

Council report recommends independent investigation into Mortonhall

A City of Edinburgh Council report into historic practices at Mortonhall Crematorium recommends an independent enquiry into the matter ahead of the Transport and Environment Committee next week.

These include recommendations that :

- an independent person is appointed to oversee and direct further enquiries into Mortonhall. This may include at looking at policy and practice in other local authority areas since initial enquiries suggest there are variations in practice across Scotland
- a review of current policy, practice, equipment and staff training at the crematorium to ensure that national guidance is being complied with. This will be done in conjunction with key stakeholders such as the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA), NHS Lothian, Funeral Directors, SANDS Lothians and other appropriate organisations.
- discussions to continue over an appropriate memorial
- independent auditors to carry on their work into crematorium records
- bereaved parents who have made enquiries should all receive a full explanation regarding the recovery or non recovery of ashes and should have access to all the records informing that explanation at the conclusion of the investigation
- the Council should continue to facilitate counselling support to bereaved parents directly and/or through SANDS Lothians or other appropriate organisations.

In addition the Council Chief Executive Sue Bruce will continue liaising with the Scottish Government on issues arising from this investigation which may have wider significance nationally.



Convener of
Transport &
Environment –
Lesley Hinds

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Environment Convener, said:- “Having received these findings I feel it is only right and proper, and taking into account the views of parents, that an independent person now completes the inquiry.

“This person would also look all the recommendations in the report which include ensuring the Council has clear policies in relation to cremations and that they comply with national guidelines.

“The independent audit of crematorium records will continue so we can get comprehensive information from which we will try to deal with the questions and concerns of families.

“We have been keeping SANDS updated as the investigation has progressed and will carry on working closely with them over the coming months. Discussions over a permanent memorial will continue.”

The report will be discussed at the Transport and Environment Committee on 15 January 2013.

Mike Rosendale, Head of Schools and Community Services, has led the enquiry to date.

A dedicated phone line, 0131 200 2383, and [an online form](#) has been set up for anyone who has concerns and wants to contact the Council.