a wide variety of memorialisation options, which include UK-sourced Staffordshire brick desk tablets, the Mulberry tree made from corten steel, ash scattering in the grounds, special memorial jewellery, personalisation and many other options. To read the complete article, please visit the: [**Sussex World website**](#)

The new **Hemel Hempstead Crematorium** has been officially opened. The crematorium has been developed by the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, made up of representatives from Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers, St Albans and Watford councils. The facility is a sister-site to the award-winning West Herts Crematorium in Garston, which is also overseen by the Joint Committee, and has been built to provide additional capacity for the West Hertfordshire region. The chapel, which overlooks a tranquil reflection pond, can seat up to 140 people and sits within extensive grounds next to Dacorum Borough Council's Poppy Fields cemetery. The new site will offer longer service times, ensuring residents can say goodbye to their loved ones in a more personalised way. It will also provide a complementary service to the Garston site, increasing the choice available to residents and reducing waiting times. The Joint Committee representatives marked the official opening on Monday, September 18th, when they were able to view the finished facility and tour the site. Deputy Mayor of Watford and West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee Member, Cllr Aga Dychton, said: "The new Hemel Hempstead Crematorium stands as a testament to our collective vision and unwavering commitment to provide a special and respectful place where people can say goodbye to their loved-ones." Hemel Hempstead Crematorium will operate on the same basis as its Garston counterpart, with funerals running Monday to Saturday. To read the full article please head to the: **[Hemel Today website](#)**

Developers have announced plans for a new crematorium between Cardiff and Newport. Known as **Castleton Park**, it would aim to relieve pressure on the Thornhill Crematorium and avoid funeral corteges having to travel from Cardiff to Gwent, Blackwood or Langstone crematoriums. The new facility would be located in a "secluded spot" on Penylan Road off the A48 at Castleton, north of the M4 near Michaelston-y-Fedw. It would seat 135 people and hold only four funerals per day. Consultations with the public will be held before a planning application is submitted, and 3D renders of the planned building have been released. Richard Evans, who is running the project and has 30 years experience in funeral and bereavement services said: "There is an urgent need to relieve the pressure on Thornhill Crematorium, so that families have the chance to hold a more inspiring and uplifting remembrance service closer to home. We will create a natural, beautiful place with the existing landscape enhanced with extensive extra planting of trees, flowers, hedgerows and shrubs to create a spot befitting for a funeral." To read the full article, please head to the: **[Wales Online website](#)**

NEWS REVIEW



CREMATORIA NEWS

Newry could be in the frame for a crematorium after its council chairperson raised concerns over the final expansion of the city's cemetery. The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) owned Monks Hill Cemetery with 2,421 burial plots is currently being expanded by 600 plots in its Phase 3 programme. The graveyard first opened 45 years ago and will reach full capacity of over 3,000 plots in the new scheme, with the gates closing on the site unless the local authority buys more land. Newry Sinn Féin chairperson, Valerie Harte said: "While we welcome the news that Phase 3 of works to expand 'Monks Hill' cemetery are underway, the reports that it may be filled by the end of the decade are concerning. We will be urging the council to review their strategy for cemeteries to look at how we can handle this issue in a way that is sensitive to families and fair to ratepayers across the district as a whole." A council report has shown that at the current rate of burials, the full capacity of Monks Hill will be met in the next six years. This will leave the local authority in a position of needing to buy more land close to the site to keep Monks Hill open or to shut the cemetery down on future burials. For the full article, please go to the: **Belfast**

Live website.

A £600,000 project to tackle issues with damp at **Stranton Grange Crematorium Chapels** began earlier in the month. The works will first make the building watertight by repairing the capping stones, repointing the brickwork and replacing the guttering. Then, from mid-December, each chapel be replastered and repainted, the wooden floors revarnished and the carpeting replaced. The restoration work is funded by Hartlepool Borough Council and will take nine months to complete. Councillor Bob Buchan, chair of the council's adult and community-based services committee, said: "The two chapels date from just after the turn of the last century and unfortunately damp has become an increasing problem. "We are very pleased to start this major restoration, which will make the chapels watertight and improve their internal appearance, following our £250,000 upgrade of the cremators last year. The work is being arranged so as to avoid any disturbance during services, but we would nevertheless like to thank people in advance for their understanding while it is being carried out." The work will only be carried out during the first half of the week and at weekends – during which time the chapels will be closed. They will be open for services during the latter half of the week, with extended hours of 9am to 5pm. To read the full article, please visit the:

Hartlepool Mail website

The Scottish Government has launched a collection of public consultations on different aspects of regulation of the funeral sector in Scotland. The proposed regulations in the consultations are to be made under the **Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016**.

The collection of four consultations cover regulations on the following topics:

- Alkaline hydrolysis ('water cremation')
- Burial
- Inspection of burial authorities, cremation authorities and funeral directors
- Licensing for funeral directors

The consultations are all available on the Scottish Government's consultation hub, **Citizen Space**.

The consultations will be live until 17th November 2023. Members of the public and the funeral sector are strongly encouraged to respond to the consultations.

Public engagement events are planned while the consultations are live, if there is sufficient public interest, to give people the opportunity to discuss the consultations and ask questions. Head to **this page** with details of events as they are planned. You can register your interest by emailing **BurialandCremation@gov.scot**



The latest update by National Medical Examiner, **Dr Alan Fletcher**, has been published and can be read on the [NHS England website](#)

Topics covered in the update include:

- Draft regulations and primary legislation
- Extended hours
- Employing GPs as medical examiners
- World Patient Safety Day 2023
- Good Practice Series – escalating trends
- Podcast – GPs and medical examiners
- Implementation in Wales
- Quarterly reporting in England
- Training and events



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

MALTA

A bill allowing cremation was approved in parliament in 2019, **The Planning Authority** issued a draft policy on the design of crematoriums in February 2023 and revised guidelines in September 2023, yet **Malta** still does not have a crematorium. Johann Camilleri, owner of Active Group Ltd, the company behind an application to develop Malta's first crematorium and whose company organises cremation arrangements overseas, has seen an increase in the demand for the service. In 2018, **Camilleri Funeral Directors International** carried out an average of three cremations a month overseas. In 2020, it conducted around 10 a month. "In the 12 months ending June 30th, 2023, we conducted 170 cremations overseas, so an average of 14 cremations a month," he said. Around 70 per cent of those who carried out a cremation were foreigners living in Malta. The company carries out cremations overseas in Sicily and in England, with Sicily being the most preferred option due to its proximity. Camilleri said the company is contacted daily for cremation services, which can cost €4,500. The service covers all necessary documentation and airline charges, among other expenses. In comparison, buying a grave costs €8,000 once one makes it to the waiting list. The reasons why people are opting for cremations vary. "Some people always wanted to have their ashes scattered at sea, while others wish to keep their loved ones with them at home in a nice urn or in cremation jewellery," Camilleri said. He said his company submitted their first application to build a crematorium in Malta in 2017, which was turned down by the PA. The company applied again in 2021 and is still waiting. To read the entire article, please head to: **[The Times of Malta website](#)**. To read the revised guidelines, please head to the: **[Planning Authority website](#)**.



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The Columbaria Company - specialists in the production of personalised memorial artwork and after cremation memorials.



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IFZW is an established manufacturer of cremator and emission filter systems.

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Obitus - provider of bereavement technology services, delivering music, webcast and tributes for families, funeral directors and leading funeral venues throughout the UK.



OrthoMetals - a family owned and operated business, recycling metals remaining after cremation.



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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