

INSTITUTE OF CEMETERY & CREMATORIUM MANAGEMENT

Report of the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 19th February 2008 at the National Office.

Present: Ian Hussein, Gary Green, John O'Callaghan, Alan Till, Martin Birch, Philip Ewing, Ken Dry, Tim Morris

The following items were discussed:

Committee and Board Vacancies and the office of President

The Chief Executive detailed the vacancies that currently exist and additional vacancies that would occur on committees this year.

It was agreed that:

All vacancies be advertised and the election process be commenced.

It was further and unanimously agreed that:

Ken Dry should take up the vacant seat on the Board with immediate effect.

Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 28th November 2007 were approved as a true record.

Matters arising:

- a) The Chief Executive was asked to contact the British Council for Funeral Services.
- b) It was agreed that the award of the contract for the drafting of the Easy Guide to Law should now be announced.
- c) The matter of cremation of cardboard coffins be raised with SAIF.
- d) The matter of online burial records will be discussed further with Assettrac Ltd.
- e) The matter of the Wesley Music sponsorship of an education scholarship will be raised with BCET.
- f) A response should be sent to the Scottish Borders Council detailing the benefits of professional membership and that the authority's policy of not paying professional membership fees can be overcome via a recharge.

Office of President

Due to his appointment in a full time position with the Institute it was agreed that: David McCarthy stands down from the Board and vacates the office of President on 31st March 2008.

It was further agreed that:

Martin Birch, Deputy President, stands in for the President for the remainder of the term of office and that the post of Deputy President be advertised as normal this year.

Management Plan

The revised management plan containing the manifesto was discussed.

It was agreed that:

a report be submitted on manifesto targets at each board meeting.

It was further agreed that:

The management plan published on the website be replaced with the updated document.

Internal Audit / Finance Report / Virtual Office

The Chief Executive reported that these three items had been placed under the same head as they have overlapping implications.

a) Internal Audit

Directors welcomed the report from Greenhalgh & Co. The report found no discrepancies or defects with the accounting procedures but agreed that the recommendations made on minor procedural matters and review of the financial regulations should be undertaken by officers in the near future.

It was noted that the report contained a confidentiality clause and the Chief Executive was asked to enquire of Greenhalgh & Co whether the document can be placed on the website.

It was noted that a discrepancy appears in the report in respect of the £500 limit on expenditure above which Board approval must be sought (page 20 item 2 and Page 21 item 7 refer).

It was agreed that:

- (i) The limit on expenditure incurred by officers before Board approval is required be £1000
- (ii) The limit on expenditure by the Chief Executive before Board approval is required be £5000
- (iii) Payments over £5000 currently requiring a second signatory are brought to the attention of the Board at each meeting

The Board discussed the recommendations relating to the adequacy of the accountancy software currently being used and the recommendation that the Institute had outgrown this system.

It was agreed that:

- (i) Sage accountancy software is evaluated and acquired by officers.
- (ii) The existing system and Sage be run in parallel from 1st April until such time as it is appropriate to discontinue the existing system.

b) Finance Report

Directors considered that the auditors report had made it clear that the Finance Manager requires the proper software to enable him to manage the accounts and produce budget reports. In light of the decision made regarding Sage software it was considered appropriate approve the recommendations of the Finance Manager in respect of expanding cost centres. Due to the expansion of activities and increased uptake for services it was considered appropriate to expand the number of cost centres in order to provide improved performance detail.

It was agreed that:

The revised list of cost centres be approved.

c) Virtual Office

Directors discussed the security of accounts data and officer's files. Whilst backups are maintained it is not possible to keep backup copies of all data in more than one site at any time.

Officers had been investigating a Virtual Office system provided by Edge Designs as this system gives instant ability for all documents, files and financial records to be maintained and backed up simultaneously on two servers at remote sites. All officers would only require a computer with a broadband connection to enable logging on to the Virtual Office. The cost of the system includes all software licences and maintenance.

The Chief Executive explained that the Institute could purchase Sage accountancy software for incorporation into the Virtual Office thus giving total security of financial data and records. Sage software would also greatly assist the annual auditing process and production of budget reports for officers and Directors.

It was agreed that:

The Chief Executive be given delegated authority to meet with Edge Designs to negotiate a contract for Virtual Office.

The Board discussed the proposal put forward by Edge Designs for the Institute to provide technical expertise on their Eptaph software.

It was agreed that:

The Chief Executive includes this subject when meeting with Edge Designs with a view to securing the most advantageous terms for the Institute.

Member Review Panel

The Chief Executive advised the Board that eleven applications had been received for places on the review panel. The requests had been received from the SE and SW&W branches wishing to reserve places as their next branch meetings would be taking place after the closing date.

It was reported that a wide cross section of the membership had come forward and that the Board had previously indicated that 8 members would be selected to make up the panel.

It was agreed that:

Places would be reserved for the SE and SW&W branch representatives

All members that had come forward, including those mentioned in (i) should make up the panel thus increasing the original number to eleven.

Conference 2008 and 2009

Directors unanimously approved the report of the Conference Manager and thanked her for securing an excellent venue and the work carried out to achieve this.

It was agreed that:

(i) The venue be approved for the 2008 and 2009 events

(ii) The fee of £495 be confirmed

Delegated authority be given to the Conference Manager and Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Finance Manager to set exhibition fees and sponsorship arrangements.

COTS Vehicle

The Chief Executive reported that evaluation of lease / purchase of an appropriate vehicle is ongoing. It was noted that a tax advantage exists for a lease arrangement.

Other Business

a) HSE / MoJ Memorial Management Guidance

Directors discussed the document produced by the HSE following a meeting of the MoJ Memorials Sub Group.

Directors expressed concern at the document and agreed that it could not be supported unless significant amendment is made. It was felt that the document provided no adequate protection for either the public or Institute members should it be issued and implemented by burial authorities.

It was agreed that:

- (i) The Institute will not support the document in its current form
- (ii) Should the document be issued without complete agreement by all organisations on the sub group the Institute will continue to advise its members to follow the Institute guidance on the subject

b) Extended Newsletter

Directors considered the content of the extended newsletter containing details of new appointments and initiatives.

It was agreed that:

The newsletter be circulated to the membership as soon as possible.

d) ICCM Logo

The Chief Executive advised the Board that at the present time the Institute has both professional and corporate logos and it was identified through the formulation of the marketing and promotion plan that it would be advantageous image-wise to merge the two logos. An example was given where the shape of the logo remains the same however the colouring and placement of the words is altered.

It was agreed that:

The new style logo be professionally drawn and converted into a JPEG image for inclusion in all future publications.

f) Fetal Remains

The Vice Chair reported on a meeting that he and Angela Dunn had attended with the Royal College of nursing.

It was agreed that:

The Institute would continue to drive an increase in the number of sensitive disposals taking place at cemeteries and crematoria.