

Cabinet – 18 November 2009

Bereavement and Registration Services - Review of Fees and Charges

Portfolio: Councillor Flower, Environment

Service: Public Safety

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

This report invites Cabinet to approve proposals for the annual increase in fees and charges associated with burials, cremation and miscellaneous registration fees as detailed in the Appendices, to take effect from 1 January 2010.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve an increase in burial, cremation and discretionary registration fees with effect from 1 January 2010 as detailed in this report and Appendices.

3. Background information

- 3.1 In accordance with protocol, it is customary to consider a review of the Council's fees and charges at least annually. Accordingly, this report seeks the approval of Cabinet for an increase in fees in relation to services within Bereavement and Registration Services.

4. Resource considerations

Financial:

- 4.1 The last review of fees and charges was approved by Cabinet on the 19 November 2008 with effect from 1 January 2009. **Appendix A** and **B** to this report show the current level of fees and the proposed increase for cemeteries, crematorium and registration services.

The majority of charges for registration services, e.g. births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships and citizen ceremonies, are set by the General Register Officer nationally. However, a number of discretionary fees are applied by Walsall and in these cases the proposed increases are shown in **Appendix B**.

It is also recommended that a 2.5% increase is levied to the cemetery lodge rentals with effect from 1 January 2010.

In meeting the local authority's responsibilities to provide a Coroner Service, a value for money exercise was undertaken in 2007 with the Manor Hospital to agree the level of service and associated charges to provide post-mortem services for the Black Country Coroner. Officers have been able to agree a favourable Service Level Agreement and as part of these negotiations, have agreed that the cremation fee for body parts, non-viable foetal remains, a still born child or child under 6 months could be held at £38.00 for the duration of the three year agreement taking effect from 1 April 2007, due to the overall benefits accrued from the Service Level Agreement.

It is also felt appropriate at this time to impose no increase to the current fees associated with the burial and cremation of infants and children under the age of 16 years.

Some fees and charges attract VAT and these are shown in the appendices as net amounts.

The level of additional annual income generated through these increases at current budgeted demand is estimated to be in the region of £55k. This anticipated additional income will off-set some of the predicted budget shortfall for this year and potentially subsequent financial years. It is important to stress, however, that the level of demand for burials, cremations and registration services is difficult to predict and increases in fees and charges to not necessarily generate the additional income forecast due to variations in demand. Specifically in relation to burial fees, the high unit cost of, for example, a new grave means that even a relatively minor fluctuation in demand has a major impact on income achieved.

There has been significant expenditure during the current financial year to improve the facilities available from Bereavement and Registration Services. Progress has been made towards installing environmental improvements at Streetly Crematorium to enable the council to abate the mercury emissions from cremations to government targets by 2012. The fabric of the Register office has been improved with a spacious and well appointed reception area compliant with the needs of the disabled. In January 2009 a seven day burial service has been made available to all sections of the community in Walsall cemeteries. The memorial safety program, which began in 2004, continues to improve the safety within the cemeteries which benefits service users.

4.2 Legal:

The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 empowers a Burial Authority to charge such fees as they think proper for, or in conjunction with, burials in a cemetery.

By virtue of Section 9 of the Cremation Act 1902, a Burial Authority may demand payment of charges and fees for cremating human remains in any crematorium provided for them.

4.3 Staffing:

None arising from this report.

5. Citizen impact

The fees and charges for burial, cremation and registration services will affect all users of the service and will help to ensure the continued delivery of a high quality service.

6. Community safety

Cemeteries are subject to vandalism from time to time and there is a continued expenditure required to safeguard cemetery visitors. Mobile patrol staff visit the cemeteries during their opening hours and grave digging and grounds maintenance staff present on site seek to provide some community reassurance and deal with visitor enquiries. However, in view of the size of the cemeteries it is not always possible to address every concern.

7. Environmental impact

None arising directly from this report.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk: The level of demand for burials and cremations is difficult to predict and accordingly, any increases in fees and charges do not necessarily generate the additional income forecast.

8.2 Performance management: None arising directly from this report.

9. Equality implications

Bereavement and Registration Services charges affect all users of the service irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, religion/faith or sexual orientation.

These proposals have introduced no increase to the current fees associated with the burial and cremation of infants and children under the age of 16 years. This complies with legislation as a specific age service.

10. Consultation

Regular consultation with a range of stakeholders is undertaken during the year to establish views about the service delivery and assist the service in its path to excellence.

Background papers

Comparisons with other local authority fees and charges.

Author

Steve Billings
Bereavement and Registration Services Manager
☎ 01922 655588
✉ billings@walsall.gov.uk

Jamie Morris



Executive Director
5 November 2009

Councillor Mike Flower



Portfolio holder
9 November 2009

SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED BURIAL AND CREMATION CHARGES

<u>CEMETERIES - SCHEDULE A</u>	Existing charge	Proposed charge
	£	£
<u>INTERMENT FEES</u>		
In Babies Memorial Garden irrespective of age (Maximum coffin size 3'8" x 1'8")	114.00	No change
Organs and other body parts removed in the course of a Post Mortem Examination/Non viable Foetal Remains/Stillborn Child/Child under 6 months in an Adult Grave at any depth	114.00	No change
Child 6 months but under the age of 16 yrs at any depth	254.00	No change
16 years and over in one coffin depth	806.00	826.00
16 years and over in two coffin depth	833.00	854.00
16 years and over in three coffin depth	860.00	882.00
Cremated Remains in Grave or Vault	317.00	325.00
<u>EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL FOR:- EARTHEN GRAVE FOR 100 YEARS</u> (inc Right to erect Headstone fee W.E.F. 1.1.99)		
Grave for full coffins	1435.00	1471.00
Grave for Cremated remains only	789.00	809.00
Grave for babies only	268.00	No change
<u>WALLED GRAVES AND VAULTS</u>		
<u>Excludes cost of construction)</u>		
Vault for 1 grave space	1435.00	1471.00
Vault for 2 grave spaces	2870.00	2942.00
Vault for 3 grave spaces	4305.00	4413.00
<u>MONUMENTS, GRAVESTONES, TABLETS AND INSCRIPTIONS</u> - Right to Erect:-		
Flatstone not exceeding 2' x 2'	263.00	270.00
Headstone not exceeding 3'	240.00	246.00
Headstone over 3'	568.00	582.00
Kerbs or Border stones not exceeding 7'6" x 3'6"	269.00	276.00
Kerbs or Border stones over 3'	568.00	582.00
Vases exceeding 14" x 12"	78.00	80.00
Additional Inscription +VAT	76.60	78.52
Memorial on a Babies Plot	64.00	No change

<u>CEMETERIES - SCHEDULE A</u>	Existing charge	Proposed charge
<u>MEMORIAL PLAQUES</u> - including burial of cremated remains		
Streetly Memorial Plaque - 4 line inscription – resident +VAT	801.39	821.42
Streetly Memorial Plaque - 4 line inscription - non resident +VAT	864.37	885.98
Streetly Memorial Plaque - Additional 4 line inscription +VAT	160.54	164.55
Bloxwich/Ryecroft Memorial Plaque - 3 line inscription – resident +VAT	540.97	554.49
Bloxwich/Ryecroft Memorial Plaque - 3 line inscription - non resident +VAT	585.22	599.85
Bloxwich/Ryecroft Memorial Plaque - Additional 3 line inscription +VAT	128.20	131.41
Transfer of Plaques/Cremated Remains between Cemeteries (inc Exhumation) +VAT	101.28	103.81
Temporary Memorials +VAT	94.47	96.83
Placing of cremated remains only beneath the plaque	75.00	77.00
Wall Plaque at Streetly Crematorium – Text only +VAT	NEW	182.61
Additional monochrome motif +VAT	NEW	8.70
Additional colour motif +VAT	NEW	34.78
Additional photo plaque +VAT	NEW	69.57

<u>CEMETERIES - SCHEDULE A</u>	Existing charge	Proposed charge
	£	£
<u>MISCELLANEOUS FEES</u>		
Maintenance of Grave, per occasion	83.00	85.00
Maintenance of Grave, per annum	123.00	126.00
Board Fee – Muslim Grave	90.00	92.00
Use of Chapel and organ (per half hour)	173.00	177.00
Exhumation of Adult/Child from a full coffin adult sized Grave +VAT	1901.28	1948.81
Exhumation of Child not from a full Adult Grave +VAT	324.25	No change
Exhumation of Cremated Remains from Earthen Grave +VAT	318.30	326.26
Exhumation of Cremated Remains from beneath a Plaque +VAT	101.28	103.81
For the services, when available for one Council Employee acting as a Bearer +VAT	105.53	108.17
Replacement for Bloxwich Barrier Swipe Card	28.00	29.00
Witness disposal of cremated remains	30.00	31.00
Search of burial records by staff per hour or part thereof	20.00	21.00
Late arrival at burial/cremation service (over 20 minutes)	50.00	51.00
<u>Out of Hours Burials</u>		
Saturday	10% additional premium on cost of exclusive right of burial and interment fee	
Sunday		
Bank Holiday/Council Holiday		
Weekday Summer Evening – May to August inclusive	5% additional premium on cost of exclusive right of burial and interment fee	

NOTES FOR CEMETERIES SCHEDULE

- i) The fees for exclusive Right of Burial (inc Right to Erect fee) and the interment fee are trebled when neither the Purchaser nor Deceased live/lived in the Borough. However, in exceptional circumstances the Head of Public Safety and/or Bereavement and Registration Services Manager have the discretion to waive or vary the premium fee surcharge.
- ii) Where two burials take place at the same time, the second fee is halved (this reflects the fact that the Grave is only excavated once)

<u>STREETLY CREMATORIUM - SCHEDULE B</u>	Existing charge	Proposed charge
<u>CREMATION FEES</u>	£	£
Organs and other body parts removed in the course of a Post Mortem Examination/Non-Viable Foetal Remains/Stillborn Child/Child under 6 months	50.00	No change
Child 6 months but under the age of 16 years now including use of organ	186.00	No change
16 years and over now including use of organ	519.00	532.00
16 years and over organised by Public Safety under Public Health Control of Disease Act 1984 and where insufficient monies are available from the deceased's estate to meet the full cremation fee now including use of organ	247.00	253.00
<u>OTHER FEES</u>		
Late Fee - Cremation Service on or after 3.45pm	70.00	72.00
Post and Package to any address in the UK	78.00	80.00
Use of Chapel including organ at Streetly Crematorium (per half hour)	173.00	177.00
Use of Chapel at Willenhall Lawn Cemetery (per half hour)	90.00	92.00
<u>URNS AND CONTAINERS</u>		
Metal Urn	53.00	54.00
Plastic Urn	29.00	30.00
Wooden Caskets	70.00	72.00
<u>MEMORIALS</u>		
Donation for trees	602.00	617.00
Bronze Plaque for Memorial Trees +VAT	177.87	182.32
<u>ENTRY IN BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE</u>		
Not exceeding 2 lines +VAT	65.53	67.17
Not exceeding 5 lines +VAT	108.09	110.79
Not exceeding 8 lines +VAT	154.90	158.77
Full Coat of Arms +VAT	154.90	158.77
Badge, Crest or Motif +VAT	131.91	135.21
<u>ENTRY IN BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE formerly kept at Ryecroft Crematorium</u>		
Not exceeding 2 lines +VAT	39.15	40.13
Not exceeding 5 lines +VAT	81.70	83.75
Not exceeding 8 lines +VAT	129.37	132.60
Full Coat of Arms +VAT	154.90	158.77
Badge, Crest or Motif +VAT	131.91	135.21

<u>STREETLY CREMATORIUM - SCHEDULE B</u>	Existing charge	Proposed charge
<u>MINIATURE BOOK</u>	£	£
Not exceeding 2 lines +VAT	78.30	80.26
Not exceeding 5 lines +VAT	108.09	110.79
Not exceeding 8 lines +VAT	131.91	135.21
Badge, Crest or Motif +VAT	83.40	85.49
Additional Inscription +VAT	41.70	42.74
<u>MEMORIAL CARD</u>		
Not exceeding 2 lines +VAT	41.70	42.74
Not exceeding 5 lines +VAT	55.32	56.70
Not exceeding 8 lines +VAT	74.90	76.77
Badge, Crest or Motif +VAT	83.40	85.49
Additional Inscription +VAT	41.70	42.74
<u>DEPOSITION OF CREMATED REMAINS</u>		
Scattering of Cremated Remains from other Crematoria +VAT	55.32	56.70

NOTES FOR STREETLY CREMATORIUM SCHEDULE

- i) The total fee for Cremation quoted includes the Medical Referees charge @ **£18.50** (where applicable); use of the Chapel and waiting area, use of organ (if required), all attendances after the coffin is placed on the catafalque by the Funeral Director, disposal of Cremated Remains in the Garden of Remembrance (if required) or provision of container when Cremated Remains are collected for private disposal, provision of taped music (if required). Includes copy of certificate of cremation if required.
- ii) Where a Cremation Service takes place for two or more persons at the same time the fee will be reduced by **£177.00**. This reflects the use of the Chapel and organ (if required)

SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED REGISTER OFFICE CHARGES

REGISTER OFFICE – SCHEDULE C	Existing charge	Proposed charge
NON STATUTORY FEES	£	£
<u>Licensing Fees</u>		
Marriage Licensing Fee (lasts for 3 years)	1129.00	1157.00
Charges for outside Marriages/Civil Partnerships – Saturday or Sunday	331.00 169.00*	339.00 173.00*
Charges for outside Marriages/Civil Partnerships Week Day - Monday – Thursday	209.00	214.00
Charges for outside Marriages/ Civil Partnerships– Friday	331.00	339.00
Re-affirmation of vows		
• Register office Mon-Sat	96.00	98.00
▪ Outside venues Mon - Thurs	191.00	196.00
Fri/Sat/Sun	282.00	289.00
Private British Citizenship ceremonies – Register Office		
Mon- Fri	169.00	173.00
Saturday	226.00	232.00
Baby/child naming		
• Register office Mon-Sat	85.00	87.00
▪ Outside venues Mon- Thurs	191.00	196.00
Fri/Sat/Sun	282.00	289.00
▪ Issue of Certificate on same day as requested – not including statutory fee (currently £7.00)	19.00	20.00

*Late ceremony fee (where no immediately preceding ceremony at the time of the booking)