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Yellow News...

Hope for an end to 'conveyor belt' funerals

Crematorium is given go-ahead

A NEW crematorium is to be built near Royal Wootton Bassett after planners gave their blessing.

The development is expected to alleviate long waiting and journey times experienced by the bereaved using the Kingsdown facility in Swindon.

Last Wednesday Wiltshire Council's northern area planning committee agreed unanimously to grant permission to the Westerleigh Group for its scheme at Upper Studley Farm.

Mollie Groom, Wiltshire councillor for the area, said: "Quite simply, everybody supports it. There is a shortage of burial plots in the area. It is putting something where it needs to be.

"I think it will attract quite a few people from this side of Swindon and North Wiltshire."

She said some in the area had found themselves travelling as far as Semington for cremations.

By Tina Robins

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The news was welcomed by funeral directors in the area.

"It is going to make it an awful lot easier for all of our families, that's the main thing we have to remember," said Jem Mead from Mead Family Funerals. "It is going to give them a much more dignified service of an hour."

The eight-hectare site, close to junction 16 of the M4, had the support of Lydiard Tregoze Parish Council and comes 15 years after Royal Wootton Bassett identified a need.

Families are facing waits of two to three weeks to have funeral services at Kingsdown and funeral directors report some have complained that although the crematorium staff do their best, it can feel like a conveyor belt.

At a funeral this week mourners had to wait for an earlier

group to leave before they could enter the chapel. Although backed by the councillors, there were concerns about access to the new facility.

Bassett South councillor Chris Hurst said he supported it because of the waiting times.

"I think I was swayed by the fact that the copse is going to be maintained and it is going to be hidden to some extent behind that," he said.

But he did have an issue with the exit which allowed people to turn right onto the A3102.

Highways officers had not objected to it but Brinkworth councillor Toby Sturgis suggested a safety audit after six months to decide whether the turning was dangerous. He believed the development would be welcomed.

"I've spoken to people who have had to wait a considerable time to get a place in Kingsdown," he said.