

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK RECEIVED**

### **Chairman's observations on the feedback:**

The Chairman's letter to the Membership (see download) received feedback from fourteen Institute members. Whilst I am disappointed at the low response, I am heartened by the quality of the comments received: they clearly reflect a great deal of thought given to important matters. I wish to publicly thank all those who took the time to let me have their comments.

Most respondents are relatively long serving and several had I previously served on the IBCA Executive Committee and/ or the ICCM Board. I corresponded with each member and responded to their questions mostly advising that I would bring their comments to the Board of Directors (which I did at the last meeting – see minutes). Whilst none asked to remain anonymous, I have not included their names here.

The feedback included some excellent ideas and constructive feedback. Inevitably, a few comments, which were made by a minority of those responding, were highly critical of the Board and tinged with personal dissatisfaction. Interesting, the member making the most vociferous comments accepted shared responsibility for 'mistakes made in the past'.

Here are the member comments and ideas received in no particular order and quoted using individual text albeit with some paraphrasing and avoiding duplication of ideas where repeated (all for the benefit of brevity alone):

### **THE FEEDBACK**

*The response of the Board of Directors is shown in italics*

**Provide members with a specification for the construction of a mausoleum.** There is little competition for this growth area and local authorities could save money by building their own if they had some guidance. *The Board feels that this would be best considered on an individual basis as each mausoleum should be unique. However, the idea has been referred to the Professional Committee for consideration.*

**Provide members with a specification for the construction of a brick grave.** As above and especially as this is a target in the Charter. A spec. would help more burial authorities achieve it. *A good idea that will be considered by the Professional Committee.*

**Establish an approval scheme for cardboard coffins for cremation so that members can be assured that an approved cardboard coffin is suitable for cremation.** There are so many weird and wonderful cardboard, whicker and other coffins available now that someone needs to test them and give them a seal of approval for local authorities. It would generate income

and increased credibility for the ICCM. *A good idea that will be considered by the Professional Committee.*

**Lease, purchase or contract to run a cemetery or crematorium.** This would establish the ICCM as a credible organisation who puts their policies into practice. We could run the first such an establishment as a training facility. Perhaps we should establish a charitable section which could eventually rival private companies and act as a check & balance for the benefit of local authorities. Charities do run cemeteries and crematoria in other parts of the EEC. It looks much better if a local authority contracts out their cemeteries and/or crematoria to a charitable organisation than off-loading it to a private company. *There are no plans to tender for such a lease, purchase or contract at this stage. However, the Board will keep the proposal under review.*

**Ensure Directors direct.** For many years now the board of directors have lacked any real bite or willingness to action change, bogged down with suspicion and mistrust of "competitors" all the while missing real opportunity for effective change. I lack no qualification for that statement as I was a director myself, quite happy follow the crowd and to nod through almost anything without true debate or discussion and now left with a degree of self imposed frustration at having failed even my own lowly standards. I wish you every success in this venture and in facing the challenge of demonstrating real transparency and democracy all the while working towards a degree of unification in our small but nonetheless crucial industry. I offer my tentative support and watch the developments with interest. *The Board has put in place an ambitious programme of change and development thereby demonstrating that it is taking the initiatives and directing in an open and progressive manner.*

**Publish salaries, honoraria and expenses etc.** *A survey has been commissioned and the results will be published in 2008.*

**Introduce a Crematoria Management Course similar to the ILAM one for cemeteries.** *This was tried previously with little uptake but will never the less be pursued again in 2008.*

**Produce a Law Guide for Scotland and not just England.** *Invitations to tender have been issued and the Guide will be published in 2008.*

**Improve the CYA scheme – especially the judging and make it more inviting to crematoria.** *This request has been conveyed to the MAB.*

**Have independent CYA Judges.** *This has been conveyed to the MAB.*

**Increase ICCM officer activity North of Watford.** *Officers are very active in the North and additional resources will be established once the new Northern Technical Officer post has been filled in the New Year.*

**Improve the web site.** *A member notice and press release on this matter will be circulated shortly.*

**Address the Committee structure to make the Board directly accountable.** *A Review Committee is to be formed from volunteer ICCM members in 2008.*

**Full Membership of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management should be by qualification.** We fought for many years to get this in our constitution and eventually succeeded in 2000, only to see it removed in what I consider to be a rather underhand way just a few years later. It may not make much difference in our time, but we will never see substantial improvement in the status of our industry/profession and the people in it whilst just about anybody can be appointed to senior posts in cemeteries and crematoria regardless of previous experience, training or qualification. The situation is no better, and if anything possibly worse, than it was when I first came into the industry a long time ago – a bit of an indictment on our efforts over the intervening years! And mine is not a new aspiration for the future of our profession – just read about the Institute's history and it has been there right from the start! *A Review Committee is to be formed from volunteer ICCM members in 2008.*

**Afternoon AGM?** If you are not attending conference but want to be at the AGM (at 5.30 pm) it requires an overnight in Harrogate for those travelling long distance, whereas if it is held at say 1.30 pm members could have got there and back in the same day. This makes me think that members who do not attend conference are, albeit inadvertently, being made to feel excluded from attending the AGM. I wonder if in future years the Board would consider holding the AGM at a time of day conducive to the most number of members being able to attend if they wish to. *This will be implemented in 2008.*

**Northern Training Centre.** I note the mention of a northern training centre and I hope the ICCM is at last proceeding with a freehold purchase that will add to its asset base. If we are looking at another lease arrangement then I think that may be a mistake. I hope also that thought is being given to the other targets. *Plans to acquire a Freehold have been postponed for the time being but the matter will be re-considered in 2008/09.*

**ICCM Crematoria?** There are currently a few projects for new crematoria around where consortia are involved, could it be at some stage that the ICCM might consider becoming a stakeholder of such a project together with a long term management agreement over the site? *This is not a priority at this stage but will be kept under review.*

**Establish a national bereavement telephone helpline.** *This is not a priority at this stage but will be kept under review.*