

Orbitas Bereavement Services Ltd (Orbitas)
Minutes of Board Meeting,
20th April 2022, Westfields and via Teams

Present:

Kevin Melling, Managing Director	KM
Cllr David Marren, Chairman	DM
Cllr Penny Butterill, Director	PB
Cllr Joy Bratherton, Director	JB
Mark Darbyshire, COO, Orbitas	MD

Other Attendees:

Abigail Winter-Jones, Employee Rep North	AWJ
Anthony Gosling, Employee Rep North	AG
Sarah Worthington, Employee Rep South	SW
Lorraine Sarson Bereavement Services Manager South	LS
Karen Potts PA to Group MD (Minutes)	KP

Apologies:

Helen Green, Finance Business Partner	HG
Melanie Henniker, Director HR & Corporate Service	MH

Agenda Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p>Welcome to all participants, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>DM reported that due notice of the meeting had been given and that a quorum was present. He chaired the meeting throughout. He welcomed LS and the three Employee Representatives to the meeting and introduced the NED's and KM as directors giving them an insight to how the board meetings proceed.</p>	
2.	<p>Employee Representatives – Introduction</p> <p>AG and AWJ will share the role for the North. AG will attend alternate board meetings covering the first six months of the financial year and AWJ will cover the remaining six months, with SW covering the full year representing the South staff.</p> <p>KM updated briefly on this role confirming it was agreed as part of the shareholder agreements to have an employee representative who would attend and speak but not vote at any board meetings.</p> <p>KM asked if there is anything the board could do to help promote and communicate what the role is about, please let them know. This could be in the form of posters or through the Orbitas Newsletter.</p>	

	<p>Each of the three representatives gave a brief introduction including their current roles and the opportunities they had identified to use their experiences to good effect in this employee rep role.</p>	
3	<p>2.1 Minutes of Last Meetings and Matters Arising The Minutes from the board meeting on 14th March 2022 were accepted as true and accurate record.</p> <p>2.2 Matters Arising DM asked JB to give an update on the Cemetery strategy sub-committee’s work. JB advised that the group had set up their terms of reference with a view to reviewing the present cemetery strategy to make it more relevant for the people served by Bereavement services.</p> <p>The group have visited several different cemeteries to consider conditions & future plans including identification of areas where more burials or ashes could be placed.</p> <p>Blinds and Flowers MD gave an update to advise that the work identified is underway. Lectern handheld remote-control units have been ordered, two handheld controllers and a new receiver along with the two new screens.</p> <p>TV/CCTV Installation MD advised that Wesley will be installing CCTV and the cabinets at the same time, expected to be sometime in June. These include external cameras with a CCTV camera covering the access</p> <p>A discussion took place around the CCTV recordings including who would have access and how Orbitas could comply with legislation.</p>	
4	<p>Financial Update (Verbal) KM gave a brief update in HG’s absence to advise we are in the transactional closure stage. There isn’t any further update on the 21/2022 financials at the current time as we are still posting accruals and many other entries</p>	
5	<p>Operational Update MD explained that this is a monthly report which covers four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume • Training • People • Facilities <p>Discussions took place around the difficulties currently being experienced in recruiting staff and also about the additional work that the Handyperson team has been able to complete since the addition of a new team member.</p> <p>The Covid Memorial Garden has been complete by SW’s team. The mayor opened the garden on the 19th of April. He was very impressed.</p>	

	<p>KM asked about the Macclesfield compound surface and when this is to be completed. AG will chase up. Action AG</p>	AG
6	<p>Feedback from Funeral Director Visits MD and LS gave a presentation on the findings from recent Crewe FD visits LS had made to introduce herself as the new BSM for the South of the Borough. She visited 10 FDs in total with the aim to be their key contact for Orbitas. A discussion took place around the main issues raised and how improvements could be made. This was split into two categories; those that could be made immediately and ones that would take longer</p> <p>The directors thanked LR and MD for the work they had completed.</p>	
7	<p>Environmental impacts – future strategy MD had recently attended a joint seminar on the environment impact on cremations and burials, DM also attended. MD found this very thought provoking. and a discussion then took place around emerging technologies and measures that could be taken to reduce our carbon footprint.</p>	
8	<p>Employee Representative Matters SW – has no matters to bring to the board today as this is the first meeting.</p> <p>AWJ – asked about the Employee forum, is this to be every 3 months. MD advised that this was slightly behind schedule. We have some actions from the last meeting that we are working on, but we are at a point where we do need to meet again.</p> <p>AG – regards the welfare facilities at Alderley Edge, MD advised he will pursue.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business 9.1 Orbitas contract KM wanted to confirm Orbitas has renewed the contract with CEC for an 8-year period fixed for 5 years and then a further 3 years. We are committed to rebranding. Orbitas keeps its identity as a company, but when we undertake services on behalf of the council this will be as Cheshire East Bereavement Services</p>	

The Meeting Closed at 12.10pm, Next Board Meeting to be held on 11th May 2022 at Macclesfield Town Hall.