

**Orbitas Bereavement Services Ltd (Orbitas)**  
**Minutes of Board Meeting,**  
**11<sup>th</sup> May 2022, Macclesfield Town Hall and via Teams**

**Present:**

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

**Other Attendees:**

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| Anthony Gosling, operational Team Leader North | AG |
| Karen Potts PA to Group MD (Minutes)           | KP |

| Agenda Item | Notes   | Action   |
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| 1.          | <p><b>Welcome to all participants, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>DM reported that due notice of the meeting had been given and that a quorum was present. He chaired the meeting throughout.</p>  |  |
| 2.          | <p><b>2.1 Minutes of Last Meetings and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The Minutes from the board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were accepted as true and accurate record.</p> <p><b>2.2 Matters Arising</b></p> <p>AG advised that the job titles were incorrect for the Employee Reps.<br/> AG - Operational Team Leader - North<br/> SW - Operational Team Leader - South<br/> AWJ – Administration Assistant – North</p> <p>MD apologised he had not looked at the wheel bier, but this will be resolved by the next meeting. Action MD</p> <p><b>TV Installation</b></p> <p>MD advised that Wesley will be installing TV monitors at Crewe on the 25th of May and Macclesfield 2nd of June. KM thought it would be the perfect opportunity to have a positive press campaign. Action MD to advise on this</p> <p>The CCTV monitoring policy was not available for this meeting as MH is waiting for clarification on several points. The policy will be presented to the June meeting.<br/> Action MH</p> <p>Update on the Macclesfield compound, AG confirmed that he is still awaiting confirmation of a commencement date. The board agreed that the work needs to be completed by late summer early autumn and for AG to contact an alternative</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MD</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MD</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MH</b></p> |

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|          | <p>supplier if a date is not confirmed from the preferred contractor. Action AGbe completed late summer early autumn and for AG to contact alternative supplier if a date is not confirmed from the preferred contractor. <b>Action AG</b></p> <p>Action plan to address how we disperse mourners before the next funeral and if a time buffer is created. This is to be brought to the next board meeting. <b>Action MD</b></p>   | <b>AG</b> |
| <b>3</b> | <p><b>Operational Update</b></p> <p>The operational report was distributed prior to the meeting.</p> <p>MD advised the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volumes - a quiet start to the year</li> <li>• MA1's - although the figure is low for this month, we are still above the contract target number. Part of the reason for the lower figure is because we have been completing refurbishment to properties which has reduced capacity to complete other jobs.</li> <li>• Training - PAT testing remains an issue within the team.</li> <li>• People - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Team at Crewe is now complete.</li> <li>○ We are still having recruitment issues and continue to work with our HR Business Partner to help improve the situation</li> <li>○ The temporary contract employee within the Handyman team continues to be a key person to the team</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Facilities – the board agreed that future reports on this subject will on an exceptions basis.</li> </ul> |           |
| <b>4</b> | <p><b>Financial Update (Verbal)</b></p> <p>Redacted due to commercial sensitivity</p>  |           |
| <b>5</b> | <p><b>End of Year Directors' Report</b></p> <p>MD presented the report via PowerPoint, and a discussion took place throughout the presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Year - the board agreed to move away from monthly achievements but where necessary reference the month within the content being presented.</li> <li>• Contract secured to repaint street furniture for Crewe Town Council over Q1 2022/23. MD explained that this is 3 weeks work, with flexibility to fit in within our timescales. It involves painting bollards, street furniture, metal and wood items, hanging baskets. The contract was secured from recommendations related to the Covid Memorial and the Tree of Lights.</li> </ul>   |           |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Staff – DM asked why there were no absence statistics. MH advised that with the changeover to Unit 4 we have lost the ability to run such reports. We know that our process, procedures, and policies are working well, and we are able to manage the monitoring of absences within Orbitas very well.</li> <li>• Health and Safety – Visual display very good, we could combine pages 6 and 7.</li> <li>• Corporate Social Responsibility – this is to become an agenda item for discussion on how Orbitas links into the council’s corporate responsibilities plan.</li> <li>• JB discussed the option of linking the corporate responsibilities into the induction training plan to give the new NEDs a better understanding of how this works within both Orbitas and how Orbitas aligns with the council’s strategic objectives.</li> </ul>  |    |
| 6 | <p><b>Auditors’ report on Cremations and Burials.</b><br/>MD presented the report for discussion.</p> <p>Page 4 – DM asked why this was included and MD advised that this was for background information only. MD to feedback to Beaver and Struthers to include more context. <b>Action MD</b></p> <p>Page 5 – Medium Risks, we were unable to prove an ownership of a grave. We have now implemented a checklist to ensure we have all documentation in relationship to grave ownerships and transfer of ownerships. There was also a backlog of forms due to staff shortage which have now been cleared.</p> <p>Page 8 – this includes what the auditors have checked and the areas we need to focus on. If there is nothing against the point the auditors have found everything to be in order.</p> <p>KM advised that it was good to have an external view to help Orbitas, as a board we can then focus on them and gain the assurance needed.</p> <p>MD advised that the auditors are on site and are checking the areas we needed to improve, and he feels that the new paperwork check list and process that have been implemented will show we are performing to standard.</p> <p><b>Board Resolution: the board accepted the Auditors’ report on Cremations and Burials.</b></p> | MD |

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| 7 | <p><b>Verbal update on recent visits to innovative, alternative providers</b><br/> KM updated on the two visits that he, DM and MD attended.</p> <p>Both visits were of interest and identify two different options for the future burials.</p> <p><b>Resomation Visit was in Bradford –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a state-of-the-art facility where they can offer a water cremation.</li> <li>• The process itself is not dissimilar to that of a gas or electric cremation. The costs are around the same but it is a longer process of around 4 – 5 hours in comparison to 1 ½ hours for a flame cremation.</li> <li>• It is possible to run the machinery for 24 hours. MD advised that this currently only allows for 2 processes per day, but we need to consider that Electric cremation would also be a longer process than we currently have.</li> <li>• With the new technology we could consider a central location and keep the chapels.</li> <li>• Challenges - we would require a licence from the water authority, and this can be a challenge as there are only a few who are accepting this process.</li> <li>• Joint replacements and other medical implants are recovered intact from the process and can be recycled more easily.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural Composting visit the Faunus Group in Nottingham –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are in in partnership with an American company.</li> <li>• The technology is not as advanced, and the process currently takes 6 months although we may see this reduce in the future to 3 months.</li> <li>• We would possibly need to consider an industrial unit for this process.</li> <li>• Market research indicates that there is public acceptance to this method, and it is like a natural disposal.</li> <li>• There may be the option to invest as they are looking for funding and should this be an option it will be brought to the board and shareholders.</li> </ul> <p>In the future there will be a variety cremations and burials. We need to consider all options and to ensure that the Commissioning officers are also up to date with any new process and the technology involved.</p> <p>There was a discussion around our own cemeteries and how we can improve the way that they look. KM advised he is in talks with the Council to see if they can become involved in improving the grounds. We need to look at how we can reinvest into our sites.</p> |  |
| 8 | <p><b>Health and Safety Policies and Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole Body Vibration Guidance Note</li> <li>• Vibration Policy</li> <li>• HAVs Guidance Note</li> </ul> <p><b>Board Resolution: the board accepted the proposed changes to the above policies.</b></p>   |  |

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| 9.  | <p><b>Employee Representative Matters.</b></p> <p>AG had spoken to staff at Macclesfield and there are no matters which need to be brought to the board.</p>  |  |
| 10. | <p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>KM thanked both DM and PB for all their support and their contributions from the initial start of Orbitas. KM presented a thank you gift to DM and advised PB that she would be receiving a delivery.</p> <p>A discussion took place on electing a Board Chair once DM officially steps down. DM proposed JB for the position of Chair, PB and KM both supported this decision. This will provide continuity within Orbitas until the new NEDs take up their positions.</p> <p>DM thanked the board members for all their support while he has been chairing and all the work, they had put in to make Orbitas what it is today. PB also thanked the Board for their support whilst she had been a member.</p> <p><b>Board Resolution: it was resolved that JB should be appointed as Chair of Orbitas with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022.</b></p> |  |

The Meeting Closed at 12.10pm, Next Board Meeting tbc