



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Catafalque at Belfast Crematorium
<b>Date:</b>	13 October 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sharon McCloy, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>The City of Belfast Crematorium was opened in 1961. Over the last 5 years the management responsible for the City of Belfast Crematorium have been made aware of the health and safety issues regarding the structure and height of the existing original catafalque in the funeral church. The 3 steps leading up to the catafalque together with the actual height of the catafalque, all pose a manual handling risk during arrival and placement of the coffin. Pallbearers which often include elderly family members have struggled to walk in a dignified manner whilst carrying a coffin up the 3 steps and place the coffin onto the catafalque which is chest height.</p> <p>The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) have been extremely vocal with regards to this health and safety risk concerning the catafalque and have consulted councillors and held meetings with the Director of Parks and Leisure.</p> <p>Property Maintenance were consulted and have drawn up detailed plans to remove the 3 steps at the base of the catafalque and reduce the height of the catafalque together with the installation of a safety rail.</p> <p>The NAFD were consulted during the drawing up of these plans together with the Healthy and Safety Unit, the crematorium staff and management and their approval has been obtained.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>This work has been entered onto the Planned Maintenance Schedule for 2011/12. It requires the funeral church to be closed to the public for this work to be completed safely. Property Maintenance is now in a position to</p>

	<p>carry out the work which is estimated to take 2-3 days to complete. As there are no suitable bank holidays between now and late Spring 2012 during which the work could be done, Committee approval is being sought to temporarily close the operational side of the crematorium for 3 days from Saturday 12 November to Monday 14 November 2011 to enable this work to be carried out.</p> <p>This means the funeral church would close down on the evening of Friday 11 November after the last cremation service is complete, re-opening again for cremations on the morning of Tuesday 15 November. This enables the contractors to have 3 full days and nights to carry out this work.</p> <p>The crematorium building and grounds would remain open to the public for burials, scatterings and collection of cremated remains and book of remembrance viewing. The crematorium office would function as normal. The funeral church and connecting hall/corridors would be closed off for health and safety reasons to members of the public.</p> <p>There would be no funeral services on Saturday morning (normally 4) or on Monday (normally 11). This disruption to the availability of cremation service times could result in a possible backlog of cremations.</p>
--	---

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u> To help minimize the disruption to bereaved families staff have offered to carry out additional cremation service times on the evenings of Thursday 10, Friday 11, Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 November. This would be on overtime and therefore have some financial implications.</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
	None.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended that approval is given to close the City of Belfast Crematorium from 6.00pm on Friday 11 November 2011, re-opening again on Tuesday 15 November at 8.30am, to allow this planned maintenance work to be carried out in the funeral church.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	Sharon McCloy, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager. Decision of Committee to be implemented by 15 November 2011.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	None.

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1: Catafalque Construction Plan Appendix 2: Catafalque Handrail Appendix 3: Structural frame to support roller