
PILOT OUTCOMES FOR REGISTRAR LED FUNERAL SERVICES IN KINTYRE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the outcomes of a pilot for civil funeral services in the Kintyre area with local undertakers that Council approved in September 2022.
- 1.2 The pilot was born of a request to local registrars by local undertakers in the South Kintyre area about them conducting funeral services due to the lack of Church of Scotland Ministers available to perform funerals. Due to the long-term decline of the number of faith based celebrants to perform funeral services, the pilot was an opportunity to determine if this was something the council could provide as a wider service. This is not a statutory service so needs to be on a fee paying basis.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the council approves:
- i. The permanent addition of civil funeral services to the portfolio of registration services in the Kintyre registration district, in co-operation with local undertakers. Roll out to further districts in the future will require separate approval.
 - ii. That the council continues to record funeral service fees in the annual budget pack and subject to the inflationary increases approved by Council.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In October 2022 Council approved a pilot of civil funeral services in Kintyre arising from contact by local undertakers who were struggling to find suitably qualified professionals to conduct services; largely due to a lack of Ministers. This report covers the period from November 2022 to June 2023. Before the pilot could start a significant amount of set up work was required including:
- Agreement of an memorandum of understanding with undertakers
 - Creation of a GDPR Data Protection Impact Assessment and Privacy Statement
 - A Civil Funeral Planning Booklet has been created for families to use when deciding what to include in their personalised service
 - A Civil Funeral Information Form has been created for families to complete to assist in the development of a personalized eulogy
 - Set up of a new process on the CRM system so that all documentation relating to the funeral ceremony is stored
 - Training materials and sessions with undertakers
 - New online information about the service and fees charged
- 3.2 Below is a breakdown of the number of funerals in the South Kintyre area over the pilot period and how many were conducted by a Registrar and in summary they completed 8 out of 121 funeral services or 7%.

Month	Total Funeral Ceremonies	Civil Funeral
November	11	1
December	15	1
January	13	1
February	18	3
March	13	0
April	14	0
May	11	0
June	17	1
July	9	1

It was notable that Church of Scotland have had a locum minister in place since February 2023. All ceremonies were weekday ceremonies, two graveside services, two at-home services, one in Campbeltown Town Hall and one in the Burnet Building ceremony room.

- 3.3 The 2023/24 fee for a council Registrar conducting a funeral ceremony on a Monday – Friday is £150 per ceremony, plus travel. For a Saturday, the fee increases to £250 per ceremony plus travel. No charge was made for the funeral service of a child, in line with the burial charges set by Roads and Infrastructure Services. Original projections were that £6k may be raised a year in Kintyre, but the reduced demand after the Minister was appointed means that it will probably only be £2k for the full year.
- 3.4 Feedback from families after ceremonies has been 100% positive. Mourners attending the civil funeral ceremonies have also passed on their good comments and some have indicated this is what they would like to plan for their own funeral. The feedback received from the undertakers is also positive and they would like to continue to have the civil funerals option available.
- 3.5 Members had raised concerns that Campbeltown registrars may find it upsetting to deliver this service, but their feedback is they were happy to provide this additional service to the community and feel that although numbers have been low, awareness is slowly growing and it does not impinge on their core statutory registration duties. Registrars in other Districts report that they do not yet have a demand from local undertakers for this new service, but they are re-assured that all the products and processes are in place to support its roll out further if needed.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The pilot has been successful in that it has established all the prerequisites for a civil funeral service, the customers using the service are very satisfied with it and local undertakers in Kintyre are grateful for the additional option it provides for them. Given that the service is not impinging on statutory duties and is bringing in a limited additional income that more than covers costs, we recommend that it be made a permanent additional service in the Kintyre Registration District. The pattern of reducing numbers of faith-based officiants is unlikely to change and this means there may well be a wider future requirement for civil officiants at funerals where registrars are willing to offer the service and perform funeral ceremonies.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	Would be a permanent change to the range of registration services, (but wider roll out would require further approval).
5.2	Financial	Moderate new income stream circa £2-3kpa
5.3	Legal	None known
5.4	HR	There are no changes to employee Conditions of Service
5.5	Fairer Scotland Duty	
5.5.1	Protected Characteristics	Offers a non faith civil alternative choice of officiant.
5.5.2	Socio Economic	None
5.5.3	Islands	Gigha is covered within the Registration District
5.6	Climate Change	None known
5.7	Risk	None known
5.8	Customer Service	The Kintyre service will provide a new service to meet a local need and is aligned to current registration services and skills.

Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services

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