

**PILOT FOR REGISTRARS CONDUCTING FUNERAL SERVICES IN KINTYRE  
AREA 2022 – FEES AND CHARGES**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. In Campbeltown and the surrounding area there is a lack of Church of Scotland Ministers available to perform funerals and local undertakers have identified a need for alternative celebrants to be available to perform funeral services. The Council has been approached by the local undertaker in Kintyre in regard to the possibility of local Registrars conducting funeral services; using their experience in completing death registrations and marriage ceremonies. The Council proposes a pilot scheme for a period of six months in the Kintyre area, where Registrars will perform funeral services in co-operation with local undertakers, with an interim report after three months to allow a decision as to whether the service should be offered during the 2023/24 financial year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Council approves:-

- i. Registrars in Kintyre to establish a six month pilot scheme to perform funeral services in co-operation with local undertakers, with an interim report after three months to inform the budget process for 2023/24; and
- ii. The pilot fees and charges as set out within the report at section 4.3.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is seek agreement from the Council to establish a six months pilot scheme to undertake funeral services in the Kintyre area with local undertakers.
- 2.2. The Council have been approached by local undertakers in the Kintyre area in regard to the possibility of local Registrars conducting funeral services. There is a lack of Church of Scotland Ministers available to perform funerals and local undertakers have identified the need for alternative, suitably experienced celebrants to be available to perform funeral services.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council approves:-
- i. Registrars in Kintyre to establish a six month pilot scheme to perform funeral services in co-operation with local undertakers, with an interim report after three months to inform the budget process for 2023/24; and
  - ii. The pilot fees and charges as set out within the report at section 4.3.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 Officiating at funerals has not been a service that was offered by Argyll and Bute Council registrars; although some other councils such as Edinburgh City Council and East Ayrshire Council have offered it. Hitherto faith based celebrants have fulfilled that role. However in South Kintyre the retirement and relocation of ministers has meant that local undertakers have struggled to get celebrants for funerals and asked the Campbeltown based registrars if they could help to fill the gap; given their role in the registration of deaths and the celebration of marriages/partnerships. The registrars in Campbeltown therefore propose a six month pilot to establish exactly how the service could operate, the demand for civil funeral ceremonies, scale of potential additional income and to inform future innovation and partnership working. An interim report will be completed after three months to inform budget related decision making, if the Service is to be offered in

the 2023/24 financial year.

- 4.2 A memorandum of understanding will be put in place with the local undertakers to ensure that they and their customers are aware of what the Council offer, what will be charged and what the respective roles would be.
- 4.3 The proposed fee for a Council Registrar conducting a funeral ceremony would be £150 per ceremony, plus travel. The table below illustrated the charges of a humanist celebrant to conduct a ceremony, and the charges of other Local Authorities who also provide this service. The proposed Council's fee is greater at the weekend as it includes the remuneration for the registrar who will work on a voluntary basis on a Saturday. The proposed fee is competitive with the humanist alternative and reflects the actual costs of service delivery in a rural area.

	<b>Fees and Charges</b>
Argyll and Bute Council <b>Monday – Friday</b>	£150 (plus travel)
Argyll and Bute Council <b>Saturday</b>	£250 (plus travel)
Humanist	£180 (plus travel)
Edinburgh City Council	£90 (plus travel)
East Ayrshire	£100 (plus travel)

- 4.4 The Council's Registrars would provide the service during Monday to Friday. If a Saturday was required, it would only be offered if a Registrar was available and willing to fulfil the engagement. The proposed fee for a Saturday would be £250 with the remuneration for staff set at the current fee for a marriage/civil partnership ceremony. A minimum of 3 days' notice would apply for a registrar to conduct the service.
- 4.5 Indications from undertakers are that 90% of the funeral services would be Monday to Friday and our Registrars would take on these ceremonies as part of their weekly duties. The same 60p per mile currently charged for marriage ceremonies in the fees schedule would be applied for any travel required to external venues. Currently at weekends Registrars are paid a fixed allowance to officiate at marriage ceremonies and each ceremony is allocated a notional three hours to complete including the travelling time. If Registrars were to officiate at a funeral service at weekends, then the same allowances would apply, leaving a minimum £150 in Saturday income for the Council to cover core costs.
- 4.6 Officers have been provided with death figures for Campbeltown District for the last 3 years, where the ceremonies were conducted by a Minister of Religion. The figures also include the number of Humanist funerals. Naturally, only a proportion of these would be done by Registrars. However, if 30% were completed by Registrars, it would bring in circa £6k a year. However the pilot will help establish actual demand.

Year	Total Funeral Ceremonies	Humanist Funeral
2021	132	1
2020	113	0
2019	97	2

- 4.7 There is scope for the Council's Registrars in Campbeltown to take on this service in addition to marriage ceremonies as there is a relatively low number of marriages; in 2021 there were 14 civil marriages and 2 civil partnerships in Campbeltown District for the year. Minimal training would be required as registrars are already experienced in assisting the bereaved through their death registration activities and in preparing for and undertaking ceremonies from their marriage related activities. The pilot would help to inform the potential to extend the service to other areas.
- 4.8 A new process for the funeral service Pilot would require to be set up on our Registration system; Oracle. All documentation relating to the funeral ceremony where our Registrars have had to capture information about the deceased would be stored on the Oracle CRM system. A privacy statement would tell customers how the information that they provide will be used and protected. A Data Protection Impact Assessment would require to be done to confirm how we would manage the information that we have collected and also how long we will retain this for. All current Health and Safety procedures currently in place for civil marriages and civil partnerships would apply for civil funerals.
- 4.9 At the end of the six months pilot, officers will report back to the Executive Leadership Team as to the potential for extending the service further. An interim report will be submitted as part of the budget setting process in February 2023 to allow matters such as fees to be considered for the 2023/24 financial year.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 As there is a shortage of Church of Scotland Ministers and Celebrants in the Kintyre area, this pilot will allow Council Registrars to provide a skill set to conduct a much needed service to the public and is a source of fee income for the Council. A 6 month pilot is proposed in the Campbeltown District (with an interim report by February 2023). Based on the 132 death figures for 2021 and some of these being conducted at weekends, there is a potential income of over £6,000 per year. If the pilot is successful it could also be rolled out to the other areas within Argyll and Bute where the reducing number of faith based officiants means there is a requirement for civil officiants at funerals.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – depending on the outcome of the pilot, a policy would be put in place for any permanent arrangements offered. A local Memorandum of Understanding will be put in place with local undertakers for the duration of the pilot.

- 6.2 Financial – the pilot will inform a possible new income stream for the Council.
- 6.3 Legal – none known.
- 6.4 HR – there are no changes to employee Conditions of Service.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known.
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known.
  - 6.5.3 Islands – none known.
- 6.6 Climate Change – none known.
- 6.7 Risk – none known.
- 6.8 Customer Service – the arrangements of this pilot will provide a new service to meet a local need and is aligned to current registration services and skills.

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