



We are pleased to bring you the Cremation Society's last newsletter of 2024! Thank you for continuing to subscribe to this newsletter which we hope helps you to stay abreast of news and developments from across the cremation sector. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in 2025!



News in this issue includes updates on:

- Maldon Fields first funeral services
- Application for Donegal Crematorium
- Angus crematorium battle returns to Court of Session
- Plans for new crematorium at Eastington
- Plans for new crematorium near Inverurie at risk
- Glenrothes crematorium plans approved
- Cremation Society visit to Durham

## NEWS REVIEW

## CREMATORIA NEWS



The first funeral services were held on December 4th at Essex's newest crematorium. **Maldon Fields** is the first crematorium ever built in the Maldon District, which means that bereaved families from Maldon and the surrounding area will have access to a local funeral and cremation service instead of having to travel longer distances to Chelmsford, Colchester and Basildon crematoria. Leader of Maldon District Council, Cllr Richard Siddall, visited the new facility on the occasion of its opening to the public: "I am pleased to see that Maldon Fields Crematorium has begun to serve the local community in their new state-of-the-art facility," said Cllr Siddall. Unlike many other Essex crematoria, Maldon Fields will provide up to an hour for each funeral service, giving families time to gather and remember their loved ones in a dignified way. It will provide an additional choice for a less hurried service for families from further afield, such as Chelmsford, Colchester and Basildon. The need for the new crematorium has been highlighted by how families from across the area have chosen Maldon Fields for their service from as far afield as Chelmsford, Witham, Southminster and Tiptree, as well as from Maldon itself. To read the complete article, please head to the: **[Maldon Nub News website.](#)**

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Plans for a new crematorium in **Glenrothes** have been approved after an appeal to the Scottish Government. A Holyrood reporter overruled a decision by Fife councillors in May, stating there is no justification for refusal. The proposal for Southfield Industrial Estate includes a timber and manufacturing facility alongside a construction skills academy. More than 100 people objected to the planning application over fears pollutants from burning would affect their health. And members of Fife Council's west and central planning committee ruled it was planned for the wrong location. However, developer **Respect Developments** has pledged to speak to residents in a bid to be a good neighbour. The approved Glenrothes crematorium plan also includes memorial gardens, 193 parking spaces and vehicular access. Respect Developments say it could create 120 jobs, including 80 apprentices. Fife planning officers recommended refusal as Southfield Industrial Estate is zoned for employment use. For the full article, please go to: **[www.thecourier.co.uk](http://www.thecourier.co.uk)**



## NEWS REVIEW

## CREMATORIA NEWS



A fresh Court of Session challenge against **Angus Council's** approval for a new crematorium on the border with Dundee is being mounted. It means the authority may have to defend its decision-making in Scotland's highest civil court for the second time. And it could further delay farmer Guthrie Batchelor's hopes of starting work on the **Duntrune** facility in 2025. A local objector is seeking a statutory review of the Angus planning appeal committee's August green-light for the project. It is the latest stage in the four-year controversy surrounding the rural site. In March this year, the court ruled a decision by planning review councillors to overturn a previous refusal by officials for the scheme was unlawful. The authority was ordered to establish a new review committee to re-consider the application. In August, it gave the Duntrune development the go-ahead for a second time. Meanwhile, an application for another crematorium on farmland near Carmyllie was rejected by the review committee last month. For the full article, please go to the: **[Courier Evening Telegraph's website.](#)**

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Plans for a new crematorium near **Daviot** are at risk of being thrown out as councillors claimed it was simply "in the wrong place". Inverurie businessman **Fraser Milne**, who owns Inverurie Garden Centre, lodged an application for the facility in January. The project has been earmarked to be built on land next door to busy agricultural manufacturing firm Stewart Trailers. It would have a central chapel with seats for 144 people and a large window looking out towards Bennachie. An electric cremator would be powered by 200 solar panels located at the corner of the site. Meanwhile, a garden of remembrance and reflective pool would be added outside giving mourners a peaceful space to remember their loved ones. Plans for the development recently went before the Formartine area committee for members to give their views. The application resulted in a vote that ended in a tie, but committee chairman Iain Taylor had the final say and recommended the plan be refused. However, the fate of the development will now lie with the Garioch area committee who will consider the crematorium when they meet again in the new year. To read the full article, please head to the: **[Aberdeen Live website.](#)**





Plans for refurbishing **Astwood Crematorium** have been set out in a report published by **Worcester City Council**. Alongside new, energy-efficient electric cremators, it is proposed that the programme of work includes a refurbishment of the chapel and the complete replacement of the building's roof. The Policy and Resources Committee was asked to back the refurbishment plans, agree to the preparation and submission of a planning application, support the financing of the £6.96 million scheme, and set the wheels in motion to appoint a main works contractor. At the heart of the plan is the replacement of the current three gas-powered cremators with two new electric cremators, thought to be the first to be installed in a West Midlands crematorium. Work is expected to start on site in summer 2025, with the Crematorium building closed until spring 2026. Astwood Cemetery and grounds will remain open throughout the refurbishment period. To read the full article, please go to: [www.worcester.gov.uk](http://www.worcester.gov.uk).

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Work has started on a new memorial garden at **Worthing Crematorium**. The garden will provide space for 950 new plots. The crematorium currently has three private memorial garden areas for cremated remains, but all are now used or reserved with more than 100 families on a waiting list for a plot. The new garden is being built on the site of the former country house, **Muntham Court**. It will have 950 permanent resting places, including duo plots for couples and quad plots for families. The new memorial garden will have a sensory area and sustainable planting that benefits wildlife and works with the environment. Work on the garden started in early November 2024 and should be complete by the end of January 2025, subject to weather conditions. For the full article, go to: [www.theargus.co.uk](http://www.theargus.co.uk).

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A West Donegal funeral director is welcoming the prospect of a crematorium bring developed in Letterkenny. It's emerged that the owners of **Eternal Light Chapel of Rest** have made provision for a cremation facility within a new funeral home in the **Carmamuggagh** area for which permission has already been granted. The current building is affected by defective concrete, so a nearby site has been purchased for the construction of a replacement. Cllr Paul Canning is an architect on the project. Funeral Director Kieran Roarty says having a crematorium in Letterkenny would be a very positive move for people in West Donegal who face lengthy journeys to Cavan. To read the full article, please go to: <https://highlandradio.com>.



## CREMATORIA NEWS

Plans to build a new crematorium on the outskirts of **Newport** have been quashed. City council planners said the proposals for the farmland, near **Castleton**, would have led to the loss of agricultural land and would have piled pressure on rural roads. The applicant, **Castleton Park Ltd**, had also proposed creating new vehicle access, car parking, and memorial parkland at the site, off Pen Y Lan Road. At a meeting of Newport City Council's planning committee, planning officer Adam Foote said his department was "not satisfied that there was an overriding need for a facility of this nature". Even if there was evidence of a need for the crematorium, it would be "outweighed" by the potential loss of farmland, he said. Mr Foote judged the proposed crematorium to be an "unjustified, inappropriate and unsustainable development in the countryside". Ms Jones, speaking at the meeting, said she was "extremely disappointed" with the officers' reasons for recommending refusal, and believed any highways issues "can be overcome". Mr Foote told the committee the Welsh Government had also weighed in on the proposals, telling the council that if it approved planning permission, the matter would be referred to ministers to make a final decision. The committee agreed with the council's planning officers, however, and refused to grant permission for the development. For the complete article, please go to the: **Newport Herald's website.**

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Plans have been lodged for a 'much-needed' new crematorium near **Stroud**. Proposals were submitted to Stroud District Council for the construction of a new crematorium building with memorial garden, associated access, car park, landscaping and natural burial ground at the site – land on the east side of Claypits, Eastington. The group behind the scheme - **Crematoria Management Limited** (part of the Westerleigh group) – spoke to parish councils including at Eastington, Frampton, Whitminster as well as funeral directors serving the Stroud, Gloucester, South Gloucestershire and Cotswold districts before lodging the proposals on Thursday, November 7th. The car park would consist of 126 parking spaces including overflow, electric vehicle, disabled and staff space while the site would be accessed via the A38/Bristol Road. Planning documents – submitted on behalf of the applicant – argue that funeral directors 'feel there is a compelling need' for such proposals and that their service 'plays a vital role in society'. They also say that it would allow a large amount of Stroud district residents to have a crematorium within a 30 to 45 minute drive time. For the full article, please go to: **www.gazetteseries.co.uk.**



## NEWS REVIEW

## CREMATION SOCIETY NEWS

The Cremation Society's Chair Professor Hilary J Grainger OBE, and the Society's Executive Officer Wendy Buchan, visited Palace Green Library at Durham University to lodge a further collection of documents to the Society's Archives that are deposited at the Library.

To mark the Society's 150th anniversary, the original declaration signed by the founding members of The Cremation Society in January 1874, was handed over and received on behalf of the Library by Professor Douglas Davies, Vice-President of The Cremation Society.

Presentations were also given by scholars who have used the Archives in their current and past research. You can find out more information on the Society's Collection and view the online catalogue by visiting <https://www.cremation.org.uk/archives>. We will publishing more news on the Society's Archives in future additions of Pharos International.





## NEWS REVIEW

## CREMATION SOCIETY NEWS



Members of the **Scottish Cremation Society** and **Glasgow Crematorium** team welcomed The Cremation Society's Chair, Professor Hilary J Grainger OBE, and Executive Officer, Wendy Buchan, to the crematorium as part of The Cremation Society's 150th anniversary tree planting scheme.

Glasgow Crematorium, owned by the Scottish Cremation Society, was the first crematorium to be opened in Scotland, in 1895. The tree planting was also attended by Stephen Docherty, President of Glasgow Tree Lovers Society.





# 2024 NEWS ROUND UP...

Four new crematoriums opened in 2024....  
Oakfield Gardens, Plymouth's The Park, Maldon  
Fields and Bishopbriggs all opened their doors.



Policy for the development of  
standalone crematoria in Malta  
approved, bringing Malta's first  
crematorium a step closer.



Successful CBCE Conference held  
in iconic Blackpool.



The Cremation Society  
reaches its 150th anniversary  
since its formation on 13th  
January 1874.

Statutory Medical Examiner system  
introduced



Law Commission begins  
Burial, Cremation and New  
Funerary Methods project





Dr Jennie Riley is an academic at the University of Aberdeen. She is currently undertaking a Leverhulme Trust early career fellowship, conducting a study about grave goods in the contemporary UK context. Readers can find out more about the project and Dr Riley's research on her staff profile page, which you can find here: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/hsru/who-we-are/people/profiles/jennifer.riley>.

Interviews form a central part of this study, and Jennie is looking to speak with a diverse range of people working in death-related fields within the UK (i.e. funeral directors, celebrants, crematorium and burial ground managers) throughout 2025. Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes on Microsoft Teams, at a time convenient to you.

More information about what interviewing involves can be found at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/divinity-religious-studies/baggage-for-the-beyond-3068.php>

Anyone who would be happy to participate can contact Dr Riley at [jennifer.riley@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.riley@abdn.ac.uk)



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\*Grave goods are any items placed with the dead when they are buried or cremated.

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Contact Dr Jennie Riley at [jennifer.riley@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.riley@abdn.ac.uk)

LEVERHULME TRUST





Westerleigh Group has unveiled a world-first at its **Gedling Crematorium**, offering families a chance to experience the funerals of the future, today, thanks to state-of-the-art technology. The crematorium in Nottinghamshire can now uniquely personalise services to an unprecedented level, using the projection of dynamic theming in the chapel, accompanied by coordinated soundscapes and lighting.

The innovative experience is the result of a partnership between **Westerleigh Group** and the UK's leading audio-visual provider to the bereavement industry, **Obitus**. Westerleigh Group is one of the UK's largest independent owners and operators of crematoria and cemeteries. Obitus is a 'customer first' company dedicated to delivering more ways for bereaved families to say goodbye through high-quality, personalised music choices, visual tributes, live streaming and keepsakes for funeral services. Thanks to this pioneering research and development project by Obitus, Gedling Crematorium can now offer the first stages of a ground-breaking, immersive, celebration of life experience.

Families can start their remembrance as they gather in the waiting room prior to the service by viewing the Gallery - a collection of 25 digital frames uploaded with images of their loved one. Inside the chapel, the Canvas service allows personalised visual tributes to be projected onto the front wall, making it part of the theming that surrounds the wider wall space, creating a thoroughly immersive visual and audible experience. The Canvas transforms the whole area around the coffin into a themed backdrop. High-spec audio equipment and customisable lighting have been installed by Obitus at Gedling Crematorium, enabling the team and families to uniquely tailor the chapel, waiting room/area and entrance areas to reflect the life of the loved one being remembered.

To begin with, there is a choice of ten dynamic backgrounds, from Country Hills and Waterfall to a Gentle Glimmer and a Football Stadium, but over time, Westerleigh Group and Obitus plan to significantly increase the background options available, as well as further develop the capabilities of the Canvas technology's uses in funeral services. The bereaved, families and funeral directors who may be interested in hosting a funeral at Gedling Crematorium which includes the new immersive theming should contact the team via [gedling@westerleighgroup.co.uk](mailto:gedling@westerleighgroup.co.uk) or 01158 714 107. It's available at Gedling Crematorium for anyone to use, regardless of where you live – and until it comes to a Westerleigh Group crematorium near you in the future.





## SECTOR NEWS

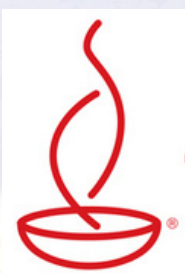


The family of a much-loved parent have said they are “blown away” after an award-winning Derbyshire company agreed to preserve their mum’s ashes in a memorial bench installed in the iconic surroundings of Manchester Monastery. Marie Worthington said she was forever grateful to Wirksworth-based **TDP** which went above and beyond to find a home for mum Norma Copeland’s ashes inside a memorial bench – the first time the company had been asked to accommodate such a request. Marie said: “It was suggested to us that a recycled plastic bench as opposed to a wooden one would be a good way for us to go, because it would last for a very long time, would not need maintenance, and there’s the environmental aspect too. We wanted to put her ashes in the memorial bench and when we asked TDP, they said they would try to find a way to do it, and I thought ‘wow’. Their kindness just blew me away.”

TDP founder and managing director Rob Barlow said: “This was the first time we have been asked to put the ashes of a loved one inside one of our memorial benches, but we were determined to try and make it work. We were able to create a space at the back of the bench so that Norma’s ashes could be placed inside. We’re very happy we managed to find a solution and we hope that the family will be comforted by the presence of the ashes as they remember Norma.”

The memorial bench for Norma has been installed in the healing garden of the Manchester Monastery, a Gothic revivalist building designed by EW Pugin, son of Augustus Pugin who was responsible for Big Ben and the interior of the Houses of Parliament. Norma’s memorial bench is one of TDP’s ‘Peak’ designs, which uses around 1.65 cubic metres of recycled plastic, equating to a saving of 58 days of CO2 emissions from the average UK home.

TDP won a rare and coveted King’s Award for Enterprise for Sustainability in 2023.





## SECTOR NEWS



Leading deathtech provider PlotBox has been named IT supplier of the Year at the Belfast Telegraph IT Awards 2024.

Held during a glittering ceremony at the MAC Theatre, Belfast on Friday 15th November, the awards celebrated the best of the IT Industry in Northern Ireland. Among the winners unveiled across 19 categories, PlotBox were also shortlisted in the hotly contested Best Place to Work in IT (Over 100 Employees) category.

PlotBox CEO Sean McAllister said: ‘We’re honoured to have been recognised among our peers within the Northern Ireland IT sector. With a focus on customer success, our local heritage and home-grown expertise has helped to drive our strategy for continued global growth. That has helped to empower our teams in delivering the same exceptional quality of services and support to our deathcare partners across the UK, the Island of Ireland and across the world. Thank you to the judging panel and many congratulations to all of the winners and shortlisted organisations.’







**Lea Fields Crematorium** near Gainsborough has been awarded a bronze award from the **Greener Globe Funeral Standard**. The accolade recognises the crematorium’s commitment to adopting and implementing a comprehensive Environmental Policy, as well as ensuring that all staff are informed and actively engaged in its green ethos. This achievement is a significant milestone in the facility’s ongoing efforts to promote environmentally conscious practices within its operations. Councillor Stephen Bunney, chair of the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Working Group at West Lindsey District Council, which runs the crematorium, said: “This award is a testament to the dedication of the Lea Fields Crematorium team and their commitment to making sustainability a core part of their mission. By reducing environmental impacts and promoting greener practices, they are setting an example for other facilities in the region. As a council, we are proud to see this initiative align with our broader environmental goals.”

Lea Fields Crematorium on Gainsborough Road, Lea, has implemented a range of measures aimed at reducing its ecological footprint, from energy-efficient processes to waste reduction and sustainable landscaping practices. These efforts are now officially recognised by the Greener Globe Funeral Standard, a highly regarded benchmark for eco-conscious funeral services. Deborah Balsdon, manager of Lea Fields Crematorium, said: “We are delighted to receive the Bronze Award from the Greener Globe Funeral Standard. Sustainability is at the heart of what we do at Lea Fields, and this recognition reflects the hard work and dedication of our entire team. We will continue to strive for even greater environmental standards to better serve our community and our planet.” To read the full article, please go to: [www.lincolnshireworld.com](http://www.lincolnshireworld.com)







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**SK Environmental Ltd** is a UK manufacturer of instrumentation for measurement and control of combustion plants, specialising in environmental monitoring and control products.



**Treske** - one of the UK's leading makers and suppliers of bespoke crematorium furniture and soft furnishings.

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