

Committee(s): Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	Dated: 18 January 2022
Subject: Cemetery and Crematorium Fees and Charges Report 2022 - 2023	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,4,11,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report author: Gary Burks Superintendent, City of London Cemetery and Crematorium	

Summary

Fees and charges for the services provided at the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium are reviewed annually and this report presents the proposals for 2022/23.

The report proposes price increases of 2% for most services offered including, cremations, burials, new graves, memorial dedications, and other sundry items with some rounding. Fees such as genealogy searches and grave transfers will not change. The Cemetery & Crematorium continues to offer a wide range of cremation and burial options to ensure that both services cater to a range of needs and budgets.

The proposed increases are set to help us in our aim to maintain a break-even position for the service and ensure our fees are in line with other providers in the local area.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Agree the fees and charges as set out in this report and shown in Appendix 1 for implementation with effect from 1 April 2022

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium reviews the fees and charges that it makes for the services provided each year and the new fees come into force on the 1st April each year. This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for the year 2022/23 for your Committee's approval.

Current Position

2. The strategy used when setting fees and charges in previous years has been to keep prices affordable, maintain choice and increase income to meet the needs of the service and operate as close to a break-even position as possible. In recent years we have increased fees significantly above inflation and last year fees were increased by 5% for cremations and new graves. A 1.3% increase for interment fees and most other items such as grave permits and urns and caskets. But no increase for memorial gardens, book or remembrance and grave care.
3. In setting fees in a competitive market, it is critical to consider those charged by our competitors. We have therefore reviewed the fees and charges amongst other authorities and private companies in the surrounding areas; details are given in tables 1 and 2 below.
4. Another factor that the cemetery and crematorium consider when setting fees is the affect that our charges place on funeral debt and funeral poverty. In 2019 the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) carried out a national inquiry based on the findings of an interim report in 2018 which highlighted significant concerns regarding price increases of funeral directors and crematoria over the last decade.
5. Earlier this year the CMA Funeral Markets Investigation Order was published setting out its findings and requirements for the funerals industry and this included a requirement to publish all fees relating to funerals. The City of London meets all of the requirements set out in the order.
6. The cost of funerals has climbed significantly in recent years but has now stabilised with reductions in some areas. The City of London Corporation has considered this when offering a range of funeral choices and in the setting of fees and charges. The City of London Corporation provides choice and prices to ensure that burial and cremation remains affordable.
7. The Children's Funeral Fund was introduced in England in July 2019 and means that families who suffer the death of a child (up to the age of 18) do not have to meet the cost of the funeral. The fund is generous and allows for a cremation or burial and for a grave to be purchased that will allow for future adult burials. To date we have processed 20 claims through the fund.

8. In February this year the city introduced live funeral streaming at the modern crematorium, this has been extremely well received and has improved the offer at the site. At the time of writing, we have already carried out 600 streaming services and we are confident that it will continue to be a benefit to the bereaved and an asset to the site going forwards.
9. The following tables provide analysis of cremation and lawn grave costs. These have been provided in detail as indicative benchmarks. A full list of all the proposed burial and cremation charges at the Cemetery & Crematorium is provided in appendix 1 and these include a wide variety of funeral options ranging from early morning “drop off” cremation slots with no service to longer weekend funeral times and from burial in a public or woodland grave through to large fully constructed graves with 100year leases. This wide range helps to ensure choice and that more affordable options remain despite price increases.

Table 1 – Cremation statistics and fees for other local and London Crematoria

Current Position

Crematorium	Total Cremations 2018	Total Cremations 2019	Total Cremations 2020	Standard Cremation Fees (Current)
East London	499	538	688	£844
Manor Park	407	365	317	£900
Croydon	1762	1661	2061	£894
New Southgate	786	780	899	£925
South Essex	3012	2955	3288	£995
Enfield	1879	1744	2103	£949
Forest Park	1312	1265	1832	£995
Harlow	1517	1485	1619	£995
City of London	2536	2374	2711	£976
City of London Proposed Fee for 2022/23				£995
City of London Residents will receive a reduction of £498 on the proposed fees				

10. Table one shows that the current cremation fee is competitive with other local crematoria, that the proposed fee is in keeping with fees within the general area and continues to provide value for money, whilst providing extra income needed to meet inflationary increases.

Table 2 – Current Resident and Non-Resident Grave Purchase and Burial Fees

Cemetery & Crematorium & Lease (in years)	New Lawn grave Resident & Non-Resident (including 1st interment) 2020	Burial Fee (Current)
East London	Not publicly available	Not Publicly Available
Manor Park	£4,250	£1,780
Forest Park	(Res) £3,160 (Non-Res) £5,948	(Res) £800 (Non-Res) £1,150
South Essex	(Res) £3,620 (Non-Res) £7,240	(Res) £1,420 (Non-Res) £2,840
Enfield	(Res) £4,690 (Non-Res) £7,490	(Res) £1,890 (Non-Res) £1,890
Croydon	(Res) £3,662 (Non-Res) £7,324	(Res) £1,110 (Non-Res) £2,220
New Southgate	Standard Grave £6,515 Heritage Grave £11,000	£1,800
City of London (Heritage Grave)	Non-Res) £3,830	£1,700
City of London (virgin soil) Lawn	(Non-Res) £5,240	£1,700
Proposed fee for 2022/23	Heritage (non-Res) £ 3,906 Virgin Soil Lawn (Non-Res) £5,345	£1,734
City of London Residents will receive a reduction of £498 on the proposed burial fees		

11. Table 2 illustrates that there is a significant variation between fees, but the City Corporation remains generally in line with other nearby local authorities and with our nearest private competitors. However, the landscape value, service provision, grave choice and maintenance standards at the site means that it remains the preferred burial choice for many.

Proposals

12. Having considered the information set out above and having consulted within the funeral industry and with cemetery staff, we believe that the market can withstand the price increases proposed in the following paragraphs and listed in Appendix 1

13. The general level of increase proposed is 2% for cremations, new graves and other fees such as interments, memorial gardens, grave care and book of remembrance as well as ancillary services, with some rounding. We have not used the Open Spaces Department's recognised RPI figure of 4.9%. This will increase our cremation fee to £995 and it is felt that any greater increases at this time would take the fee over £1000 which would not be prudent. There is no increase for genealogy fees or grave transfers as both are considered to be above slightly high.
14. The city offers a proposed woodland grave fee, including burial, of £3,034 and a heritage grave (reuse grave) fee of £3906 which allows for a memorial. At the opposite end of the fee structure the proposed charge for a partly constructed grave and fully constructed vault will be £25,234 and £40,634 respectively. This offers a choice to suit a wide range of families.
15. Local charges for funeral streaming, where it is available, range from £45 to £80 and we feel that the proposed fee of £66 is reasonable but not excessive.
16. The cemetery and crematorium division has made significant above inflation increases in previous years and has met the 12% savings required. We do not envisage that this increase will affect our market share due to the level of service provided and the likely increases that will be made by our local competitors.
17. Options such as early cremation services at a lower fee ensure that those families on low income can still choose the City of London as a choice for the funeral of a loved one and our fee of £498 for funerals with no service means that families choosing to have a funeral service elsewhere (at a local church for example) can do so. This means that our proposed cremation fees range from £498 up to £1428 for those with a full service in our chapel at the weekend.

Key Data

18. This report sets out proposals for a 2% increase in fees and charges at the City of London cemetery and crematorium. This proposal is made after careful benchmarking as per the tables above and is intended to increase income whilst maintaining the offer of affordable burial and cremation as well as a range of choices to bereaved families in the areas served.

Options

19. **Option 1** - Agree the proposed scale of charges for the year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 as set out in the main list attached as Appendix 1 and explained within this report. **This is recommended.**
20. **Option 2** - To keep charges as they are. This would be in effect a price cut whilst inflationary increases would still apply to our own expenses. **This is not recommended**
21. **Option 3** - To increase fees and charges higher than those proposed in Appendix 1. This has the risk of putting our fees and charges in the upper / higher end of the market and make us less competitive. This could result in a reduction in the

number of burials, cremations and take up of other services provided at the Cemetery and Crematorium as families choose to go to cheaper neighbouring facilities. It could also contribute to funeral debt and funeral poverty. **This is not recommended.**

Corporate and Strategic Implications

Strategic Implications

22. The Cemetery and Crematorium services actively contribute to the following Corporate Plan 2018-23 aims and outcomes:

- **Contribute to a flourishing society**
- **Shape outstanding environments**

Financial Implications

23. The Cemetery and crematorium is expected to operate as a not for profit service and to meet all costs, where possible. We will achieve this by introducing a new pricing plan and by the careful management of expenditure whilst trying to avoid a reduction in the quality of maintenance and the service provided to bereaved families. The proposed fees and charges should generate additional income of approximately £100,000 which will cover increases in costs.

24. Officers wish to remind this Committee that the services we provide are at the point of need and whilst we may retain our percentage share of the market, any regional trend in death rates may create unpredictability around the achievement of income.

Resource implications

25. The recommendations in this report have no additional resource Implications.

Legal Implications

26. The City of London is empowered to make fees and charges for the services provided at the Cemetery and Crematorium under powers provided within Article 15(1) of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and section 9 of the Cremation Act 1902. Such fees must be properly incurred.

Risk Implications

27. The cemetery and crematorium business risks are not changed by the recommendations in this report.

Equalities Implications

10. The recommendations in this report should have no impact (positive or negative) on people protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. There is no fee for the cremation

and service of a child up to 16 years and the burial fee for a child is reduced by the current full cremation fee.

Climate Implications

28. There are no climate implications from the recommendations in this report. However, it should be noted that the successful completion of the cremator replacement project in February 2021 means that the emissions from all cremations carried out by the crematorium now are fully abated. The current legal requirement is for 50% abatement.

Security Implications

29. There are no security implications from the recommendations within this report.

Conclusions

30. As the major provider of burial and cremation services for the City and its neighbours, the Corporation is recognised as one of the UK's leading burial and cremation authorities. In addition to meeting the needs of the bereaved the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium is an historic and listed open space (the largest in the London Borough of Newham) and one that was originally designed as both a park and an educational resource. The Cemetery and Crematorium is however also a business in competition with several local public and privately-owned operators.

31. The above factors have been considered in setting the fees and charges for the Cemetery and Crematorium for implementation in financial year 2022/23 which I propose for approval by your Committee.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – main items of the Proposed Fees and Charges for 2022/23

Report author

Gary Burks

Superintendent & Registrar, City of London Cemetery and Crematorium
Open Spaces Department

E: gary.burks@cityoflondon.gov.uk

T: 020 8530 9831