



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

THE JOURNAL

ISSUE 7



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#ITSOKAYTOTALK

We are a peer to peer support group for men. Come have a brew and a chat!



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The CPD Standards Office
CPD PROVIDER: 60065
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LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Amanda Dalby, Dip. FD, LMBIFD



Dear Members, Students, Fellows & Associate Members of our Prestigious Profession,

Well, even though my flower pots are mostly fully blooming at my Funeral Parlour, we've hardly had a Summer, so far!

I've been out & about, despite the rainy weather, however...

First off, in June, was the bi-annual National Funeral Exhibition at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, with a dedicated BIFD Team. What an amazing exhibition it was - jam packed full of every kind of product, cars, hearses and associated funeral services - we didn't know what to look at first!

You will have seen a lot of my pictures in the last Journal, but here are my favourite moments from
THREE DAYS IN COVENTRY!



with Past President, David Capper



Angel at my Side



'Pretty in Pink' at the Lyn Oakes Stand



The Best stand by far - JC Atkinsons



Quality Street - made in Yorkshire



with Adrienne Peers, from Canfly Marketing



Unique Morris Traveller Hearse



It was also great to chat with all of the Kindred Associations, and the many suppliers who work tirelessly to aid our profession to create those very special 'Final Goodbyes' for our grieving families. Families who may be looking for something a little different to add to that very important day.

I went out 'shopping' and found the perfect 'Memorial Cuddle Stone' to keep some of my late Father's ashes in, from a company called 'Yarwood Memorial Products' who were located right next to our BIFD stand. I also bought a stunning glass urn from them, for a very glamorous lady, whose funeral I carried out in June. The family LOVED IT.



Memorial Cuddle Stones from Yarwood Memorial Products

Canfly Marketing's latest NFE promotional pack of Cherry Blossom designed Scattertubes, Memory Boxes & matching Donation Boxes also caught my eye - and now look SO pretty in my Parlour, perfectly complimenting my deep pink colour scheme.

Additionally, the 'Memorial Crystals' Swarovski Butterfly, Heart & Tealight items (also on Special Offer for NFE shoppers) are currently trying to 'sparkle' in my display cabinet...when the sun eventually makes an appearance!

And although 3 full days at the NFE was quite tiring - I came back with lots of new ideas & made some interesting new contacts.

The BIFD Team talked to many prospective new members, and handed out lots of information regarding BIFD Education too - so all in all, it was a very successful few days. Roll on 2026!

Later in June, myself & a fellow Funeral Director friend, Judith Brandwood, chased the sun to Blackpool - a very popular Northern Seaside Town on the west coast of Lancashire, for the joint CBCE (Cremation Society & Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities) Conference Dinner. It was held at the really unusual & quite beautiful 'Spanish Hall' in the Winter Gardens, just behind the iconic Blackpool Tower.



Cherry Blossom design from Canfly Marketing



Glass Urn from Yarwood Memorial Products



Crystal Keepsakes from Message from the Heart

I had the pleasure of meeting the newly appointed Mayor, Councillor Peter Hunter, & Mayoress, Anne-Marie Hunter, of Blackpool, and the guest speaker was Amy Williams MBE, a former Skeleton Racer & Olympic Gold Medalist 🏅



with fellow Funeral Director friend,
Judith Brandwood



with Mayor & Mayoress CCLR Peter &
Anne-Marie Hunter



Amy Williams MBE, Olympic Gold Medalist

Into July, and our online CPD Sessions continued on Wednesday 3rd, with a presentation from the Stroke Association, which was most enlightening.

All our CPD sessions are scheduled for 7pm on Zoom and the upcoming sessions are as follows:

- **Monday 12th August** with Kate Bell, who will present an overview presentation of 'SoBs' - Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide.
- **Wednesday 4th September**, Eimer Duffy and Ian Henderson will be talking about "How to stand out more online in a competitive market and beat the bear!"
- Obitus will be joining us for two sessions, the first on **Wednesday 2nd October** Drew Whibley and Phil Perry will focus on familiarisation of Obitus products and services. Drew Whibley will be joining us again on **Wednesday 6th November** this session will feature Funeral Director Dashboard training.

We hope that you can join us for these CPD sessions, as they all help towards gaining a 'BIFD Licence to Practice', which you can attain by completing x12 hours of CPD per year. Please watch out for the login details of these sessions on Social Media, or by contacting admin@bifd.co.uk

The current BIG topic of conversation amongst Funeral Directors is the Government inspections, being carried out across England, Wales & Northern Ireland. Local Councils are now sending out teams of Environmental Health Inspectors to all Funeral Directors premises, with the emphasis on 'care of the deceased' and 'ashes storage'.

As BIFD members, we all know that it's vitally important to keep our premises 'ship shape' but if ever there was a time to have a 'clear out' or do some re-organising, it's now!

Going forward, the Ministry of Justice is the government department who are looking into regulating the Funeral Industry. If you would like to raise awareness of our high standards, you may want to write to your newly elected MP, to tell them that BIFD Diploma holders are actually the HIGHEST qualified Funeral Directors in the UK, and that we believe all funeral businesses should have a fully qualified member of staff in their midst.

I'm sure that most people would agree that grieving families deserve to be looked after by fully qualified Funeral Directors, and perhaps your MP would like to talk to you about bringing this to the attention of the MOJ?

If you need a draft letter, please contact admin@bifd.co.uk and we can send you all of the points that you might want to highlight to your new MP and our new government.



MY PRESIDENTIAL CHARITY NEWS - please contact me if you'd like to join me, my Team & friends for a sponsored walk. The 'Highlights of Halifax Hike' will take place on Saturday 31st August, in aid of Andy's Man Club, my Charity of the Year. Watch out for my 'JustGiving' page this month 🇬🇧

We're starting off at my funeral parlour & heading for all of the interesting landmarks around Halifax - including 15th Century Halifax Minster, the 'Gibbet' traced back to as early as 1280, and Grade II listed historic Shibden Hall - which you'll recognise from the TV series 'Gentleman Jack'.

I'm aiming to raise at least £1,000 for Andy's Man Club - I will update you in Issue 9!



And, of course, I can't end my letter to you without reminding you about my upcoming BIFD Conference Weekend, 18-20th October, in Yorkshire.

If you haven't already booked your place, please do. We are busy putting all of the final plans into place, and I'm really excited about taking you all on a short FREE bus trip to the Piece Hall, in my beloved Halifax.

I've attended some of the Summer concerts these last few weeks, and we've had some fabulous acts gracing the huge stage there - Nile Rogers & Chic, Grace Jones, Bryan Adams, Shania Twain & Rick Astley, to name but a few! So come along for the outing, and you'll see why these stars were all so bowled over by this beautiful space - I shall be your Piece Hall Tour Guide, and will explain how important this building is to the people of Halifax, now & in the past.



And you won't want to miss the Friendly Brass Band, welcoming you into Dinner on Saturday 19th - in the 'Yorkshire Room' of course. It will be a rousing Yorkshire Welcome!



Make your Booking today. Visit our website www.bifd.org.uk and you'll find the booking forms under 'Meetings & Events' or in this Journal.

Yours funerally,

Amanda Dalby

The British Institute of Funeral Directors

Conference: 18th – 20th October 2024

*Cedar Court Hotel
Ainley Top
Lindley Moor Rd
HD3 3RH*



Venue & Itinerary For 42nd Conference & AGM

Our National President, Amanda Dalby, would like to invite all Members, Fellows, Students, Associates, Presidents of the Kindred Associations and all Guests to the forthcoming Conference, AGM and Gala Dinner, to be held, on 18th - 20th October **2024** at the Cedar Court Hotel, Ainley Top, just above Halifax, West Yorkshire.

The Cedar Court 4 star Hotel, offers comfortable rooms and excellent facilities for a relaxing stay. The hotel is conveniently located just off the M62 at junction 24, between Leeds and Manchester. The hotel has excellent modern facilities, a huge car park, and offers free Wi-Fi.

The President's Charity 2024

For her Presidential Year, Amanda has chosen to support **Andy's Man Club**, a charity set up by the brother-in-law of Andy Roberts, a 23 year old from Halifax, who took his own life. The aim of the charity is to prevent suicide in men. The charity is now nationwide, and their now familiar slogan is '**It's Okay to Talk**'

The itinerary so far...

Friday 18th October 2024

The Board of Directors will be meeting in the afternoon.

After checking into your room, Amanda invites you to join her for a **3 course dinner** in the function suite.

Saturday 19th October 2024

The AGM will take place in the morning followed by a **buffet lunch**.

Amanda is planning something to occupy your time in the afternoon.....**watch this space!**

The evening will start with a Drinks Reception followed by a **3 course dinner**, plus cheese & biscuits, with wine in the **Yorkshire Room**. After dinner, we will have our **Diploma Awards Ceremony** and **Handover of Offices** followed by music and dancing until late.

Earlier than 18th or later than 20th October 2024

If you would like to enjoy a longer break, we have secured good rates either side of the Conference, so that you can enjoy Yorkshire for an extended stay! Ask Amanda about all of the interesting sights & places to visit around Halifax.



**I look forward to welcoming you all to
Yorkshire in 2024, Amanda Dalby**

DipFD, LMBIFD National President of the BIFD

**The British Institute of Funeral Directors Conference 2024:
18th – 20th October 2024**

Cedar Court Hotel

Ainley Top
Lindley Moor Rd
Huddersfield
HD3 3RH

The 42nd BIFD Conference 2024 Rates

1. Friday Evening To Sunday Morning – THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£595</i>
<i>Friday & Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£370</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea & Coffee</i>		
<i>Saturday Lunch Included</i>		
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>		
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal</i>		

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£250</i>
<i>Friday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£160</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £25 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£360</i>
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£225</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal Followed By Tea & Coffee</i>		
<i>Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £25 PP

4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only

.....£80 Per Person

Saturday Evening Drinks Reception
Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal

5. AGM ATTENDANCE ONLY

.....Free To All Members & Students

Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Saturday Lunch Is Available On The Day At £25 PP

TO STAY BEFORE OR AFTER THE CONFERENCE B&B BASIS

<i>.....Double Room (2 People)</i>	<i>£100</i>
<i>.....Single Room (1 Person)</i>	<i>£90</i>

The 42nd BIFD CONFERENCE - 18th – 20th October 2024

Cedar Court Hotel, Huddersfield

BOOKING FORM

Members Name: Membership Number:

Address:

Post Code: Contact Telephone Number:

Email Address: Number of Rooms Required:

Special Dietary Requirements: Yes/No Details of Diet

Arrival Date:/...../..... Departure Date:/...../.....

Attending **Partners** Name:

Attending **Guests** Names:

See Rates Page To Complete Form & Payment

Tariff (1) – Full Package

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Please return, or email, your completed booking form for the appropriate amount to the Conference Co-ordinator and make payment either by Bacs or by Cheque made out to "The BIFD":

Tariff (2) – Fri to Sat

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Bacs Payments To:

Sort Code: 60-83-01 - Account Number: 20336550

Tariff (3) – Sat to Sun

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Mr. David Gresty

C/O The British Institute of Funeral Directors
National Office
10 St John Road
Wroughton
Wiltshire
SN4 9ED

Tariff (4) – Gala Dinner Only

Total Attendees £.....

07354 847 702

Tariff (5) – AGM Only

£ No Charge

david-gresty@hotmail.com

Total Amount Due £.....

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS FOR 2024 ARE OVERDUE!!

Attention all members: We're already a quarter way through the membership year! If you haven't renewed yet, it's time to act. We know it's easy to overlook, but we need your attention on this.



After 31st July, we will remove expired members' details from the National Office database.

Please ensure you remove any BIFD logos from your website and premises after this date, including expired membership and licence certificates.

We'll be sad to see you go and sincerely thank you for your support over the years.

If you believe you've renewed or have any questions, please contact the National Office at:

admin@bifd.org.uk

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Patrick Gallagher

Past President BIFD, MBE, Past President & Fellow, SAFF

1947 ~ 2024



On Saturday 29 June 2024 at Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield, Sussex over 300 mourners gathered to remember the influential life of Pat Gallagher. The Church was full, and included an overspill of mourners who watched a live stream in the community hall.

Pat's life has impacted so many for good over the years from his native Loughborough to Cuckfield.

Pat was born on 31 July 1947. It was a very hot day, and he was a distinctive looking baby at Loughborough Hospital with a shock of bright red hair. He was the youngest of the family with two older sisters, Sheila and Ann, and a brother Ken.

Pat's parents were extremely hospitable and had an open house, so it was full most Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with crowds of girls and lads from the camp. On Sunday morning, Pat's father would count the heads to see how many were there for breakfast. The squaddies reciprocated by bringing gifts of food purloined from the camp, while some helped out painting and digging the garden. Life was noisy, full of music and fun.

He started his working life in 1963 with Tom Robinson, who taught him much of the Funeral trade including coffin making and embalming, and he was with him until 1970, having married Sandy in 1966.

He then moved to Richmond to work for T.H. Saunders and he and Sandy blossomed in this environment, where the world opened up to them from life in Loughborough.

He qualified as a funeral director and Matthew was born in 1973. They were there for four years before moving to Lewes to work for Trevor Bennett, where Pat qualified as an embalmer.

His final move was to Cuckfield in 1978, which became their spiritual home. He worked for J C R Mathews until he opened the business in 1992 in Haywards Heath and the rest is history. From one office, they grew to four with Paul Bowley joining at Hassocks a few years later, followed by branches in Burgess Hill and Brighton.

He and Sandy had a house in Portugal for 11 years where they had many visitors and some wonderful times.

OBITUARY

He loved sport, football in particular, and played golf and was a season ticket holder at Leeds United FC.



above: Pat Gallagher (centre) with the Gordon Key Cup

Pat's business was based on hard work and a first class, professional service. The answer always being yes, whatever the request. He was involved in his community, organising events: concerts, golf days, performing; in fact, whatever he could do to help others.

In 1992 he joined SAIF, the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors, a society whose aim was to protect the existence of British independent funeral directors,

and Pat was good at that. He stuck up for the 'little man', righting wrongs. He joined the SAIF National Executive, and he was Chairman of the Education Committee, which went on to form the Independent Funeral Directors' (IFD) College. In fact, he served on just about every committee, his ideas and high standards shared with many, forging the way for new members.

In 2001, Pat was National President of the British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD), and in 2009 he served a year as National President of SAIF.

Pat encouraged and supported Paul Bowley, when he was National President of SAIF in 2017, and, of course, he also encouraged Matthew, his son, to serve on the SAIFCharter Executive and used his educational skills and knowledge as Governor of the IFD College.

Having imparted all this knowledge and help in so many ways, in 2022, Pat was awarded the highest honour SAIF can bestow, a SAIF Fellowship, in recognition of his dedicated service to the funeral procession.

Whoever met Pat could not help but be endeared to his generous character, warm personality and humour. Pat related to people no matter their status or background. A person who encouraged, listened and challenged. A man of deep family values, despite being a Leeds United Football Club fan all his days.



above: (back L-R) Pat Gallagher and his late son, Matthew Gallagher
(front) Pat's late wife, Sandy Gallagher

Gary Neill, Fellow of SAIF, in his tribute recalled Pat, Sandy and Matthew's thoughts, to life being like a train journey. The train makes many stops during alifetime and during that time people get on and off the train. This reflection left the congregation giving thanks for the times spent whether as a colleague, golfer, or friend, our gratitude to have shared in Pat's journey.



The Last Journey:

There is a train at the station, with a seat reserved just for me
I'm excited about its destination, as I've heard it sets you free.
The trials and tribulations, the pain and stress we breathe
Don't exist where I am going, only happiness I believe.
I hope that you will be there, to wish me on my way
It's not a journey you can join in, it's not your time today
There'll be many destinations, some are happy, some are sad
Each one a brief reminder, of the great times that we've had
Many loved ones I know are waiting, who took an earlier train.
To greet and reassure me, that nothing has really changed
We'll take the time together, to catch up on the past
To build a new beginning, one that will always last
One day you'll take your journey, on the train just like me.
And I promise that I'll be there, at the station and you will see
That life is just a journey, enriched by those you meet
No-one can take that from you, it's always yours to keep
But now as no seat is vacant, you will have to muddle through.
Make sure you fulfil your ambitions, as you know I'll be watching you
And if there's an occasion, to mention who you knew.
Speak kindly of that person, as one day it will be you
Now I can't except this ending, and as it's time for me to leave.
Please make haste to the reception, to enjoy the drinks, on me!

Pat wanted his business to remain independent and has arranged for Sue and the team, to carry on his and Sandy's legacy.

And so, Gary Neill gave them our pledge, on behalf of all his funeral family at SAIF, that if needed, we will help support the team in any way we can. And I'm sure that everyone in the community will continue to support P & S Gallagher, Independent Family Funeral Directors.

Pat was one of the best, and his legacy will be honoured and respected and will live on.

Auden

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RECENT CPD SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

STROKE ASSOCIATION'S VITAL WORK



The latest Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session, held online, brought to light the commendable efforts of the Stroke Association and their impact on families and professionals. This session focused on the diverse ways the Stroke Association supports families who donate in memory of loved ones, and the essential training they provide for funeral directors.

Supporting Families Through Bereavement

The Stroke Association plays a crucial role in assisting families during their times of loss. They provide emotional support and practical guidance,

ensuring families who wish to donate in memory of a loved one can do so with ease and comfort. This support includes personalised assistance, acknowledging the family's generosity and helping them understand the positive impact their donations have on stroke survivors and research.

Training for Funeral Directors

Recognising the unique position of funeral directors in supporting bereaved families, the Stroke Association offers specialised training to help them better serve those affected by stroke. This training equips funeral directors with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide compassionate and effective support, making a significant difference during such challenging times.

Communication Difficulties Post-Stroke

A significant focus of the session was on communication difficulties experienced by stroke survivors. Approximately two-thirds of individuals experience communication difficulties soon after a stroke, and some may continue to face these challenges long-term. While many can improve with the right support, the journey is unique for each person.

Becoming Communication Accessible

The Stroke Association offers a free training program, "Become Communication Accessible," aimed at helping organizations better serve individuals with communication difficulties. This training is crucial for any business or service provider wanting to create an inclusive environment for stroke survivors.

By completing this training and displaying the communication accessibility symbol, organizations signal to stroke survivors that they can confidently access their services. This symbol is a beacon of support and understanding, offering reassurance to those who might otherwise struggle to communicate their needs.

Thanks to Our Presenters

The session was enriched by the expertise of Emma Kay, Mel Hudson, and Amy Spence, who joined us via Zoom. Their insights and experiences provided valuable perspectives on the importance of communication support and the difference it makes in the lives of stroke survivors and their families.

Sign Up for Free Training

We encourage all interested parties to sign up for the free "Become Communication Accessible" training provided by the Stroke Association. By doing so, you can make a significant difference in your community and help stroke survivors lead more fulfilling lives. To sign up, visit: www.stroke.org.uk/ca-signup.

This CPD session underscored the importance of understanding and addressing the challenges faced by stroke survivors. With continued support and training, we can all contribute to a more inclusive and supportive society for those affected by stroke.

The facts



Communication difficulties affect more than **350,000** people in the UK following a **stroke**.

Aphasia is a **language and communication disorder** - with **stroke** being the biggest cause. The condition often has a profound effect on someone's ability to **speak, read, write and/or use numbers**.

Other communication difficulties include **Dysarthria** (difficulty controlling muscles in face) and **Apraxia of Speech** (inability to move the muscles in the face).



In the UK, most people (72%) lack confidence in recognising Aphasia symptoms and less than half of people (42%) would feel confident in communicating with someone with the disorder.

How your business can help

When talking to someone with communication difficulties you can:

- Speak **clearly**, but **don't shout**.
- Check for **'yes', 'no'** responses.
- Give your **full attention**.
- Give the person **time to speak**.
- Talk about **one idea** at a time.
- Remember that **communication difficulties** do not make someone **less intelligent**.

To find out more about how we support people with communication difficulties after a stroke visit: stroke.org.uk/what-is-aphasia



"When you have aphasia, you find people shout at you when they talk to you. You get that all the time.

People need to know that those with aphasia are not dumb. There's a person behind that voice who is struggling. It's very hard to get these words out. It exhausts you."

Tom Middlemass, 59,
from Edinburgh

A FOND FAREWELL: PAST PRESIDENT PAUL STIBBARDS EMBARKS ON NEW ADVENTURES AFTER 30 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE



For over 30 years, Paul has provided exemplary service within the funeral industry, starting his career in the traditional art of furnishing coffins. His dedication and passion for the profession saw him steadily rise through the ranks, mastering every aspect of the trade before qualifying as a trained Funeral Director and Embalmer.

Paul's expertise and commitment have not only benefited the company he served but also the wider community. In recent years, he has been a valued member of the management team at S Stibbards and Sons Funeral Directors, contributing significantly to its trusted position within the local community.

Paul's influence extended far beyond his family's business. During his successful tenure as President of the BIFD, he championed education within the funeral industry, earning the respect and admiration of his peers nationwide.

Now, having reached the pinnacle of his career, Paul seeks new challenges that will allow him to leverage the extensive experience and skills he has gained. While he will be missed within the profession, we are excited to see what the future holds for him.

On behalf of the entire BIFD community, we extend our deepest gratitude to Paul for his years of dedicated service. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours and with his upcoming wedding.



Land Rover Defender
Hearse and
Support Vehicle



The Land Rover Defender hearse accommodates for the coffin and flowers with 4 available seats for funeral staff, whilst the support vehicle has 7 seats available.

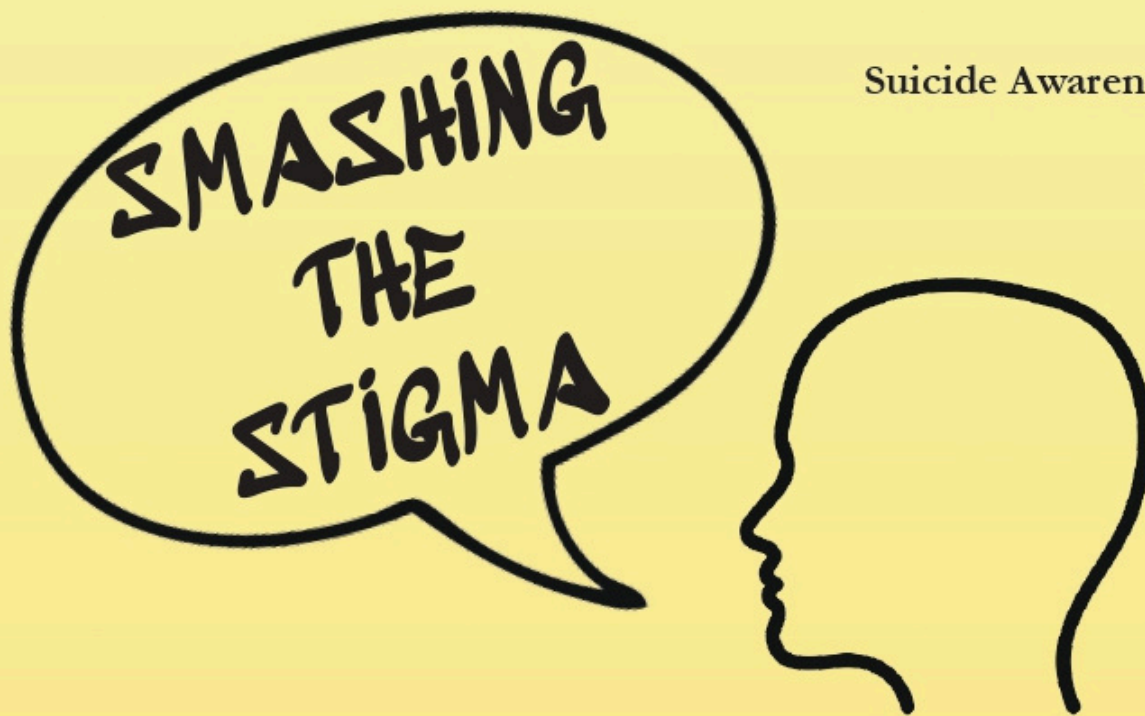


Bennetts Funeral Directors

Call 01277 887110

www.landroverfunerals.com

Suicide Awareness



If you have lost a loved one, friend or colleague to suicide, please join us for an afternoon at:



Butterfly Meadow
Hall Lane, Shenfield, CM15 9AN
Sunday 8th September 2024
13:00 - 16:30

Refreshments provided

Scan the QR code for more information.

Some of the organisations involved:



BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Essex
Working Well

mind
Thurrock
and Brentwood

phoenix
98fm

Please contact Bennetts Funerals to register your interest in attending via telephone number, email or the QR code.

Bennetts
Funerals

info@bennettsfunerals.co.uk
01277 210 104





ARTICLE

THE RISE AND FALL OF GREEK CREMATION

by Clive Pearson, Dip. FD, LMBIFD ~ 2nd Vice President

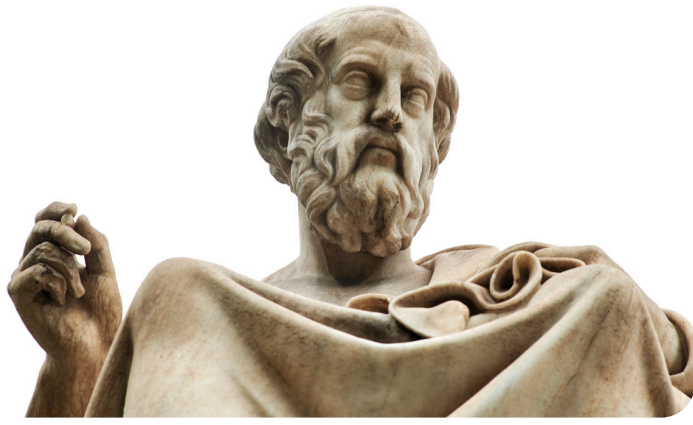
The ancient Greeks are often celebrated for their advancements in philosophy, arts, and sciences. However, one lesser-known aspect of their culture is the practice of cremation. The rise and fall of Greek cremation practices provide a fascinating glimpse into the evolving beliefs and societal norms of ancient Greece.

The practice of cremation in ancient Greece has its roots in the Mycenaean civilisation, which flourished between 1600 and 1100 BCE. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Mycenaeans practiced both inhumation (burial) and cremation. However, it was during the subsequent Geometric period (circa 900-700 BCE) that cremation began to gain prominence. This shift in funerary practices is often attributed to the influence of the Homeric epics, particularly the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," which depict several instances of cremation for fallen heroes.

Cremation held significant cultural and religious importance in ancient Greece. It was believed to purify the soul, freeing it from the physical body and allowing it to ascend to the afterlife. The ashes were often placed in elaborate urns and interred in family tombs or memorial sites, signifying the deceased's continued presence and honour within the community. This practice also reflected the Greek emphasis on heroism and valour, as cremation was often reserved for warriors and prominent individuals.

The rise of cremation can also be linked to practical considerations. In a land with limited arable space, cremation offered a more efficient use of land compared to traditional burials. Additionally, the practice of cremation allowed for the easier transportation of remains, especially in times of war when soldiers perished far from home.





above: *Philosopher Plato*

Despite its initial popularity, the practice of cremation began to decline during the Classical period (circa 500-323 BCE). Several factors contributed to this shift. Firstly, the rise of philosophical schools, such as those founded by Plato and Aristotle, brought new perspectives on the nature of the soul and the afterlife. These philosophies often emphasised the immortality of the soul independent of the body, reducing the perceived necessity of cremation for purification.

The growing influence of mystery religions, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries, introduced alternative funeral practices and beliefs. These religious movements often emphasised inhumation and the concept of bodily resurrection, which contrasted with the notion of cremation.

The spread of Christianity in the later centuries further accelerated the decline of cremation. The Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection at the end of times necessitated the preservation of the body, making burial the preferred method. By the time of the Roman Empire's dominance, cremation had largely fallen out of favour in Greek society.

The rise and fall of Greek cremation practices reflect broader changes in religious beliefs, philosophical thought, and societal norms. Initially embraced for its cultural, religious, and practical advantages, cremation eventually gave way to new ideologies and practices that emphasised the preservation of the body. Understanding this evolution provides valuable insights into the complex tapestry of ancient Greek culture and its enduring legacy.



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ASK A CELEBRANT

Part One: How Can We Take Away The Fear For Children Experiencing Loss

by Independent Celebrants, Dinah Liversidge and Berni Benton

The key with children is openness and inclusion. Allowing them time to process, giving them permission to feel and express whatever range of emotions they are feeling, and explaining what is going on. Kids are amazing, they will know if you are hiding something from them and leap to the wrong conclusion, often one that puts them at fault.

SHOULD I BRING CHILDREN TO THE CREMATORIUM OR CEMETERY?

Berni Says: I would always say “yes, where possible” and here’s why. As a child I was ‘protected’ from the deaths of my grandparents through hushed conversations and not being present at the funeral. As adults we understand that ritual and community are of paramount importance to taking those first steps to processing grief, yet, as parents we have this understandable urge to protect our children from upset.

But they have to process their loss too. And not being present, not being talked to and not seeing the sharing of love and grief, only leads to denial, confusion, sometimes even self-blame, as if they have done something wrong. Letting your children see your vulnerability and be supported in theirs will retrospectively prove more cathartic than hiding it from them.



Dinah Says: Children’s imaginations are powerful, and they will create all kinds of scenarios to cope with a situation when they are kept in the dark. I would encourage families to take children to the service as it gives them a truth to refer to that is likely to be less scary than the story they will create on their own. If possible, arrange a visit before the service, to show them the location and to allow them to feel more comfortable on the day.

HOW CAN I INVOLVE AND SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN?

Dinah Says: Step one is to be open to every child needing different support. Thankfully there are excellent organisations doing to work to help us support families and children at this challenging time. Having a list of local, and national help that is available is such a practical way of helping. During grief, families may not have the time or the energy to find the support they need, so go prepared and leave contact details to help them find these much needed resources.

ARTICLE

Child Bereavement UK has a wonderful section on books for children of all ages. I always take a book with me to family meetings and ask parents or carers if they'd like to read it with their kids over the days and weeks ahead.



Berni Says: Children are, in my experience, surprisingly resilient. Openness and explanation will help them process. FDs could offer children an opportunity to look inside a hearse, around the chapel of rest, at a coffin. Maybe even encourage the family to pre visit the graveyard or crematorium, so the space is familiar.

I always talk to the young people and explain what is going to happen in age appropriate language; what it will look like, how they might feel (everything, nothing – whatever it is and how that's OK).

There are lots of ways to involve kids: paint a picture to be displayed on the coffin or even decorating the coffin (cardboard), bringing a gift for the deceased to take with them.



WHAT ABOUT TEENS?

Berni Says: Teens often feel the need to put on a brave face or be strong for their parents or siblings. Being a teen is confusing enough eh! How about offering them the option to pall bear? Or encourage them to write a letter to go with the deceased. Or to write something and even read it (it's not a performance so)? I always tell them there is no pressure and if they don't feel like it on the day I can read on their behalf.

They may like to walk in ahead with the celebrant and lead the way, or choose a piece of music, share a story to be told. Giving the teens permission to speak to us directly is empowering too. And I always pass on a link to Young Minds.

Dinah Says: Emotions are always running high in our teens. Add loss and grief to the mix and there is no guarantee how a teenager will respond to the death of someone they love.

Our first experience of death is often during these challenging years and it can leave a lasting impression on how we process death going forward.

Funeral Directors and Celebrants can work together to ensure the 'traditional' way we do things is flexible to what they need. Being open to creating a ceremony that supports and involves these young people might mean we have to be outside our comfort zone; and that's okay. We've got to be prepared to change if we want to prevent trauma from being part of the memory.

WHAT ABOUT KIDS WHO NEED EXTRA SUPPORT?

In our next article, we'll take a closer look at children and young adults who need additional support and consideration as we support them and their families.

RECOMMENDED READING

Want to know more? We recommend the following sources:

- **Child Bereavement UK:** <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>
- **Winston's Wish:** <https://winstonswish.org/>
- **Young Minds:** <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dinah Liversidge and Berni Benton are both Independent Celebrants. Berni is a member of the Committee for the Association of Independent Celebrants (AOIC) and an end-of-life Doula. Dinah trains Independent Celebrants and her training is recommended by the AOIC. They are both based in Wales.



above L – R: Berni Benton & Dinah Liversidge



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FUNERAL DIRECTORS HELP PEOPLE WHO CYCLE TO CHURCH BY PURCHASING NEW BIKE RACK

A long-established Funeral Directors has underlined its commitment to their community by providing a local church with a much-needed cycle rack. Anne Rowe, Funeral Arranger at James & Thomas Funeral Directors in the village of New Haw, arranged for the bike rack to be purchased following a request from the nearby All Saints Church.

Surrey County Council also helped with the installation via their Your Fund Surrey Small Community Projects fund. The new cycle rack allows churchgoers somewhere safe and secure to leave their bikes.

James & Thomas Funeral Directors is part of the high-quality Funeral Partners network – a company committed to supporting the communities they serve. Anne said she was delighted to be able to help provide the church with something they required.

“It’s very important for us to be a big part of our community, to help out where needed and be a friendly and familiar face in the area,” she said. “We’ve had great reports that it is already being well used by people who are visiting the church.”



Funeral Arranger Anne Rowe and All Saints Church Churchwarden Linda Salt

FROM POURING PINTS TO PLANNING FAREWELLS: EX-PUB WORKER LOVING NEW ROLE AT FUNERAL DIRECTORS

A former pub manager has swapped pulling pints for helping bereaved families after starting work as a funeral arranger. Catherine Shaw spent more than 20 years in the pub trade, working at various establishments in Reading. But she has now become the face of the new Miles & Daughters Funeral Directors home in Northumberland Avenue in Whitley Wood, Reading.



Catherine Shaw outside of Miles & Daughters Funeral Directors in Whitley Wood, Reading

Catherine admitted that while some people have found her change of career surprising, she is loving her new role and caring for the community with the help of her colleagues at Miles & Daughters and the support of Funeral Partners – the country’s third largest funeral company.

“It was last year when I was on the verge of turning 40; I was pulling a pint and I just had the realisation ‘Is this something I want to be doing when I am 65?’

I had enjoyed working in pubs, but it does become more difficult when you have children and have to work anti-social hours. Then I considered what I did want to do, and I have always been interested in funerals. I had a tiny bit of experience working at a funeral company briefly a long time ago when a friend who worked there needed an extra pair of hands. I remembered how much I enjoyed it and thought it would be a good career move.

There are some transferable skills – you work very closely with people and have to build relationships quickly. People I used to serve have asked me about the change and they’re either really shocked or have a thousand and one questions. But I have loved meeting people and helping them find a way through difficult times.”

Catherine has worked in the Whitley Wood branch since it opened late last year and said she has enjoying getting to know people in the area. *“People appreciate having us here,” she said. “There is a real community spirit, and families like to know they can have the funeral procession travel up Northumberland Avenue, which is where we are based.”*

Catherine has also worked with the Whitley Community Development Association who raised money for two life-saving defibrillators to be housed in the area and volunteered for the funeral home to be one of the sites.

“They do so much great work and I was really happy to have our building chosen as a site for the defibrillator.”

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As a business owner, you've put your heart and soul into building your business. You've overcome countless challenges, made pivotal decisions, and worked tirelessly to see it thrive.

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Sam Kershaw
Chief Executive Officer
07834 531822
sam.kershaw@funeralpartners.co.uk



Steve Wilkinson
Mergers & Acquisitions Director
07528 970531
steve.wilkinson@funeralpartners.co.uk

DORSET FUNERAL DIRECTORS WITH ENVIABLE REPUTATION WELCOMED TO FUNERAL PARTNERS FAMILY

A Funeral Directors known for their unwavering commitment to high standards and outstanding personal service has joined Funeral Partners.

Nicholas O'Hara Funeral Directors was founded in 1974 by Nicholas and his parents in Wimborne. Now celebrating their 50th anniversary, the company has gone from strength to strength with five funeral homes in the Dorset area, at times three generations of the family have worked together serving the local community as a business full of traditional values, and a reputation for delivering the high standards set by Nicholas from the outset.

Nicholas, who has worked in funerals from the age of 15, and started his own company in his early 20s, has now taken the opportunity to retire and spend more time with wife Jackie, who herself stopped working at the business two years ago.

Their children, Anthony and Natalie O'Hara, will now continue the day-to-day running of the Funeral Directors, having both joined in 1997.

Speaking about joining Funeral Partners, Anthony said: *"It was the right time to give security to the business for the future. We've been raised in the industry, but our own children have different career ambitions. We were very reassured with Funeral Partners, how they were with us and their vision of what the future would be like. We have been given the scope to continue running the business and they were impressed by the high standards we have set for arranging funerals and caring for the deceased. I don't think myself and Natalie can imagine doing anything else at this point and we are excited about the future. It is an honour to help people on a day that is obviously tinged with sadness, but you can still make it very special."*

The team at O'Hara's has strong community links and recently raised more than £7,000 at their third annual golf day. This year the money was donated to Young Epilepsy - a cause chosen because the company arranged a funeral for a young man who died from the condition.

Anthony added: *"We try to support charities that mean something to us and are local causes."*

Sam Kershaw, Funeral Partners CEO, said: *"We are so pleased to be working with O'Hara's - they have a great reputation in Dorset and surrounding areas - their client care and service standards are exceptional. I wish Nicholas all the best in his retirement, we both know the business is in good hands with Anthony and Natalie at the helm and would like to welcome them and their teams to the Funeral Partners family."*

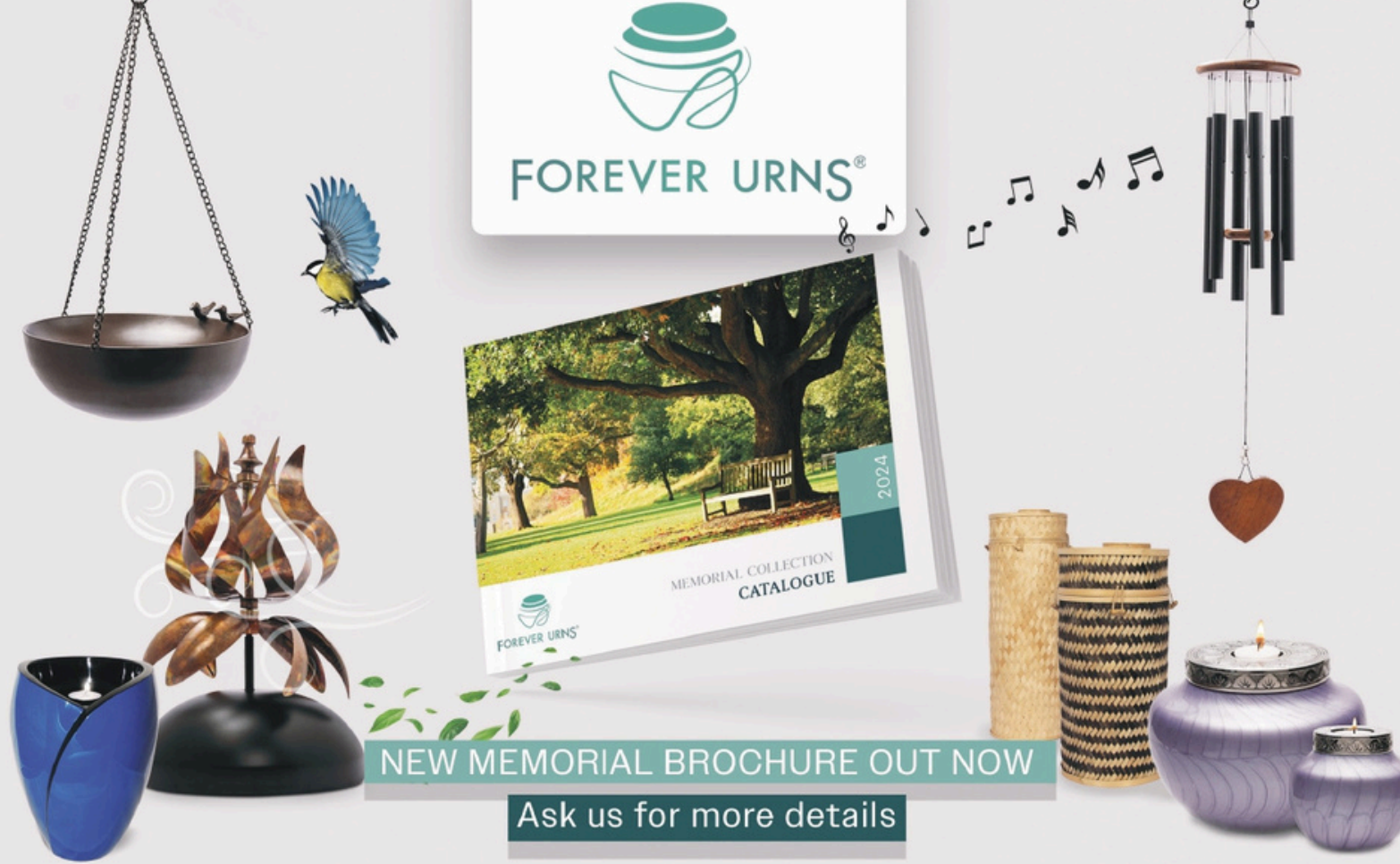


Funeral Partners CEO Sam Kershaw with Anthony and Natalie O'Hara

Funeral Partners is the UK's third-largest funeral business, with more than 230 funeral homes staffed by over 1000 dedicated funeral professionals serving communities across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw has over 40 years of experience in the funeral profession, joining the business back in 2016 as Chief Operating Officer. Funeral Partners, which celebrated its 15-year anniversary in 2022, has grown rapidly, building a strong reputation as a well-run, high-quality funeral services business overseeing more than 25,000 funerals each year.

It now includes more than 130 family businesses, which have entrusted their reputation and heritage to Funeral Partners.



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Legacy Expressions Launches New Website

PRESS RELEASE

Legacy Expressions is pleased to announce the launch of a newly designed website, a valuable resource for those seeking meaningful ways to honour and remember their loved ones. This innovative platform offers an extensive range of memorial products, all available for easy browsing and purchase.

At the heart of the new website is a user-friendly browsing experience, allowing visitors to explore a variety of collections. Among the standout offerings are the 3D crystal laser engravings, which transform cherished photos into stunning three-dimensional keepsakes. Additionally, the memory tags collection provides a modern way to create personalized, portable tributes.

Legacy Expressions is dedicated to helping families preserve the essence of their loved ones through beautifully crafted, high-quality memorial items. Each product is designed to capture and reflect the unique stories and memories that define a life well-lived.

Discover the full range of memorial products and find the perfect tribute at

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PLUS MORE

AN UPDATE FROM LIFE LEDGER

Many of you (over 1000 independents and some bigger businesses) already signpost our free service that lets families close the accounts of loved ones online, quickly and easily.

We are now also working with over 100 local authorities, again to simply make the bereaved public aware of the help that is available.

We would like to extend a big “thank you” to everyone who has made this happen. If you are not working with us then do get involved. For more information see our dedicated page here:

https://lifeledger.com/funeral_directors/

Life Ledger is free for the public to use and the feedback we get is great - please see some examples from families:

"You and your company have been brilliant on all fronts, and it helps to ease the pain we are all going through at the moment with losing Dad."

JH, Yorkshire

"Thanks for this and all the help. I have to say Life Ledger is proving to be a really valuable resource. Thanks."

KG, Stockport

"I must say this is the most wonderful service and has taken a lot of stress out of an extremely traumatic time. Thank you for everything you do."

ES, Swansea

"You've truly been marvellous and have taken away some of the arduous tasks we have had to deal with. Thank you again! Best wishes and gratitude."

HR, St Albans

"I think this service is brilliant. It's been such a help to me already and removed a big bit of worry and stress in contacting the companies."

EH, Stockport



Life Ledger

Reviews 17 • Great

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- Branded dashboard for families highlighting YOU as the referrer
- A 400-word review of your business on LifeLedger.com, perfectly SEO-optimised, designed to drive visitors back to you
- A quarterly LinkedIn post dedicated to your business

WHY UPGRADE?

Our website gets a high level of traffic - mainly from individuals who are expecting a bereavement soon, or are very recently bereaved. People are also signposted from service providers, Google, registrars and other sources.

For a demo/discussion about any of the free or paid services available, please call or email dan@lifeledger.com or by phone 07702 639919.

As always thank you for your support and for helping families with their end of life admin journey.
The Life Ledger team



"The service Life Ledger provides the bereaved, allows a family the space and time to grieve without having to worry about administration processes which in the past may have caused unnecessary stress and concerns when sorting out our loved one's accounts"

John Adams Dip FAA, Dip FD,
Cert. ED

"Life Ledger makes the process easier for families. Anything that makes it easier for them is a must!"

Emily Houghton DipFAA,
DipFD, CertED, MBIFD

"Life Ledger is an essential service to offer to families. We have used it personally following a family bereavement and it made the closing of accounts very easy and stress free. It is highly recommended"

David Barrington Dip FD,
CTLLS

*Fimer Duffy*

How can...

LINKEDIN BENEFIT FUNERAL DIRECTORS?

As a Funeral Director, your role in providing support and guidance during difficult times is invaluable. While your focus is on offering compassionate service, it's also essential to reach more families who need your expertise. LinkedIn, a professional networking platform, can be an excellent tool to enhance your visibility and credibility within the industry. LinkedIn's unique features are specifically tailored for professional use, making it worth your consideration.

CRAFTING A COMPELLING PROFILE: YOUR DIGITAL BUSINESS CARD

Your LinkedIn profile is more than just an online CV, it's your digital business card. A well-crafted profile can significantly enhance your professional image and make it easier for potential families, partners and future staff to find you.

Step-by-Step Tips for a Strong Profile:

- **Professional Headshot:** Use a clear, professional photo. This makes your profile more approachable and trustworthy.
- **Detailed Summary:** Write a summary that highlights your commitment to compassionate service, your experience in the industry, and any unique qualifications.
- **Experience and Services:** Clearly describe the services you offer and your experience. Include any awards or recognitions to showcase your credibility.



PRACTICAL TIP:

Use industry-relevant keywords like "compassionate funeral services," "grief support," and "end-of-life planning" to improve your profile's searchability.

POSTING VALUABLE CONTENT: SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE



PRACTICAL TIP:

Aim to post at least 1-2 posts a week. Use a mix of content types – written posts, videos, and shared articles – to keep your audience engaged.

Posting content on LinkedIn might seem daunting, but it's a powerful way to demonstrate your expertise and engage with your community. Sharing valuable insights can help establish you as a thought leader in the funeral industry.

Ideas for Content to Share:

- **Grief Support Tips:** Share articles or personal insights on managing grief.
- **Community Involvement:** Highlight any community events or charity work your funeral home is involved in.
- **Industry Updates:** Post about any changes in funeral service regulations or best practices.

BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK: CONNECT WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

LinkedIn is designed for professional networking, making it an ideal platform for connecting with peers, suppliers, and industry experts. Building a strong network can lead to valuable partnerships and referrals.

How to Build Your Network:

- **Connect with Local Businesses:** Forge relationships with local hospitals, hospices and other relevant businesses.
- **Join Industry Groups:** Participate in LinkedIn groups related to funeral services and grief support. This is a great way to share insights and learn from others.
- **Engage with Content:** Comment on and share posts from others in your network to foster relationships and increase your visibility.



PRACTICAL TIP:

Start by connecting with people you already know; colleagues, industry peers, and local business owners. This makes the process less intimidating and gradually expands your network.

ESTABLISHING A COMPANY PAGE: SHOWCASE YOUR FUNERAL HOME

Creating a LinkedIn company page for your funeral home allows you to highlight your services, share updates, and connect with your community on a professional level.



PRACTICAL TIP:

Regularly update your company page with new content, such as service offerings, community involvement, and industry news.

Benefits of a Company Page:

- **Increased Visibility:** A company page makes it easier for people to find your funeral home when searching for services.
- **Professional Image:** It provides a space to share your funeral home's mission, values, and services in a professional setting.
- **Client Testimonials:** Share testimonials from families you've served to build trust and credibility.

ALL IN ALL...

While the idea of using social media might seem daunting, LinkedIn offers a professional and effective platform for funeral directors to enhance their visibility, build a network, and reach more families in need. By crafting a compelling profile, sharing valuable content, building a strong network, and establishing a company page, you can unlock the potential of LinkedIn for your funeral services business. Give it a try, the results might pleasantly surprise you.

Want to have a chat about using LinkedIn or would you like to book a free online video audit of your current online presence, then do get in touch with me. Visit www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk for more information. And you can email me at eimer@fitsocialmedia.co.uk.

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SEPTEMBER 2024 DEATH CERTIFICATION REFORM

ROLE OF THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

In the forthcoming reforms starting September 2024, a medical practitioner will have the opportunity to serve as an attending practitioner and fill out a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) if they have attended to the deceased during their lifetime. The attending practitioner will suggest a cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief. With the introduction of medical examiners, there will be regular independent examination of the cause of death proposed by attending practitioners.



This marks a streamlining of the current regulations, allowing medical practitioners to act as attending practitioners and complete MCCDs if they had attended the patient during their final illness. Previously, if they had not done so within 28 days before death or had not seen the patient in person after death, the case needed referral to a coroner for review.

Guidelines for filling out a medical certificate of cause of death will be revised to align with and complement the implementation of the statutory medical examiner system.

Completing an MCCD is already a legal requirement for attending practitioners, as outlined by the General Medical Council (GMC) in their guidelines on end-of-life care decision-making. This responsibility extends beyond the patient's death, emphasising professionalism and compassion during the confirmation and pronouncement of death, along with adherence to relevant laws and statutory codes.

The significant change is that attending practitioners must now share the MCCD and proposed cause of death with a medical examiner for scrutiny before submission to the registrar.

ROLE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

According to the proposed regulations for medical examiners, they will offer impartial examination of causes of death and serve as a point of contact for bereaved individuals seeking clarification or expressing concerns.

A medical examiner, typically a seasoned medical professional, will dedicate a set number of sessions each week to independently review causes of death, separate from their regular clinical responsibilities.

Trained in both the legal and clinical aspects of death certification procedures, they do not have prior involvement in the patient's care. Supported by medical examiner officers acting under delegation, they conduct a thorough review of medical records and provide an opportunity for bereaved individuals to inquire and voice concerns.

Medical examiners have been conducting unbiased examinations of causes of death since the introduction of the non-statutory medical examiner system. This practice will persist under the new death certification process, with independent scrutiny by a medical examiner becoming a legal requirement prior to the registration of all non-coronial deaths in England and Wales.

Information on the national medical examiner system is accessible through NHS England, particularly the 'National Medical Examiner's Good Practice Guidelines'.

All guidelines will be revised to align with the implementation of the statutory medical examiner system.

Once both the attending practitioner and the medical examiner have completed their certifications and scrutiny, and the cause of death is confirmed, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) will be forwarded to the registrar. Simultaneously, the deceased's representative will be notified that they can contact the registrar to proceed with the death registration process.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH



A new iteration of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) will replace the current certificate, aligning with the introduction of medical examiners who will scrutinize the proposed cause of death.

This update aims to enhance:

1. Efficiency within the death certification system.
2. Accuracy of mortality data for local and national purposes.

Forms for deaths occurring after 28 days of life and for neonatal deaths within the first 28 days will remain statutory, with bilingual versions available in Wales. The revamped MCCD will retain details of the attending practitioner who certified the cause of death based on their knowledge and belief.

Moreover, the revised MCCD will incorporate the following additions:

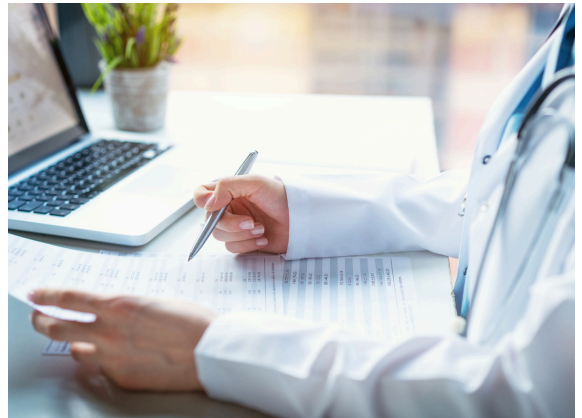
- Information on the medical examiner who reviewed the cause of death.
- Ethnicity data, self-declared by the patient on medical records, reflecting insights gained during the COVID-19 pandemic. If such data is absent, the attending practitioner can mark it as 'unknown' on the MCCD and should refrain from requesting it from the deceased's representative.

- Inclusion of maternal deaths and a new line (1d) for the cause of death, aligning with international standards.
- Recording of medical devices and implants by the attending practitioner on the MCCD, which will subsequently be transferred to the burial or cremation certificate (contained in the green form) by the registrar to inform relevant authorities of their presence.

A paper version of the updated MCCD will be distributed before the implementation of the statutory medical examiner system. Additionally, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is developing an online version to facilitate easier sharing between attending practitioners, medical examiners, and registrars.

MEDICAL EXAMINER CERTIFICATION

Following the guidelines outlined in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and the proposed regulations for the medical certificate of cause of death, we are introducing medical examiner certification to address exceptional circumstances, namely:



1. When no attending practitioner is available.
2. When an attending practitioner cannot be reached within a reasonable timeframe.

In such cases, where the senior coroner decides against initiating an investigation after referral by a medical practitioner who is not a medical examiner, the senior coroner should direct the case to a medical examiner for certification. This certification will be completed through a medical examiner MCCD.

Legislation and guidance will specify that the medical examiner MCCD is to be used exclusively in exceptional circumstances, after all efforts to locate an attending practitioner have been exhausted by the referring practitioner. It will be clarified that only the senior coroner, and not the referring medical practitioner, has the authority to refer the death for certification by the medical examiner.

While medical examiners completing a medical examiner MCCD may not interact with an attending practitioner, all other aspects of medical examiner scrutiny will remain intact. Supported by medical examiner officers, medical examiners will continue to provide representatives of the deceased with opportunities to ask questions and voice concerns. They will conduct a balanced review of medical records. If, in the course of this review, the medical examiner determines an inability to ascertain the cause of death, the case will be referred back to the senior coroner.

THE CORONER

The draft medical certificate of cause of death regulations primarily focus on the completion of the MCCD. However, they also outline the flow of information among the attending practitioner, medical examiner, coroner, and registrar within the new system.

The Notification of Deaths Regulations 2019 will continue to apply, with minor adjustments due to the changes. Attending practitioners must still notify the coroner of deaths meeting the criteria outlined in those regulations, and the coroner will determine any necessary follow-up actions.

In exceptional circumstances where no qualified medical practitioner is available to certify a death and the coroner's jurisdiction is not applicable, provision will allow the medical examiner to issue certification.



Presently, attending practitioners can directly report deaths to the coroner if they believe it's a statutory obligation. In such cases, there's no requirement for them to notify the medical examiner. If the coroner declines jurisdiction, they will inform the attending practitioner, who will then proceed with completing the MCCD, subject to scrutiny by the medical examiner.

As per the new system's design, endorsed by the General Register Office and implicit in the draft regulations, coroners will no longer be responsible for notifying the registrar when they determine that their duty to investigate under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 is not applicable.

Regarding interactions with the registrar, little change is expected when investigations are discontinued following a post-mortem examination, and this will now extend to include cases discontinued without such an examination. The process for coroners' interactions with the registrar after an inquest will remain largely unchanged.

The registration of deaths will only proceed once the registrar receives notification of the cause of death from either the medical examiner or the coroner. This notification will trigger the start of the 5-day statutory window for registering the death.

Informants should have the opportunity to discuss and be informed about the cause of death before registration. If any concerns are raised regarding the cause of death during registration, these issues will be forwarded to the coroner or medical examiner as necessary.

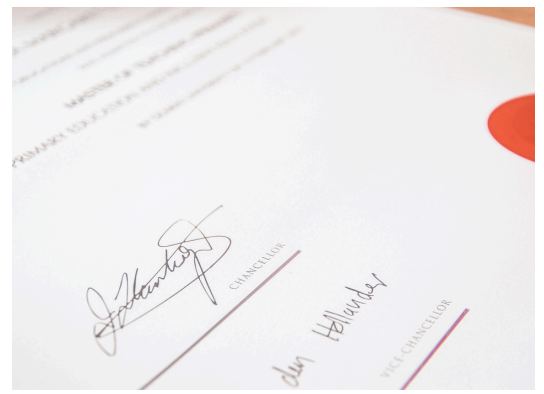
REGISTRATION

With the implementation of the death certification reforms, the registrar's duties will evolve, removing the requirement for registrars to refer deaths to the coroner. It will be the responsibility of either the attending practitioner or the medical examiner to determine which deaths require referral to the coroner. Consequently, the relationship between the registrar and the coroner will change significantly, as their interaction will be minimal, except in cases where the coroner provides a registration certificate following an inquest or a discontinued case.

The Registrar General will no longer be responsible for providing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), as the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will handle the development and distribution of the new form.

As there will be limited interaction between the registrar and the coroner, the need for form 100A will be eliminated and thus removed from use.

As outlined in the draft medical certificate of cause of death regulations, specific circumstances will require the coroner to provide information to the medical examiner.



Furthermore, there will be an expanded scope of cases where the coroner, having declined jurisdiction, will communicate this decision to the attending practitioner. The General Register Office, Ministry of Justice, and DHSC will collaborate to ensure the new process functions effectively and will adjust coroner's forms and certificates accordingly.

The objective is to reduce uncertified deaths, with the attending practitioner certifying initially, with medical examiner approval, or the medical examiner certifying in exceptional circumstances following referral by the coroner.

These changes will also introduce new categories of qualified informants, allowing the partner of the deceased and a representative of the deceased to register the death.

BURIAL AND CREMATION

Cremation and burial procedures are undergoing changes, particularly concerning the documentation required for non-coronial deaths. Presently, a medical practitioner, typically the attending one, completes form Cremation 4 (the medical certificate) to furnish necessary details for the medical referee's comprehension of the cause of death, should cremation be chosen. However, with the impending implementation of the statutory medical examiner system, the scrutiny conducted by medical examiners will render the confirmation on form Cremation 4 obsolete. Consequently, the regulatory obligation for the medical referee to review it will be eliminated.

Details regarding medical devices and implants within the deceased's body, presently documented on form Cremation 4, will be integrated into the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and the burial or cremation certificate (green form) as outlined.

In cases under coronial investigation followed by cremation, the coroner will continue to certify the cause of death utilizing form Cremation 6 (certificate of coroner). This form will be modified to allow the coroner to note information on medical devices and implants, where available, for communication to the cremation authority. Likewise, the coroner's burial order (form 101) will be adjusted to include information on medical devices and implants for the burial provider's reference.

Currently, medical referees authorise the cremation process based on the provided medical certification. They will retain their roles during the transition period of implementing the statutory medical examiner system. The Ministry of Justice will collect evidence during this transitional phase to determine the ongoing role of medical referees. Medical practitioners, coroners, and funeral directors will have opportunities to contribute to this decision-making process.

A photograph of a person with curly hair hugging a child from behind. They are standing on a sandy beach, looking out at a calm blue sea under a hazy sky. A woven picnic basket with a silver thermos and a white mug sits on the sand to the right.

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BEYOND THE CLICK: KNOW YOUR PPC FROM YOUR SEO

Thinking about online advertising for your funeral business? Here's why funeral directors should prioritise their website's SEO over PPC (pay-per-click) advertising.

BY KATE WALKER, MANAGER, FUNERAL DIRECTOR WEBSITES, MUCHLOVED

In today's digital age, funeral directors face unique challenges in reaching and connecting with their audience. I say 'unique' because people looking for funeral directors online are in a very different frame of mind to those searching for clothing or gardening equipment.

WHY PAY-PER-CLICK ADVERTISING LOOKS APPEALING

With the rise of online marketing channels, funeral directors may be tempted to invest their marketing budget in pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns and Google Ads to increase visibility and attract clients. Particularly when they are bombarded by companies promising them 'top of Google' or telling them they are not currently ranking.

It makes a lot of sense. We all know that these days, the first point of call when you want something is to search online. Your business can quickly jump onto the search engine results page, and deliver your message, to people who are looking for a specific service, in the areas that you serve.

If you know your way around the Google dashboard you can see the exact outcomes and tweak your campaign to ensure you get high quality leads, and that you never spend more than your budget allows.



EXCEPT, IF THERE WAS ONE THING I COULD TELL OUR CLIENTS, IT WOULD BE THIS: STOP DOING IT

Not because PPC doesn't work (it can work), or because it's expensive (you name the budget), or because it's difficult to do right (there are people who can help) but because there are other things that are at least **as** effective, if not **more**, and which put your business in front of the people you want to reach.



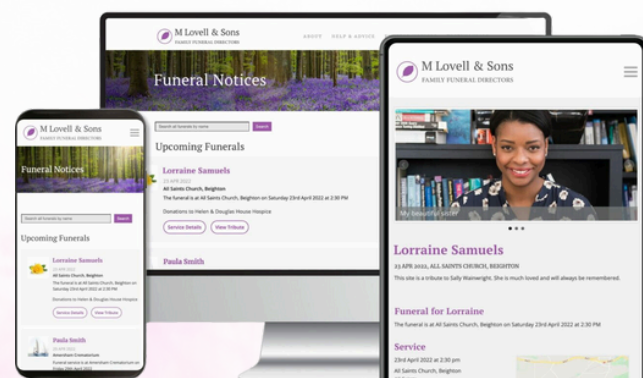
WHY SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION WILL DELIVER BETTER RESULTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

There's a compelling argument to be made for prioritising website search engine optimisation (SEO) instead. On the next page, I'll explain why I think funeral directors should focus on optimising their websites for search engines and regularly updating content, including funeral notices, linking to tribute pages, and adding reviews and client testimonials.

- **Long-term visibility and credibility:** While PPC campaigns and Google ads can provide immediate visibility, they are temporary solutions that disappear once the advertising budget is exhausted. In contrast, investing in SEO builds long-term visibility and credibility for your funeral business' website. By optimising your website for relevant keywords and local search terms, you can improve your organic search rankings and attract organic traffic over time. When developing or re-developing your website, ensure that it has search engine optimisation built in, and you are already half-way there. When you purchase your domain, purchase it for as long as you can afford, not just for 1 year. It signals that you are here for the long term, not a fly-by-night operation.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** PPC campaigns can be expensive, especially in competitive markets. Businesses often compete for the same keywords, driving up the cost per click and making it challenging to achieve a good return. In contrast, SEO offers a more cost-effective approach to driving traffic to your website. While it requires an upfront investment in website optimisation, the ongoing maintenance costs are relatively low compared to PPC advertising. The ongoing content creation is partly handled by the funeral notices widget and reviews widgets from MuchLoved. That doesn't even require much effort on your part, and the budget is minimal compared to a freelance writer. Paying for people to visit your site to make an enquiry is not a long-term strategy, much like paying for a hotel room doesn't achieve the same objectives as buying and improving a house. Just like a well-built and maintained house, a well-optimised site can continue to attract visitors and deliver value for years to come.
- **Targeted traffic and quality leads:** Website-centric optimisation allows funeral directors to target specific services and keywords and geographic locations, ensuring that their website appears in relevant search results. This targeted approach attracts people who are actively searching for funeral services in their area. In contrast, PPC campaigns may attract clicks from users who are not necessarily interested in buying funeral services but are doing other research. You're still paying for their website visit, whether they buy from you or not. **WARNING!** - If you suspect that a competitor is deliberately clicking on your ads to rack up costs for you (yes, this does happen!), this is known as click fraud and most advertising platforms have processes for combating it. If you notice suspicious behaviour on your ads, you should raise this with the platform.
- **Enhanced user experience:** A well-optimised website not only ranks higher in search engine results but also provides a better user experience for visitors. After all, the whole point of search engines ranking websites by quality, is to ensure that users get high quality results.

By regularly updating content, including funeral notices and tribute pages, funeral directors can ensure that their website remains informative, engaging, and relevant to visitors. This not only improves user satisfaction but also encourages repeat visits and referrals.

- **Building trust and reputation:** A search engine optimised website with regularly updated content shows professionalism, reliability, and dedication to serving the needs of your families. It builds trust and credibility with potential clients, leading to increased enquiries. In contrast, PPC ads may not convey the same level of trust and authenticity, as they are perceived as paid advertisements.



SEO - A LONG TERM, STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ONLINE MARKETING

It sounds like I'm against pay per click advertising. Not entirely. There is a time and a place for it. I'm just not convinced that it paints the right picture of your business, and I know that it gets very expensive in the long run. I also know that there are long-term gains of investing in your website to ensure it delights your customers, and that it's easy for you to maintain.

So, my advice to funeral directors is prioritise website search engine optimisation (SEO) over pay-per-click (PPC) advertising to maximise your online presence and attract visits that become enquiries.



By investing in SEO, funeral homes can achieve long-term visibility, cost-effectiveness, targeted traffic, enhanced user experience, and a strong reputation within your community. By regularly updating your website with relevant content, including funeral notices and tribute pages, and client testimonials that speak of the quality and care you put into your services, you can ensure that your online presence is informative, engaging, and trustworthy for potential clients and their families.

It means that you are adopting a long-term, strategic approach to online marketing and focusing on SEO best practices. This is a sustainable and effective way to reach and connect with clients, ultimately driving growth and success for your funeral business.



ABOUT KATE WALKER

Kate Walker is the Manager of Funeral Director Websites at MuchLoved. With her expert guidance and unwavering passion, Kate has been instrumental in leading our funeral partners through training sessions with MuchLoved. Now, she spearheads Funeral Director Websites, where she navigates clients through ambitious website design and development projects from conception to launch.

Kate is a knowledgeable force of nature on all things MuchLoved and is committed to learning about challenges faced by Funeral Directors and Arrangers. Her dedication ensures that all our partners harness the full potential of our services, empowering them to grow their businesses, deliver exceptional services to bereaved families, and expand their online presence. With Kate at the helm, funeral directors can confidently navigate the digital landscape, knowing they have a trusted ally guiding them every step of the way.

We Move with the Times

Times change, people change, preferences change.
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BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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Email: admin@bifd.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 032 2733

2024/25 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Please complete this form IN FULL and return it with your payment and any supporting documents, as required.

Name:		BIFD Membership No.:
Address:		
Town:	County:	Post Code:
Telephone:	Email: please print clearly	

I hereby apply to renew my membership in the British Institute of Funeral Directors, as follows:

✓	MEMBERSHIP TYPE	SUBSCRIPTION AMOUNT		
	Licenced Full Member (CPD FORM MUST BE COMPLETED)	£185.00		
	Full Member	£160.00		
	Retired Member (voting)	£ 75.00		
	Retired Member (non-voting)	£ 50.00		
	Student Member	£ 75.00		
	Associate Member	£100.00		
✓	ADDITIONAL MEMBER ITEMS	Quantity	Cost	TOTAL AMOUNT
	Additional copies of Annual Licence <small>(ONLY available to Full Members with a Licence, as above)</small>		£10.00	£
	Member's Lapel Badge		£ 5.00	£
	Member's Window Sticker		£ 2.45	£
	Member's Tie (normal straight tie or clip on)		£10.00	£
	Member's 40 th Anniversary Tie (straight tie) – all funds from tie sales donated to the National Presidents chosen Charity.		£15.00	£
Total Additional Member Items				£
Membership Subscription (as above)				£
TOTAL TO PAY				£

Member's Signature:

✓	Payment Method
	Cheque - enclosed <i>(Cheques to be made payable to the British Institute of Funeral Directors)</i>
	BACS (internet banking) Sort Code: 60-83-01 Account No.: 20336550 (please quote your surname as the reference when paying by BACS / Internet Banking)

To opt out of allowing your personal information to be shared, please tick the box.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are applying for a Licence, you must complete the 2023/24 CPD Return and enclose it with your Subscription Renewal. CPD Returns will be checked and verified and you may be contacted and requested to supply additional information if we need further verification.

1st April 2022-31st March 2023

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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECORD

NAME:

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:

Date	CPD provider (Please include: name, address and contact details)	Subject matter & training activity received	Comments	Number of hours
TOTAL				

All the activities must have been undertaken between 01/04/23 - 31/03/24. No carry forwards of any description are acceptable.

National Office will require this log in support of your Licence application for 2024/2025. This information must be retained for a minimum of three years.

A continuation sheet may be used.

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Get in touch to find out more: ffma.co.uk | chiefexec@ffma.co.uk

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