

# FEES AND CHARGES REPORT

## APPENDIX 13 – LEA FIELDS CREMATORIUM

### 1. Service description

Lea Fields Crematorium offers an excellent bereavement service and facility for West Lindsey residents, and the wider area, in line with the Bereavement Strategy and in accordance with all relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

Lea Fields delivers cost effective operations, compassionate cremations and a supportive after care service.

There is also the opportunity for family and friends to lease memorials for loved ones who have passed as a way of coping with the overwhelming grief felt after a death.

Lea Fields has developed its offer as a result of market insight, offering four types of services to meet the differing needs of individuals:

**Cremation services** - Lea Fields Crematorium offer a 45-minute service hourly at 10:30: 11:30: 12:30: 13:30: 14:30 and 15:30.

**Early Start Services**- The 09:00 and 09:45 early start services are at 45-minute intervals and provide 35 minutes maximum service time and 10 minutes to fully vacate the chapel ready for the next service to begin.

**Farewell Service** -The Farewell Service are available at 09:00. This service is an attended direct funeral that gives up to six family members an opportunity to say their private farewell. Although an Officiant will not be leading, and no eulogy will be said, the family can choose one piece of music to be played throughout this short 10-minute farewell.

**Direct Funerals** - Organised through Funeral Directors, these services are not attended by family or friends, coffins are still received in chapel before cremation.

Additional offerings for enhanced services include Memorial service for burial elsewhere, extended chapel time, Saturday service, webcasting, slideshow, video tributes and DVD production.

### 2. Prior years analysis, current financial year projections

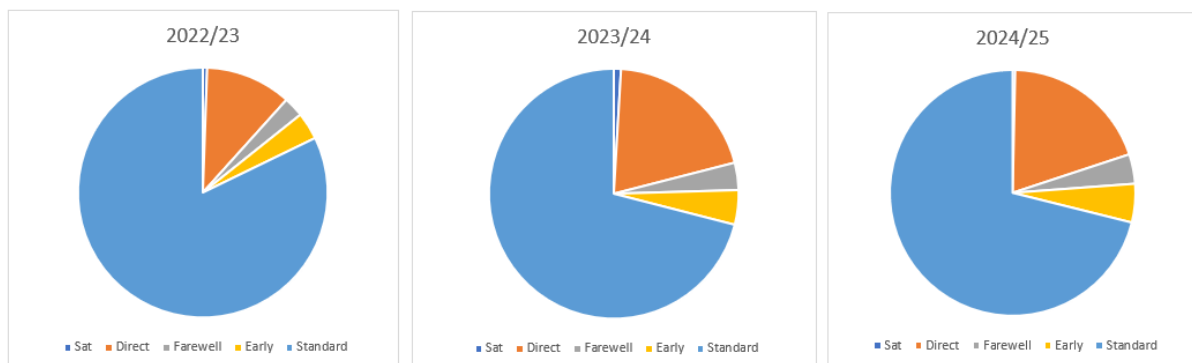
Since the first service on 3rd February 2020 to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 the Crematorium has performed 2,607 services and has served over fifty different Funeral Director companies. Lea Fields continues to receive positive feedback form both funeral directors and families.

The table below shows the actual cremations figures for 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and the forecast 2024/2025 figures as at 30/09/2024.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of Cremations	573	538	538	592
Income from Cremations	(450,570)	(428,426)	(414,743)	(478,800)

The pie charts below shows the actual percentage split of the cremation service types provided from 2022/2023 to 2024/2025. During the pandemic ‘Direct Services’ increased in demand from a national average of 3% to 20% in 2023. These saw an increase during the pandemic because restrictions were imposed on numbers being allowed to attend a funeral, however the number of Direct Funerals has remained consistently high even after restrictions ended, possibly because of the impact of the cost of living crisis or increased awareness.

There appears to be a continuing rise in the number of Direct Services in comparison to Standard Cremation Services. In 2021/2022 Direct services attributed to 8% of all our services. In 2022/2023 this rose to 11%. In 2023/2024 we saw this increase again to 20%. This follows the shift in the national trend towards direct funerals. 2024/2025 forecast is based on 20%.



### 3. Pricing

Lea Fields Crematorium pricing is benchmarked against competing facilities in Lincoln, North Lincolnshire (Scunthorpe), and Doncaster. We also included benchmarking for Babworth Crematorium (Westerleigh group) and Barnby Moor Crematorium (Memoria group), which are privately owned crematoria forming part of their larger network.

In 2021 Lincoln Crematorium reduced their ‘Direct Cremation’ fee by £100 and North Lincolnshire introduced ‘Layered service’ approach. Lea Fields has remained competitive despite our competitors’ reactions.



#### **4. Understanding Customers and Markets**

Local Authority operated crematoria no longer have the monopoly in the crematoria industry. Private investors control a large portfolio of crematoria locations around the UK and have also invested in this area. They have developed a multiple marketing strategy, using TV advertising as an effective tool to promote their offer and pursue a greater market share, brand awareness and sales revenue.

Holding numerous facilities gives providers power within the industry, leaving Local Authorities disadvantaged in resources, buying power and resilience.

Lea Fields compete with both neighbouring Local Authorities and private investors in this highly competitive and fast-changing environment. We seek new information and invite innovation to ensure a sustainable business model that rivals both our private and local authority competitors.

Customer expectations continue to rise in the bereavement industry and it is constantly evolving, driven by greater choice and easily accessible information. Whilst ensuring that Lea Fields remains true to the West Lindsey District Council ethos, we also understand and appreciate that change and innovation is essential for survival in this highly competitive and fast-changing environment.

Maximising our cremator at off peak times is essential to running efficiently. One cremator can successfully achieve five cremations in a 7.5 hour day; however, this is on the assumption we have a cremation at the start of the day and cremate continuously throughout the day. Our cremating hours are our most valuable asset. Early services are often less favourable to our customers despite any financial incentives to increase take up, this makes direct cremation invaluable for maximising usage of our assets.

In addition to our offer of direct services, usually at 08:45, and early start shorter services at 09:00 and 09:45 we have a further six possible hourly services available.

We conduct horizon scanning, best practice and professional judgement as to what additional capacity we can provide each day based on risk and opportunities.

#### **5. Proposed Charges**

The proposed charges are outlined in the table below.

Direct cremations maximise staff time and use of equipment that may otherwise not be utilised at less favourable times during the day. Other Crematoriums have reduced their Direct Cremations service fees by as much as £100 to try to increase their market share. Direct Cremations play an important part of our service and running cost efficiency, we are proposing to increase the charge by 3.1% to £500, which keeps our charge at a level that is consistent with benchmarking data and is reflected in the latest approved Business Plan.

Early start cremation services have been increased 3.1% bringing the service charge up to £825. This remains £115 cheaper than the Standard service which is proposed to rise by 3.3% to £940.

Farewell services have been increased by 3.6% and Saturday services by 3.1%.

These decisions have been made to ensure we stay competitive with other Cremation providers. This is especially important as we are still a relatively new provider in the market. However, Chapel extensions and Memorial services have been increased above inflation as these are considered a luxury add on to a service. The 20min chapel extensions have been increased by 5.8%. The 40min chapel extensions and Memorials services have been 12.4%.

Leased memorials have been increased by 3.5% rounded to the nearest pound.

Chapel Tributes are frozen or small increase applied to enhance our offer and encourage take up to widen our reach. If our media supplier increases their charges we will do an additional request to Committee in year to reflect the increase.

To encourage strewing/scattering of cremated remains into our Garden of Remembrance from another crematorium and potential memorial sales our fee has been frozen at the current rate of £55. It is important to try to attract these customers as we look to embed Lea Fields Crematorium in the local community. This could lead to families choosing Lea Fields for future services taking place at our crematorium, it will also encourage memorial sales for loved ones scattered here.

## 6. Impact on Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The budgets within the MTFP are aligned to the latest business case for the Crematorium, which was presented to Corporate Policy and Resources committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2024.

	2025/26 (£)	2026/27 (£)	2027/28 (£)	2028/29 (£)	2029/30 (£)
Current Budget in MTFP	(555,200)	(600,800)	(647,200)	(695,500)	(695,500)
Proposed Budget - Chapel income - 20 minute extension	(3,800)	(4,500)	(4,500)	(4,500)	(4,500)
Proposed Budget - Barbican Memorial	(1,300)	(1,600)	(1,600)	(1,600)	(1,600)
Proposed Budget - Book of Remembrance	(1,200)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)
Proposed Budget - Direct Cremations	(61,000)	(64,300)	(67,800)	(69,800)	(69,800)
Proposed Budget - Early Start Cremation	(26,400)	(28,100)	(29,700)	(30,600)	(30,600)
Proposed Budget - Farewell Cremation	(13,700)	(14,700)	(15,800)	(16,300)	(16,300)
Proposed Budget - Memorial Service (45 mins)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Proposed Budget - Mulberry Tree	(1,200)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)
Proposed Budget - Standard Cremation	(414,200)	(450,200)	(490,300)	(535,100)	(535,100)
Proposed Budget - Saturday Service Cremation	(2,700)	(2,800)	(2,900)	(3,000)	(3,000)
Proposed Budget - Sanctum 2000 Vault	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)
Proposed Budget - Chapel Fee Extension	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Proposed Budget - Chapel Tributes income	(23,400)	(25,500)	(25,500)	(25,500)	(25,500)
Proposed Budget - Splay Desk Memorial	(2,400)	(2,400)	(2,400)	(2,400)	(2,400)
Impact on MTFP 2025/26 Pressure/ (Saving)	-	-	-	-	-

## **7. Recommendation**

Members are requested to recommend to Council the charges for 2025/2026 as illustrated in the schedule below:

Prosperous Communities Committee

Crematorium

2024/25	Proposed Increase / (Decrease)		2025/26	VAT Amount	2025/26 Charge Inc. VAT	VAT Rate
	£	% Type or £				

Cremation			£910.00	3.3%	£30.00	£940.00	£0.00	£940.00	X
Early start (09:00 & 09:45)			£800.00	3.1%	£25.00	£825.00	£0.00	£825.00	X
Direct Cremation (no attendance 08:45)			£485.00	3.1%	£15.00	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	X
The Farewell Service	A 10 minute service, for 6 mourners, 1 piece of music played on repeat. No minister.		£555.00	3.6%	£20.00	£575.00	£0.00	£575.00	X
Body parts/slides and blocks			£90.00	5.6%	£5.00	£95.00	£0.00	£95.00	X
Saturday service (with discussion with Manager)			£1,324.00	3.1%	£41.00	£1,365.00	£0.00	£1,365.00	X
Late cancellation fee (cancellations within 72 hours of service)			£130.00	3.8%	£5.00	£135.00	£0.00	£135.00	X
Chapel fee (extension 20 minutes)			£208.00	5.8%	£12.00	£220.00	£0.00	£220.00	X
Chapel fee (extension 40 minutes)			£267.00	12.4%	£33.00	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	X
Memorial Service (45mins)			£267.00	12.4%	£33.00	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	X
Strewing/scattering of cremated remains from elsewhere			£55.00	0.0%	£0.00	£55.00	£0.00	£55.00	X
Webcast recording - Live Only	Stream a service live on request		£41.67	10.0%	£4.16	£45.83	£9.17	£55.00	S
Bundle	Webcast recording - Live & On Demand	Stream a service live and watch on demand for a further 28 days, with the option to download	£50.00	8.3%	£4.17	£54.17	£10.83	£65.00	S
Bundle	DVD, USB, Blue-Ray, Audio CD	A keepsake copy of the service, Tribute, or both. If purchased as part of the Bundle choose from USB or DVD.	£54.17	0.0%	£0.00	£54.17	£10.83	£65.00	S
Bundle	Halo Photo	First photo is free, second is chargeable. One photo is included if purchased as part of the Bundle.	£16.67	0.0%	£0.00	£16.67	£3.33	£20.00	S
Bundle	Music Slideshow	A beautifully simple photo tribute of up to 25 photos, timed to their chosen piece of music with fade transitions.	£72.50	0.0%	£0.00	£72.50	£14.50	£87.00	S
Bundle	Obitus Bundle	10% saving vs individual sale price (total £209 incl. VAT)	£158.33	12.3%	£19.42	£177.75	£35.55	£213.30	S
	DVD recording (each subsequent copy)		£26.67	9.4%	£2.50	£29.17	£5.83	£35.00	S
	Visual tribute (1 photograph)	First photo is free, second is chargeable.	£16.67	0.0%	£0.00	£16.67	£3.33	£20.00	S
	Basic Slideshow	Photo slide show of up to 25 photos with simple transitions that can be either played in loop throughout the service at a specific point in the service, not timed to music.	£43.33	5.8%	£2.50	£45.83	£9.17	£55.00	S
	Themed Tribute	A photo montage with a difference; users can choose from a range of themes and have up to 25 photos professionally edited and timed to their chosen piece of music.	£83.33	0.0%	£0.00	£83.33	£16.67	£100.00	S
	Bespoke Tribute	A professionally crafted bespoke tribute for the service by our in-house media team. Families and arrangers will have access to a "bespoke concierge" to create something unique and personal.	£333.33	0.0%	£0.00	£333.33	£66.67	£400.00	S
	Visual tribute (for additional 25 photos)	Both standard and professionally edited slideshow	£27.50	0.0%	£0.00	£27.50	£5.50	£33.00	S
	Video tribute (up to 5 minutes)	A family supplies video tribute	£36.67	0.0%	£0.00	£36.67	£7.33	£44.00	S
	Video Book	A keepsake Video Book displaying the service, Tribute, or both.	£83.33	0.0%	£0.00	£83.33	£16.67	£100.00	S
	Memory Box	A premium quality Memory Box with 25 printed photos, a keepsake USB and a keepsake DVD displaying the Live Stream/ Tribute, or both if both products were chosen	£120.83	0.0%	£0.00	£120.83	£24.17	£145.00	S
	A download link of the pro-tribute		£20.00	0.0%	£0.00	£20.00	£4.00	£24.00	S
	Extra work (Pro tribute)		£18.33	13.6%	£2.50	£20.83	£4.17	£25.00	S

Prosperous Communities Committee

Crematorium

2024/25	Proposed Increase / (Decrease)		2025/26	VAT Amount	2025/26 Charge Inc. VAT	VAT Rate
	£	% Type or £				

Book of Remembrance (3 lines)	3 lines from 2024/2025 (2 lines no longer available)	£91.67	3.6%	£3.33	£95.00	£19.00	£114.00	S
Book of Remembrance (each additional line) (to a maximum of 8 lines)		£10.00	4.2%	£0.42	£10.42	£2.08	£12.50	S
Book of Remembrance (illustrations)	plus Admin Fee £10-£30 dependent on requirements	POA			POA	POA	POA	S
Miniature book (leather - 2 lines)		£97.08	3.0%	£2.92	£100.00	£20.00	£120.00	S
Miniature book (leather - 5 lines)		£118.33	2.1%	£2.50	£120.83	£24.17	£145.00	S
Miniature book (leather - 8 lines)		£130.00	2.6%	£3.33	£133.33	£26.67	£160.00	S
Memorial card (2 lines)		£43.33	5.8%	£2.50	£45.83	£9.17	£55.00	S
Memorial card (5 lines)		£65.00	2.6%	£1.67	£66.67	£13.33	£80.00	S
Memorial card (8 lines)		£75.00	5.6%	£4.17	£79.17	£15.83	£95.00	S
Additional inscription to existing books and cards		£20.00	16.7%	£3.33	£23.33	£4.67	£28.00	S
Floral design (available for 5 and 8 lines only)		£43.33	5.8%	£2.50	£45.83	£9.17	£55.00	S
Caskets *		£49.17	10.2%	£5.00	£54.17	£10.83	£65.00	S
Temporary deposit of Cremated remains per month after initial month		£12.50	33.4%	£4.17	£16.67	£3.33	£20.00	S
Virtual Memorial Service		£62.50	0.0%	£0.00	£62.50	£12.50	£75.00	S
Virtual Memorial Service including music tribute		£120.83	0.0%	£0.00	£120.83	£24.17	£145.00	S
*** Sanctum 2000 vault (leased for 10 years) including up to 80 letters **		£943.33	3.5%	£33.34	£976.67	£195.33	£1,172.00	S
*** Sanctum 2000 vault - per letter above 80		£2.92	5.5%	£0.16	£3.08	£0.62	£3.70	S
*** Desk Memorial **		£579.17	2.9%	£16.66	£595.83	£119.17	£715.00	S
*** Barbican memorial (space lease for 5 years) **		£245.00	3.7%	£9.17	£254.17	£50.83	£305.00	S
*** Mulberry Tree - per leaf, space leased for 5 years		£166.67	3.5%	£5.83	£172.50	£34.50	£207.00	S
*** Mulberry Tree - per leaf with motif, space leased for 5 years		£195.83	3.4%	£6.67	£202.50	£40.50	£243.00	S
Memorial Glass Offering - Robin Ornament	Individual handmade ashes into glass ornaments containing a small amount of loved ones ashes and comes with a certificate of authenticity.	£95.83	4.4%	£4.17	£100.00	£20.00	£120.00	S
Memorial Glass Offering - Memorial Bauble with Stand		£120.83	3.5%	£4.17	£125.00	£25.00	£150.00	S

\* If a casket is sold as part of a funeral package it will be exempt from VAT; if supplied on its own it will be standard rated

\*\* Sanctum 2000 vault/Barbican memorial/Desk memorial/Mulberry tree - additional artwork/photo plaque can be provided - POA (plus Admin Fee £10-£30 dependent on requirements)

\*\*\* When a Mulberry leaf, Barbican plaque, Desk memorial or Sanctum vault is purchased there will be a 10% discount applied to any book of remembrance purchase.