

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

CREMATION NUMBERS AND OTHER UPDATES1. Purpose of report

To provide the Joint Committee with the latest update on cremation numbers and other aspects of Bramcote Crematorium.

2. Background and Detail

At its meeting of 20 June 2019 Joint Committee noted and requested the following:

“Concern was raised that the number of cremations was lower than anticipated which created a budget shortfall. RESOLVED that a detailed report on cremation numbers ... be brought to the Joint Committee.”

<u>Month</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
April	249	310	262	190	228	190	302
May	233	229	231	230	251	230	283
June	206	299	246	253	198	212	189
July	236	233	213	200	178	196	183
August	234	210	201	181	201	194	177
September	233	219	233	198	153	175	185
October	261	236	212	207	191	207	
November	268	237	255	221	221	210	
December	298	295	257	235	196	202	
January	309	261	315	298	273	272	
February	321	305	315	269	241	204	
<u>March</u>	<u>323</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>263</u>	<u>263</u>	<u>217</u>	<u>240</u>	
TOTAL	3171	3134	3003	2745	2548	2532	

It can be seen that Covid-19 had some impact on increased funeral numbers in March this year and a significant impact in April and May this year. However, funeral numbers at Bramcote have returned to more recent-years' normal levels from June onwards.

The appendix portrays this pictorially and also shows how all the new private crematoria are taking business away from all the established municipal crematoria in the local area. The appendix also has information on: -

- Christmas service of remembrance 2020
- Building fabric update
- Bereavement software

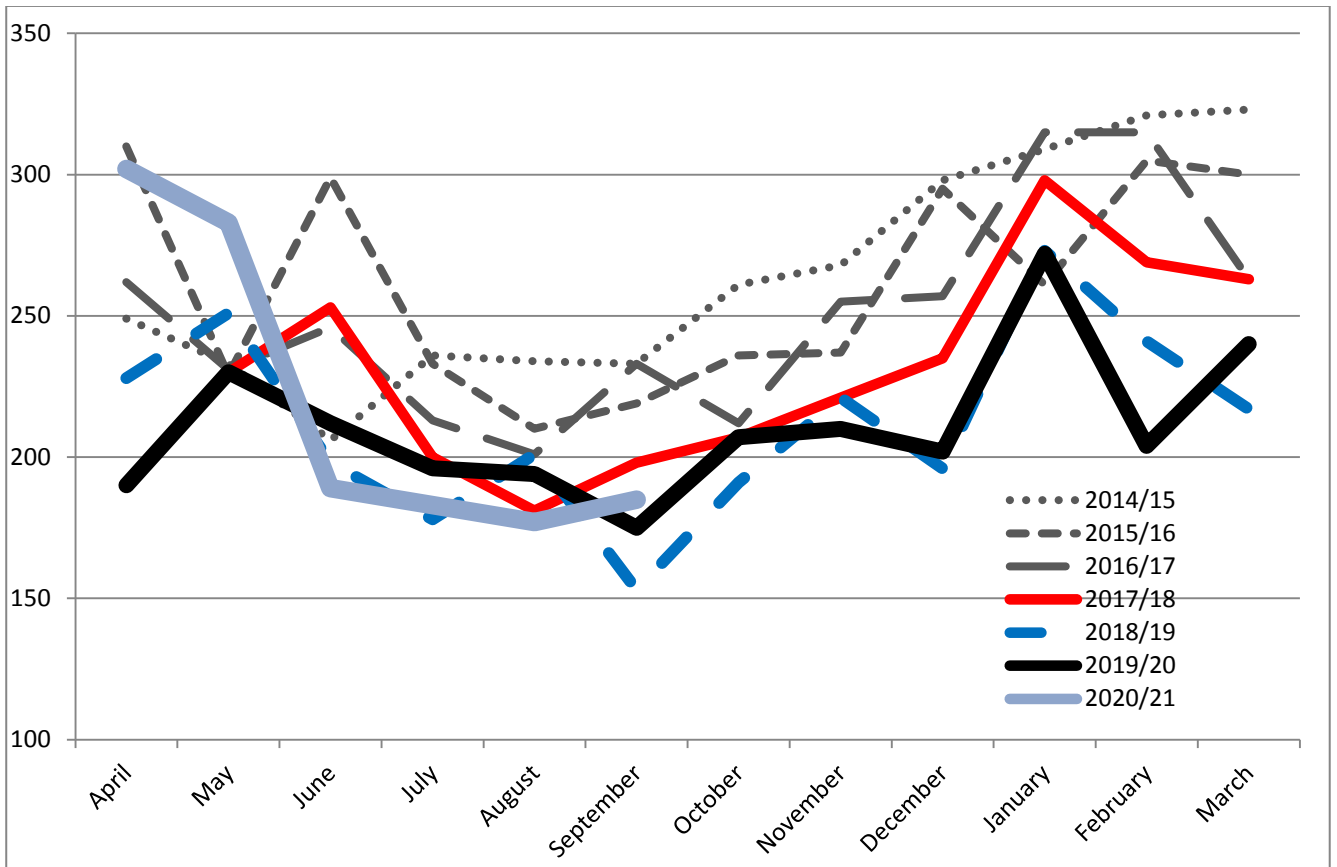
Recommendation

The Joint Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

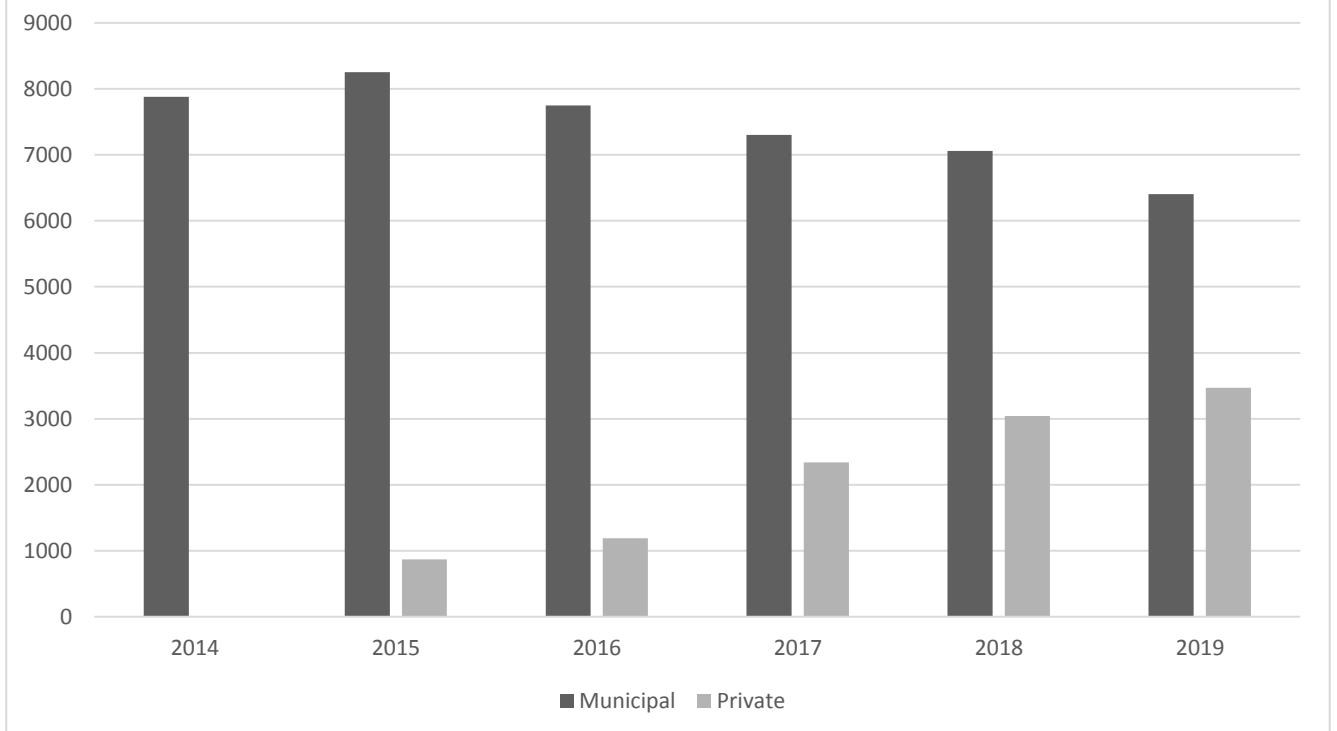
Background papers

Nil

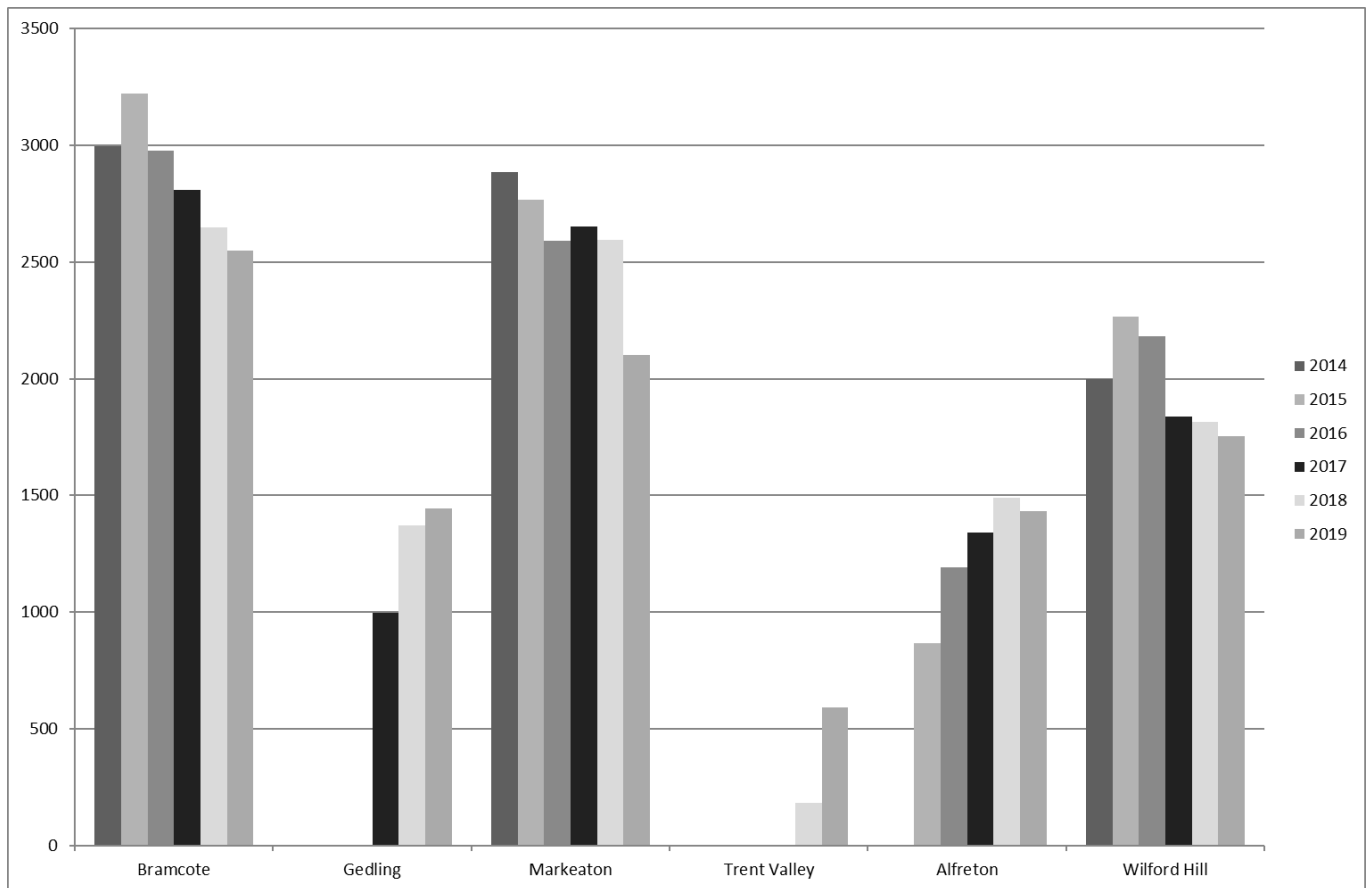
Graph of Bramcote cremation numbers by month and financial year



Overall Municipal Crematorium cremation numbers versus Private Crematorium numbers - local area



(municipal = Bramcote, Markeaton, Wilford Hill; private = Gedling, Trent Valley, Alfreton)



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Estimating numbers for the remainder of the year

It is, of course, difficult to predict cremation numbers for the rest of the year. On the one hand the resurgence in Covid-19 could lead to a significant increase again; on the other hand, the first wave had a particular focus on those with underlying health conditions – in some cases, sadly, these people may well have passed away during 2020/21 regardless of Covid-19. Regular updates will be brought to committee.

Christmas service of remembrance 2020

This year’s Christmas service of remembrance is being designed an online event due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This is because current government rules and social distancing requirements would restrict capacity to little more than 15% of the numbers who usually attend.

A verbal update on the latest plans will be given at Committee. These are, of course, subject to change.

Building fabric update

- Covid-19 screening has been installed in the Serenity Chapel for the chapel attendant, and in the main reception area for the receptionist. There was already a separate room adjacent to the Reflection Chapel for the chapel attendant.
- Current capacity for mourners is 30 in the larger Serenity Chapel and 17 in the smaller Reflection Chapel. At the time of writing funeral numbers are restricted by law to a maximum of 30 people.
- The main building experienced flooding in June 2020 at a time of exceptional (but perhaps now more frequent?) rainfall. The immediate response has been to increase drainage inspections and rodding etc, but it may well be prudent to bring forward the £60,000 currently allocated for Drainage and Parking improvements at the Crematorium from 2022/23 to 2021/22.
- The £40,000 allocated for roof repairs in 2020/21 will be spent before the financial year end.

Bereavement software

Unfortunately, the tendering exercise has proved challenging. The leading tender may be unacceptable on technical grounds, and the second best tender came in considerably in excess of the available budget of £15,720.

A further verbal update will be provided at Committee. Depending on the matters debated this may need to be debated in closed session.

Financial Information

The income budget for 2020/21 is based upon 2,450 adult cremations and 50 direct cremations. Whilst a distribution of £300,000 each to Broxtowe and Erewash Borough Councils for 2020/21 was agreed by the Joint Committee on 16 January 2020 and will be paid accordingly, a failure to meet income targets could adversely affect the distribution in future years.

The medium term financial strategy (MTFS) to 2022/23 also considered by the Joint Committee on 16 January 2020 indicated a potential increase to £400,000 per annum in the distribution to the two authorities from 2021/22 onwards if the assumptions in the 2020/21 budget proved to be reasonably accurate.