

## **INSTITUTE OF CEMETERY & CREMATORIUM MANAGEMENT**

**Report of the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at the National Office.**

**Present:**

**Directors:** Gary Green, David McCarthy, Philip Ewing, John O'Callaghan, John Rotherham, Ian Hulf, Alan Till, Martin Birch

**Officers:** Tim Morris, John Robson, Ron Dunn, Trevor Robson, Charles Ward

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

All Directors were present.

### **2. Declaration of Interest**

John Rotherham declared an interest in agenda items 6 and 7.

The Chief Executive enquired as to whether all education and training items should be included with both parties seeking clarification from the Company Solicitor.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

#### **Matters arising:**

- a) John Rotherham stated that his poll relating to a single organisation had been removed from the bereavement services Egroup.
- b) John Rotherham indicated that he would attend the Scotland and Northern Ireland branch meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April with those Directors able to attend.
- c) Martin Birch and Ian Hulf informed the Board that they would be unavailable to attend the branch meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April.

### **4 Report of the Finance & IT Manager and Accountant**

#### **a) Membership**

Membership statistics were circulated to Directors indicating gains and losses. Officers indicated that new initiatives with other organisations would provide an opportunity to attract new members.

#### **b) Sundry Debtors**

The position remains good.

#### **c) Bank Mandate**

Trevor Robson informed the Board that the new bank mandate is now in place.

#### **d) Revised Estimates 2006 / 2007**

The forecast loss of £6485 could turn into a small surplus by 31/3/07.

John Rotherham suggested that the Institute should be making profits however officers stated that the Institute is a company limited by guarantee and should be reinvesting in its membership. New initiatives and national accreditation of courses were cited as

examples and in particular the expenditure allocated to CTTS in order to gain BTEC accreditation and that these costs would not be repeated next year. It was suggested that cost savings should be sought however the Accountant indicated that there is little room for this without reducing services to members.

Officers confirmed that despite the occurrences of last year all demands from the membership had been met and numerous new initiatives had been created. Directors were reminded that the Institute has reserves of approximately one third of a million pounds. It was also indicated that Directors need to be mindful of the Institute's status of a company limited by guarantee.

Charter and training course income had increased with a reduction in consultancy income.

It was confirmed that a system of cost accountancy is being investigated.

Directors thanked officers for their efforts throughout the year.

### **e) Revised Estimates 2007 / 2008**

A provision has been made for Charter validation.

A provision of £6,000 for the Cemetery of the Year Awards has been included.

Officers reminded the Board that several new training initiatives were programmed for 2007/8 and that the benefits of national accreditation are becoming apparent.

### **5 Revised Environmental Policy**

Further to the conference resolution of members at conference 2006 and the decision made by the Board at its previous meeting the Chief Executive circulated a revised policy.

It was agreed that that:

- i) Under the General heading the first bullet point should read 'Promote the total cessation of all emissions from crematoria that may damage the environment'.
- ii) Under the Cremation heading the bullet point should be added stating that the Institute will:
  - Support the following resolutions:
    1. The Cemetery & Crematorium Working Committee of the European Federation of Funeral Services:  
"By 1st January 2012 the installation of filtration equipment at all crematoria should be mandatory in Europe. Emission limits and their measurement should be standard across Europe".

*The European Parliament - "Mercury in dental amalgam represents the second largest stock of mercury in society.. and that emissions from crematoria will be a significant source of mercury pollution for many years to come, unless abatement techniques that can considerably reduce these emissions are put into place very soon".. The European Parliament also resolved to "ask the European Commission to take further measures, in the short term, to control mercury emissions from crematoria, given that this is an increasing and worrisome source of emissions".*

## 6. Conference 2007

Directors expressed concern at the lack of progress being made on the organisation of the international conference planned for this year. Directors were mindful of the time line indicating that the Institute had attempted on numerous occasions since 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006 to progress the matter but has so far remained unsuccessful. Matters were made difficult for the Institute as time is limited in which to arrange a conference should the joint event fail.

Concern was also expressed in relation to the costs received so far and that the Institute's calculations on the figures provided identify the potential for a greatly increased delegate fee. Directors concerns related to the fact that a higher fee would attract fewer delegates therefore the Institute would not be making conference available to the wider membership.

Directors indicated that it would not be appropriate to expect exhibitors to over-subsidise delegates.

The Finance & IT Manager indicated that the delegate fee including accommodation for the 2006 event was £545. The Chief Executive indicated that the afore mentioned figure relates to the ICCM delegate fee plus 3 nights accommodation whereas the majority of delegates book 2 nights only thus bringing cost to below £500.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that he had sought an urgent meeting with the Cremation Society and FBCA with the initial response being that a meeting could be arranged for 29<sup>th</sup> March. After arranging for a Director to be present at this meeting (due to the Chief Executive being otherwise engaged) the meeting was brought forward to 21<sup>st</sup> March. In view of the delays and the difficulties that the Institute has encountered the Chief Executive requested a clear mandate for the meeting.

The Board took a vote on whether or not the Institute should withdraw with the result being 5 to 2 in favour of withdrawal however Directors took the decision to send officers to the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March in order to attempt again to resolve the matter by gaining full costs for the event and identifying a more accurate delegate fee.

a) It was agreed and confirmed that:

- i) *The Director of Corporate Service should accompany the Chief Executive to the conference meeting*
- ii) *Officers attending at the meeting should only agree if delegate fees are broadly in line with previous years*
- iii) *The Institute would withdraw if fees for delegates exceeded £600*
- iv) *Officers attending the conference meeting should pose the specific question raised by the Board of why the most expensive management option is being recommended*
- v) *Officers attending the meeting confirm the Board's view that the event should not run at a loss*

b) It was further agreed and confirmed that in the event of the joint conference not going ahead the Institute will make alternative arrangements that are in the best interest of the membership.

## **7. COTS**

The Chief Executive confirmed to the Board that since drafting the report he had been contacted by the Berkshire College who had received confirmation from City & Guilds / National Proficiency Test Council that it had agreed to apply a customer award to COTS.

It was agreed that:

Officers should progress the national accreditation of COTS via the customer award route and agree costs in consultation with the Chairman, President and Finance & IT Manager prior to official acceptance.

## **8. Foundation Degree**

The Chief Executive gave a verbal report on progress based on information recently received. The Buckinghamshire Chilterns University (BCUC) had agreed that the Diploma would be the entry level qualification with points for the Diploma counting towards the degree. Subject to further discussions and negotiations the course could be made available in January 2008.

It was agreed that:

The Chief Executive continues to progress the degree course with BCUC and reports back with actual course content and costs prior to any agreement being made with BCUC.

## **9. Cemetery of the Year Awards**

The Chairman informed the Board of his discussions with MAB who would wish to retain the Institute as the main sponsor of the scheme. The Chairman explained that MAB had agreed to make the improvements to the scheme as required by the Institute and that the Chief Executive had re-drafted the information that is sent to applicants to include improved judging criteria.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that the next steps would be to draft a judge's assessment sheet, appoint judges and arrange a training day prior to judging taking place. It was further intended to add to the judging criteria each year and provide applicants with feedback that will enable improvements year on year. One of the main complaints with the scheme was that actions taken by some applicants in line with feedback received was overlooked in the following year.

The Chairman raised the subject of the awards ceremony and indicated that he had informed MAB of the current uncertain situation regarding conference. MAB had indicated that it would be possible to hold the ceremony at the House of Parliament. Directors were reminded of their decision in respect of 6.b.ii above.

It was agreed that:

The Institute will sponsor the scheme in 2007.

## 11. Recycling Scheme – Distribution of Surplus

The Chief Executive provided a report indicating the nominations for national charities that had been received from scheme members.

It was recommended that the £15,000 surplus be divided between all nominated charities in proportion to the number of nominations that each received.

The Finance & IT Manager advised the Board that the monies should be distributed before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 in order to clear the £15,000 from the Institute's account prior to year end.

It was agreed that the following charities will receive:

CRUSE	£7,500
BCET	£3,000
MacMillan Nurses	£1,500
The Hospice Movement	£1,500
SANDS	£1,500

It was further agreed that:

- i) The Chief Executive will draft a covering letter for forwarding with cheques.
- ii) Receipts for donations will be posted on the Institute's website

## 12. Memorial Mason's Guarantees

A report on the proposal for memorial mason's guarantees of conformity was discussed. Officers explained that the current fixed period guarantees are causing difficulties with no consistency in periods being found across the UK. Whilst some authorities have been successful in gaining 30 year guarantees others have accepted guarantees for significantly lesser periods. At the NAMM AGM a threat of legal challenge against 30year guarantees was made.

The idea of a guarantee of conformity came from NAMM at a recent meeting with the Institute. It was argued that the main reason for memorial failure was poor workmanship and non-compliance with the NAMM Code of Practice and BS8415. It was generally agreed that a memorial installed to standards should remain safe for at least 30 years. The provision of a guarantee of conformity by the memorial mason stating that the memorial has been erected to standard therefore providing reassurance to burial authorities and the bereaved as this guarantee would exist whilst the memorial is within the cemetery i.e. a lifetime guarantee. Should a failure occur the memorial can be checked against standards and if not compliant the memorial mason will take responsibility. BRAMM could also act in such circumstances. The mason would not be responsible should the memorial have been interfered with by a third party or vandalised.

A standard guarantee can be developed for use by all memorial masons and burial authorities and companies thus standardising practices. Some members of the BRAMM Board had registered support for the guarantee of conformity.

Directors discussed a change away from fixed term guarantees and administering a changeover.

Officers explained that the responsibilities of burial authorities in relation to good grave digging and backfilling practice in order to reduce subsidence and proving un-dug ground at the head of graves on new sections would remain.

It was agreed that:

The Institute will support the move to a memorial masons guarantee of conformity.

### **13. Staff Meeting – Notes of meeting and report**

Officers reported that the recent staff meeting had been productive and beneficial.

### **14. Assessor and Health & Safety Qualifications**

Officers informed the Board that it would be beneficial to the Institute if they gained an assessor qualification bearing in mind national accreditation of courses. Officers further advised that it would also be beneficial for officers to hold a recognised health and safety qualification.

It was agreed that:

- i) Officers should identify appropriate qualifications and costs.
- ii) Delegated authority be given to the Chair, President and Finance & IT Manager to approve or otherwise the qualifications and costs identified.