

Transforming Peterborough's Bereavement Services

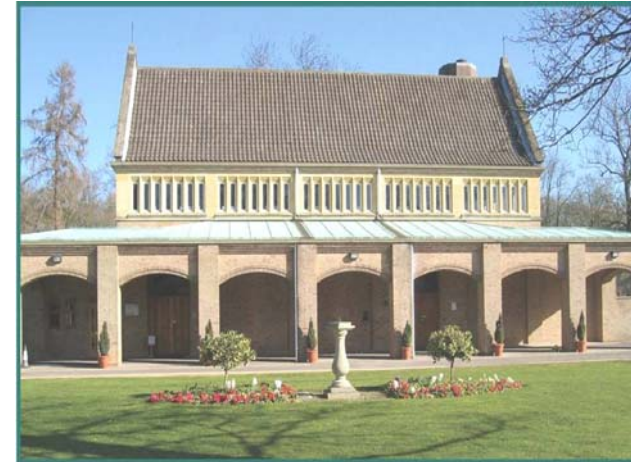
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Introduction to Peterborough

- A Cathedral City and unitary authority in the East of England
- A growing population of over 193,000
- Increase of 3.3% over a 3 year period
 - Natural change
 - New townships and business parks
 - Immigration
 - A popular commuter city
- High Muslim and Italian community
- Increasing Eastern European community

Peterborough Bereavement Services

- 1 Crematorium
- 5 Cemeteries
- 7 Closed Churchyards
- 14 staff
- Turnover of £2.29 million
- 2250 Cremations per year
- 250 Burials per year



Why the need for change

10 years ago the service was -

- Suffering from a lack of focus
- Just 'ticking along'
- Underperforming
- No appreciation of the true cost of the operating the service
 - Some areas of the service operating with a financial deficit
 - Memorial leases – cost plus pricing
 - VAT
- Burial provision was at a premium, in 2005 it was predicted that space would run out in 2011!
- No detailed business plan prepared, with capital backing, to move the service forward

Understanding what needed to change

We knew burial provision and financial structure had to be addressed but required guidance in other areas of the service

- Consultation with service users, partners and staff
 - Team meetings
 - Questionnaires
 - 2 weeks after a funeral
 - After purchasing a memorial
 - After renewing a memorial
 - Feedback cards available
 - Meetings with local ethnic groups
- Benchmarking
 - Charter for the Bereaved
 - Green Flag

What did we learn from the consultation process ?

Gave us clear Objectives

- Encourage Community Involvement
- Publicise diverse habitat
- Provide shelter for families viewing floral tributes
- Improve the children's memorial area
- Reduce the cost of Muslim brick graves and save valuable grave space.
- Provide new mausolea
- Review the fee for memorial leases
- Increase Burial Provision
 - new cemetery
 - carry out grave audits
- Draw up a business plan to deliver these and future objectives
- Set-up a trading account funded by 2.5% of interment and cremation fees.

Encourage community involvement and publicise the diverse habitat.

POCOCK'S WOOD

- Driven by Green Flag feedback
- Develop our Ancient woodland
- PECT - Heritage Woodland Project
- Partnership agreement
 - ecological restoration
 - open the woods to the public
 - wheelchair friendly path
 - woodland craft/wildlife tours

It was a challenging project aided by

- Heritage Lottery Funding
- Forestry Commission grant
- Bereavement Service contribution
- Community Payback
- Friends of Bretton Woods



Woodland Walk

Woodland Walk



- Open to the public
- Woodland craft days
- Wildlife tours

Further Community Involvement

- Budget cuts affecting maintenance budgets
- Wanting to keep high standards
 - Solutions???

- Community Payback-



40 to 300 hours unpaid work as part of a community sentence.

- Seetec-



Work experience for long term unemployed. Individuals gain:

- experience
- skills
- routine
- references

Provide Shelter for families to view tributes

Feedback received from questionnaires

- Bland
- Lacking shelter
- Inadequate lighting
- Not fit for purpose



Covered Walkway

- To lead from rear exit of the chapel to the tribute area
- Phase 1
 - From chapel to wreath area
- Phase 2
 - Around the wreath area
 - Additional centre shelter
- Structure must be in keeping with the grounds
- Built from natural materials
- Minimal disruption to families
- Paid from the trading account
- Put out to tender



Results.....

A stunning covered walkway built in oak with a cedar shingle roof



- Families are kept dry, from leaving to the Chapel to getting into their limousine.
- The area is well lit and private.
- The tribute area is far more attractive.

Improve the Children's Memorial Area

- Feedback given from families indicated that the children's area was difficult to identify.
- Success of covered walkway
 - lych gate made from the same materials
- Adequate funding for second lych gate at the entrance to the Woodland Walk



Continued Transformation

Teena Wright

Bereavement Services Manager – Compliance.

Reduce the cost of Muslim Brick Graves and Grave save space.

Feed back from our meetings with the Muslim Community indicated that :

- There were concerns with the fee for bricked graves
- Space was rapidly being used up
- An alternative design/scheme was necessary

Trenched Graves



- Graves constructed in rows of 12 within a trench
 - brick graves constructed in each 8'x4' space
- This has resulted in:
 - a reduction of burial space required by 50%
 - containing each bricked grave in a standard grave space
 - a reduction in EROB by 50%
 - prolonged the life expectancy of the cemetery

Provision of New Mausolea

Our extensive consultations and meetings with the Italian community highlighted the need for the provision of new mausolea. The scheme was only viable if we met the demanding needs of the community, which were-

- A local Italian builder was used
- The design was of Italian origin
- High quality materials were used throughout
- The design was approved in principle by the community.
- The scheme was a major undertaking involving
 - Cabinet approval
 - Capital funding
 - Extensive designing, planning and major building work.
- Advantages
 - Meet the needs of the Italian community for the foreseeable future
 - Generate a net surplus for the Council of over £850,000

Results

- Six units each containing 54 niches
- Phase 1 - 3 units of 54 niches were built initially
- Initial capital funding of £505,000



- Income generated funded the second phase
- A net surplus of £850,899 was achieved when phase 2 was completed and units sold

Review of the Memorial Lease Structure

- Based on a simple cost plus pricing formula that didn't consider-
 - The amount of space the memorial required
 - The construction costs of foundations, walls, edging
 - Construction of paths etc. leading to memorials
 - Maintenance of the memorial and associated infrastructure
- VAT – a total review of the VAT for the whole service was carried out
- When this was complete the fee structure was amended to reflect the true cost of each leased memorial.

Burial Provision

- 2005 – 6 years burial space available
- Solution
 - Search for a new cemetery site
 - Audit cemeteries

New Cemetery

- Problems
 - Difficulty in short listing suitably sized sites
 - Planning objections, land earmarked for gravel extraction
 - Environmental Issues – flood plains, aquifers
 - Archaeology - large Roman settlements to the southeast
 - We are still actively looking and have widened the search area

Cemetery Audits

- Are we utilising current available space effectively
- Analyse burial statistics, registers and cultural trends
- Outcome of Audit
 - Redesignated areas within the cemetery to increase space
 - Reduce cost and reduce space used for Muslim community
 - Burial provision that should have been exhausted in 2011 is now predicted to last until 2031

Business/Management Plan

To ensure our objectives were effectively managed, delivered and monitored a robust business plan was drawn up

Purpose of the Plan

- To continue to effectively manage and improve the quality of services
- To identify future service requirements and positively react to changes in circumstances,
- To maintain and develop the crematorium and cemeteries and maintain closed churchyards sympathetically and in line with the Council's priorities and policies.

Aims of the Plan

- To ensure a holistic approach to the services, to ensure that all locations are maintained to a consistent quality standard
- To provide attractive and peaceful places for the bereaved and visitors.
- To improve, and where possible develop, the environmental, recreational and wildlife to stimulate and encourage public participation and involvement
- To embrace, positive changes and sympathetically blend them into existing site layouts.
- To protect the historical nature and layout of locations as necessary.
- To ensure, where appropriate, existing structures and features are respected and conserved.
- To be proactive and maintain a quality service which is capable of changing as circumstances arise.

Trading Account

For the business plan to be viable it needed to be adequately funded this was achieved by:

- Ring fencing 2.5 % of the income received from cremation and interment fees
- Approved by our portfolio holder
- Held in a trading account
- Matched to the business plan

What we achieved

- Completion of major projects at the Crematorium and Cemeteries
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Higher staff morale
- Greater community involvement
- A wider appreciation of the wildlife in our grounds
- Continued Green Flag status
- ICCM Charter for the Bereaved Gold Standard
- APSE Bereavement Service of the Year finalist 2015 and 2016
- A balanced budget
- A surplus of over £1.2 million in the last 12 months

What about the future?

- Continue looking for a new cemetery site
- Further audits of time expired graves
- New pergola memorial scheme
- Apprentice gardener
- Continued partnership working with the community
- Continually develop the business/management plan
- To be proactive and maintain a quality service that meets the needs of our customers
- To ensure that Dave's ship, now our ship, is steered in the right direction

Thank you for listening

Your feedback is welcome