

## **Cabinet – 21 November 2007**

### **Bereavement and Registration Services – Fees and Charges**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Rachel Walker, Environment

**Service Area:** Built Environment

**Wards:** All

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Forward Plan:** Yes

#### **Summary of Report**

To approve proposals for the annual increase in fees and charges associated with burials, cremation and miscellaneous registration fees as detailed in the Appendix to take effect from 1 January 2008.

#### **Recommendations**

Cabinet is requested to approve an increase in burial, cremation and discretionary registration fees with effect from 1 January 2008, as detailed in this report and Appendices.

#### **Resource and Legal Considerations**

The last review of fees and charges was approved by Cabinet on 29 November 2006 with effect from 1 January 2007. Appendix A and B to this report show the current level of fees and the proposed increase for cemeteries, crematorium and registration services.

As many of the neighbouring authorities implement their annual charging review with effect from 1 April each year, when making benchmarking comparisons on charges, there is a period when Walsall council charges appear more expensive, and this charging gap is then reduced when the annual reviews are applied by neighbouring local authorities each April. Appendix C provides a comparison on a range of typical charges with neighbouring local authorities.

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 recommended that a 5% increase is levied to the cemetery lodge rentals with effect from 1 January 2008.

In meeting the local authority's responsibilities to provide a Coroner service, a recent value for money exercise has been undertaken with the Manor Hospital, to agree the level of

services 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, would be reduced to £38.00 if it was arranged by the Manor Hospital. Cabinet is recommended to freeze this fee of £38.00 for the duration of the 3 year agreement taking effect from 1 April 2007, due to the overall benefits accrued from the new Service Level Agreement.

The level of additional annual income generated through these increases is estimated to be in the region of £100k. It is important to stress however, that the level of demand for burials, cremations and registration services is difficult to predict and increase in fees and charges do not necessarily generate the additional income forecasts due to variations in demand. Specifically in relation to burial fees, the high level of unit cost, of for example, a new grave means that even a relatively minor fluctuation in demand has a major impact on income achieved.

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 by them.

### **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.

### **Community Safety**

Cemeteries are subject to vandalism from time to time, and there is 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.

### **Environmental Impact**

The delivery of burial and cremation services has an environmental impact by virtue of its prime function to dispose of the dead in an appropriate and dignified way. In addition, there is a direct impact through use of scarce and finite land resources for meeting current and future burial provision and through impact on air quality in the emission from Streetly Crematorium.

### **Performance and Risk Management Issues**

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. This is due to unpredictable variations in demand, and the high level of unit cost, of for example a new grave means which means that even a relatively minor fluctuation in demand has a major impact in actual income achieved.

## Equality Implications

Bereavement and Registration Services charges affect all users of the service irrespective of age, gender, religion/faith.

## Consultation

As part of the review of Bereavement Services, consultation was carried out last year with a range of stakeholders to establish views about the service and assist the service in its path to excellence.

## Vision 2008

The Council's Cemeteries and Crematorium contribute make Walsall a healthy place by providing a dignified burial/cremation service. To help provide a clean and green borough, provide a haven of peace and tranquillity for the bereaved and their upkeep and maintenance encourages everyone to feel proud of Walsall.

## Background Papers

1. Comparisons with other local authority fees and charges in Appendix C

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Signed:



**Executive Director:** Jamie Morris

**Date:** 12 November 2007

Signed:



**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Rachel Walker

**Date:** 12 November 2007

## SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED BURIAL AND CREMATION CHARGES

<b><u>CEMETERIES - SCHEDULE A</u></b>	<b>Existing charge</b>	<b>Proposed charge</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>INTERMENT FEES</u></b>		
In Babies Memorial Garden irrespective of age (Maximum coffin size 3'8" x 1'8")	109.00	114.00
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	109.00	114.00
Child 6 months but under the age of 16 yrs at any depth	242.00	254.00
16 years and over in one coffin depth	726.00	750.00
16 years and over in two coffin depth	753.00	775.00
16 years and over in three coffin depth	779.00	800.00
Cremated Remains in Grave or Vault	285.00	295.00
<b><u>EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL FOR:-</u></b>		
<b><u>EARTHEN GRAVE FOR 100 YEARS</u></b> (inc Right to erect Headstone fee WEF 1 January 1999)		
Grave for full coffins	1271.00	1335.00
Grave for Cremated remains only	699.00	734.00
Grave for babies only	255.00	268.00
<b><u>WALLED GRAVES AND VAULTS</u></b>		
<b><u>(Excludes cost of construction)</u></b>		
Vault for 1 grave space	1271.00	1335.00
Vault for 2 grave spaces	2542.00	2669.00
Vault for 3 grave spaces	3813.00	4004.00

<b><u>CEMETERIES - SCHEDULE A</u></b>	<b>Existing charge</b>	<b>Proposed charge</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>MONUMENTS, GRAVESTONES, TABLETS AND INSCRIPTIONS - Right to Erect:-</u></b>		
Flatstone not exceeding 2' x 2'	233.00	245.00
Headstone not exceeding 3'	212.00	223.00
Headstone over 3'	503.00	528.00
Kerbs or Border stones not exceeding 7'6" x 3'6"	238.00	250.00
Kerbs or Border stones over 3'	503.00	528.00
Vases exceeding 14" x 12"	70.00	73.00
Additional Inscription	80.00	84.00
Memorial not > 15" x 15" x 15" in a Babies Plot	61.00	64.00
<b><u>MEMORIAL PLAQUES - including burial of cremated remains</u></b>		
Streetly Memorial Plaque - 4 line inscription – resident	832.00	874.00
Streetly Memorial Plaque - 4 line inscription - non resident	898.00	943.00
Streetly Memorial Plaque - Additional 4 line inscription	166.00	174.00
Bloxwich/Ryecroft Memorial Plaque - 3 line inscription - resident	562.00	590.00
Bloxwich/Ryecroft Memorial Plaque - 3 line inscription - non resident	608.00	638.00
Bloxwich/Ryecroft Memorial Plaque - Additional 3 line inscription	132.00	139.00
Transfer of Plaques/Cremated Remains between Cemeteries (inc Exhumation)	106.00	111.00
Temporary Memorials	98.00	103.00
<b><u>MISCELLANEOUS FEES</u></b>		
Maintenance of Grave, per occasion	73.00	77.00
Maintenance of Grave, per annum	109.00	114.00
Board Fee – Muslim Grave	80.00	84.00
Use of Chapel (per half hour)	80.00	84.00
Exhume Adult/Child from a full coffin adult sized Grave	1979.00	2078.00
Exhume Child not from a full Adult Grave	363.00	381.00
Exhume Cremated Remains from Earthen Grave	331.00	348.00
Exhumation of Cremated Remains from beneath a Plaque	106.00	111.00
For the services, when available for one Council Employee acting as a Bearer	110.00	115.00
Replacement for Bloxwich Barrier Swipe Card	25.00	26.00
<b><u>Out of Hours Burials</u></b>		
Saturday	795.00	835.00
Weekday Evening	531.00	558.00

#### **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 Protection 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)

<b>STREETLY CREMATORIUM - SCHEDULE B</b>	<b>Existing charge</b>	<b>Proposed charge</b>
<b>CREMATION FEES</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Organs and other body parts removed in the course of a Post Mortem Examination/Non-Viable Foetal Remains/Stillborn Child/Child under 6 months	48.00	50.00
Child 6 months but under the age of 16 years	104.00	109.00
16 years and over	387.00	406.00
16 years and over organised by Public Protection 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	146.00	153.00
<b>OTHER FEES</b>		
Use of Organ	73.00	77.00
Late Fee - Cremation Service on or after 3.45pm	62.00	65.00
Post and Package to any address in the UK	70.00	73.00
Use of Chapel (per half hour)	80.00	84.00
<b>URNS AND CONTAINERS</b>		
Metal Urn	47.00	49.00
Plastic Urn	26.00	27.00
Wooden Caskets	62.00	65.00
<b>MEMORIALS</b>		
Donation for trees	533.00	560.00
Bronze Plaque for Memorial Trees	185.00	194.00
<b>ENTRIES IN BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE</b>		
Not exceeding 2 lines	69.00	72.00
Not exceeding 5 lines	112.00	118.00
Not exceeding 8 lines	161.00	169.00
Full Coat of Arms	161.00	169.00
Badge, Crest or Motif	137.00	144.00
<b>Ryecroft</b>		
Not exceeding 2 lines	41.00	43.00
Not exceeding 5 lines	85.00	89.00
Not exceeding 8 lines	134.00	141.00
Full Coat of Arms	161.00	169.00
Badge, Crest or Motif	137.00	144.00
<b>MINIATURE BOOK</b>		
<b>Streetly</b>		
Not exceeding 2 lines	82.00	86.00
Not exceeding 5 lines	112.00	118.00
Not exceeding 8 lines	137.00	144.00
Badge, Crest or Motif	87.00	91.00
Additional Inscription	44.00	46.00
<b>MEMORIAL CARD</b>		
Not exceeding 2 lines	44.00	46.00
Not exceeding 5 lines	57.00	60.00
Not exceeding 8 lines	78.00	82.00
Badge, Crest or Motif	87.00	91.00
Additional Inscription	44.00	46.00

<b><u>STREETLY CREMATORIUM - SCHEDULE B</u></b>	<b>Existing charge</b>	<b>Proposed charge</b>
<b><u>DEPOSITION OF CREMATED REMAINS</u></b>		
Scattering of Cremated Remains from other Crematoria	57.00	60.00

**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, 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), and 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 £84.00. This reflects the use of the Chapel)

## SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED REGISTER OFFICE CHARGES

REGISTER OFFICE - SCHEDULE C	Existing charge	Proposed charge
NON STATUTORY FEES	£	£
<b>Licensing Fees</b>		
Marriage Licensing Fee (lasts for 3 years)	1000.00	1050.00
Charges for outside marriages – <b>Saturday</b>	293.00	308.00
*Late ceremony fee (Where no immediately preceding ceremony at the time of booking)	*150.00	*157.00
Charges for outside marriages - <b>Sunday</b>	293.00 *150.00	308.00 *£157.00
Charges for outside marriages Week Day - Monday - Thursday	185.00	194.00
Charges for outside marriages – Friday	293.00	308.00
<b>Re-affirmation of vows</b> subject to consultation wef April 2007		
▪ <b>Register office</b> Mon-Fri	85.00	89.00
<b>Re-affirmation of vows</b> subject to consultation wef April 2007		
▪ <b>Outside venues</b> Mon - Thursday Sat/Sun	170.00 250.00	178.00 262.00
<b>Private British Citizenship ceremonies</b> subject to consultation wef April 2007		
Mon- Fri Sa/Sun	150.00 200.00	157.00 210.00
<b>Baby/child naming</b> subject to consultation wef April 2007		
▪ <b>Register office</b> Mon- Fri	75.00	79.00
▪ <b>Outside venues</b> Mon- Fri Sat	170.00 250.00	178.00 262.00
Issue of certificate on the same day as requested – not including statutory fee of £7.00	<b>New Fee</b>	<b>18.00</b>

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



## Bereavement &amp; Registration Services - Charges frequently levied – All fees as at 11 September 2007

	Adult Cremation £	Adult Cremation (inc organ) £	New full grave for two (inc right to erect a memorial fee) £	New cremated remains grave for two (inc right to erect a memorial fee) £	Re- open full grave for one £	Re-open grave for cremated remains £
<b>Walsall (existing)</b>	<b>387.00</b>	<b>461.00</b>	<b>2024.00</b>	<b>984.00</b>	<b>726.00</b>	<b>285.00</b>
<b>Walsall proposed</b>	<b>406.00</b>	<b>483.00</b>	<b>2110.00</b>	<b>1029.00</b>	<b>750.00</b>	<b>295.00</b>
Birmingham	432.00	432.00	2015.00	608.00	469.00	137.00
Dudley	430.00	430.00	1305.00	626.00	450.00	184.00
Wolverhampton	415.00	415.00	1420.00	505.00	710.00	220.00
Sandwell	469.00	469.00	2041.00	1092.00	611.00	146.00