

Reflections on a Year in Bereavement Services

By Lee Snashfold

APSE Associate





City of Lincoln Council Press Statement Issues 29th July 2024

Council appoints independent external experts to oversee running of crematorium as investigation launched

Staff at Lincoln Crematorium have reported six incidents where they believe some co-workers have not dealt with the burial of ashes in accordance with the wishes of the families of the deceased.

As a result, City of Lincoln Council has notified Lincolnshire Police, who have launched an investigation into one of these cases. The council has also commissioned an urgent inspection of the facility by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, which is in progress.

Angela Andrews, Chief Executive of City of Lincoln Council, said: "I am shocked and distraught to confirm that a small number of families did not receive the level of care and service they and their loved ones deserved, and rightly expected, in relation to the burial of their loved ones' ashes."

"They were let down at a time when they needed the high level of dedication and professionalism that our crematorium team has always been proud to provide."

"I have personally visited or spoken to the six families identified as being directly affected by this situation, to work out how we can best help them through this difficult time and to offer our deepest apologies."

"I have been humbled by the responses I received from these families, and we are working with them to agree on lasting tributes to their loved ones."

“We have brought in experienced industry professionals to support the operation of Lincoln Crematorium and ensure we can continue to deliver a committed and professional service. I can reassure anyone using this service that the high standards required are being met.”

“I would like to reassure those who have previously used the crematorium that there is no evidence of any other families being affected, other than those we have already been in contact with.”

“This situation came to light thanks to concerns raised by council staff. We have launched a thorough internal investigation into what happened, and how it happened, and our initial findings have been shared with Lincolnshire Police who are now investigating one of the incidents.”

"While a police investigation is ongoing, it is not possible for me to say any more. We will also be conducting a full internal review into the crematorium's processes and procedures and will provide a further update on this in due course.”

“I would like to reiterate how deeply sorry I am to all those affected by what has happened.”

All those identified as being directly affected have been contacted, however, we appreciate this situation could be upsetting for others so we are providing an advice line.

If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to contact this dedicated line, where our staff will be able to provide advice and guidance.

The number to call is: 01522 873399



Alpha Real Trust Secures Five Crematoria in England

LONDON - Alpha Real Trust Limited has expanded its portfolio by acquiring five crematoria in England for a sum of £34.2 million, with a conditional agreement in place for a sixth. The assets were purchased from subsidiaries of Dignity Group Holdings Limited, a prominent UK funeral services provider. Dignity will continue to manage the crematoria under 40-year leases that include an option to extend for an additional 20 years.

The initial annual rent for the portfolio is set at £2.5 million and is subject to inflation adjustments. The acquisition was funded through Alpha Real Trust's existing cash reserves and a loan covering approximately 65% of the purchase price. The company has also conditionally agreed to acquire a sixth crematorium for £8.8 million, with the transaction expected to be finalized by March 31, 2025.

The sale and leaseback arrangement enables Dignity to reduce its unsecured debt. For Alpha Real Trust, this investment represents an opportunity to secure a stable, inflation-linked income and add diversification to its holdings. The company continues to focus on high-return investments in asset-backed lending, debt, and property within Western Europe.

Alpha Real Trust expressed enthusiasm about the partnership with Dignity, citing the operator's track record in the UK crematoria market. The transaction involved representation by KLM Real Estate, Hogan Lovells, and DLA Piper for Dignity, while Augur Group and Penningtons Manches Cooper represented Alpha Real Trust.

This acquisition aligns with Alpha Real Trust's strategy of investing in assets that offer predictable cash flows and the potential for capital growth. The information is based on a press release statement.

Emerging Themes for the Sector

Horizon Scanning – What Next?