



# Walsall Council

**Cemeteries and Crematoria Service –**

**Commercial Approach in Bereavement Services**

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**APSE 3<sup>rd</sup>  
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# Changing for the future

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Bereavement is the last line in the  
hospitality industry

Douglas Adams



Walsall Council

# Considering the challenges

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Emergence of the private sector locally

Financial pressures – revenue/ budget

Time.....

Change to customer expectation / corporate relationship

Staff engagement and responses to change

Corporate support – or lack of it!

Not fit for future – potential risks (memorial safety policy / lack of burial space / technology



# Considering the principles of being a commercial service •

- Balancing public service values with financial responsibility
- Focused areas:
  - Strategic planning
  - Service excellence
  - Innovation
  - Team development
- Public sector trust and transparency





# What we achieved...

- Reopening our reception for in person visitors
- Recruiting in directly into cemetery role (rather than outsourcing)
- Strategic planning, giving the service a direction and vision – raising corporate profile
- Capital bids approved for service development – memorial safety (posts / investment), refurbishment to crem chapels, memorial garden on unusable burial ground (£550k)
- Staff training – shared responsibility to the service – introduction of tablets / investment in infrastructure
- Staff development – apprenticeships, basic skills training, management development
- Creating a standard as a commercial service – interactions with Stakeholders / FD's / Corporate



# What we achieved

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- We know our customers and products
- We have a plan for the service –short term and long term (business plan / strategic)
- We know our roles
- We know our value corporately
- We share our achievements
- We are proud of what we do



# How we measure our success

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- Increased commercial viability and creates more opportunities for revenue generation. Measurable increase in memorial sales and service bookings
- Reduction in complaints and customer issues
- A much needed personal interaction between service and customers/stakeholders
- No longer a hidden service corporately
- Staff feedback
- Attention to detail – FBCA feedback



# Creating the innovation

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Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.

William Pollard

Innovation is the ability to convert ideas into invoices

Steve Jobs

