

East Devon crematorium

Although construction work continues apace time was found for the Leader of the East Devon District Council to perform a symbolic turf cutting ceremony on Tuesday 19th October on the site of the new crematorium at Strete Raleigh just outside the village of Whimble.

Silver spade in hand Councillor Sara Randall Johnson pronounced, "This is an excellent and much needed facility for the people of East Devon and I congratulate all those here today who have been instrumental in bringing it to fruition".

The ceremony was attended by local funeral directors who also welcomed the new development as it will reduce journey times for them from the east of the county to existing crematoria at Exeter, Yeovil and Taunton.

The building takes shape nestling amongst the trees



Tom Wakeford (high visibility vest), project manager main contractor Stepnell Ltd. explaining progress to date in the ceremony area



Chris Johns, Steve Pearce, Cllr. Sara Randall Johnson, Mark Smith chief executive The Southern Co-operative, Steve Sheridan finance director East Devon Crematorium Ltd.



Finding the right site has taken time but the wait has been worthwhile for it nestles neatly in the countryside away from noise and distraction.

Five years ago East Devon District Council debated a motion to 'investigate the feasibility of a crematorium'. The motion was lost but it was agreed that any application for a privately financed facility would be welcomed. Thus in October last year, despite a recommendation of refusal by council officers, planning permission was given to Mercia Crematoria Developments Ltd. to build on a site off the old A30 road.

The new crematorium and memorial gardens will be run by a company with a consortium of investors, including The Southern Co-operative, one of the independent regional Co-op societies. Steve Pearce, Operating Officer End of Life Services for The Southern Co-operative said, "We are pleased to be one of the investors in this impressive new facility for east Devon led by Chris Johns."

Bob Coates