

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

THE JOURNAL



ISSUE 3



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For more information on The Samaritans and the work that they do visit their website

www.samaritans.org

Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen



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The CPD Standards Office
 CPD PROVIDER: 60065
 2023-2025
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*National President's
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Letter from the National President

Clive Pearson

Dear Members and Colleagues,

As we move into the vibrant month of March, I find myself reflecting on the strength of our community and the dedication that defines our profession. It has been a busy season, and I am pleased to share a few updates from across our network.



I recently had the pleasure of attending the London Association of Funeral Directors Ball. It was a wonderful evening of friendship and laughter—a timely reminder of the vital support systems we provide for one another.

That spirit of excellence continues in our classrooms. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the students who recently passed their Certificate in Funeral Service exam. Your hard work has truly paid off. To those currently revising for the Diploma in Funeral Service exams this April, stay focused and keep pressing forward and all your hard work will come to fruition.

On a more personal note, my family colleagues and friends have begun training for the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge this June. We will be raising funds for The Samaritans, an organisation whose mission of providing a listening ear in times of crisis resonates deeply with the work we do every day. It will be a grueling trek, but one made easier by the importance of the cause.

Finally, with Mother's Day approaching, we are reminded that for many of the families we serve, this is a day of bittersweet remembrance. While we celebrate the remarkable women in our lives, let us also continue to provide a steady hand for those honoring the memory of a mother no longer with them.

Thank you for your tireless dedication to those in your care. I wish you all a meaningful and fulfilling month ahead.

A handwritten signature of Clive Pearson in black ink.

Clive Pearson
National President, Region C

44th ANNUAL BIFD CONFERENCE

23rd – 25th October 2026



Mercure Tankersley Manor Hotel

Church Ln, Tankersley, Barnsley S75 3DQ

The BIFD Invites You To Conference 2026.....

BIFD National President, Clive Pearson, and his wife Leanne cordially invite all Members, Fellows, Students, Associates, Presidents of Kindred Associations, and Distinguished Guests to attend the upcoming Conference and Gala Dinner of The British Institute of Funeral Directors. The event will take place from 23rd to 25th October 2025 at The Mercure Tankersley Manor Hotel.



Tankersley Manor centres around a renovated 17th-century residence, conveniently located just a minute from Junction 36 off the M1 and offering free parking. Its 98 refurbished rooms are designed with elegant craftsmanship and bursts of colour to create an inviting atmosphere for guests. You'll find leisure amenities such as a gym, swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, steam room, and five spa treatment rooms—perfect for enjoying some relaxation during Conference Weekend (advance booking is recommended). The Woodman Restaurant offers a cozy spot by the fire where you can unwind and savour classic Yorkshire dishes.

Nearby attractions include Elsecar Heritage Centre, Cannon Hall, and Chatsworth House.

The President's Charity For 2026.....



Clive and Leanne have selected The Samaritans as the Institute Charity for 2026.

Founded in 1953 by Chad Vara, who recognised through his own life experiences the importance of listening, the organisation empowers individuals by offering a compassionate ear to callers wishing to talk about their emotions, feelings, challenges, and concerns, hoping to help them make positive informed decisions about their lives.

The Samaritans' mission is dedicated to reducing the number of individuals contemplating or attempting to take their own lives. The organisation currently provides comprehensive 24/7 telephone support across England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Its services have expanded to help individuals facing a broad range of issues, including suicide, depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness, all forms of abuse, and alcohol or drug use.

The itinerary so far...

Friday 23rd October 2026

The Education Committee is scheduled to convene in the morning, followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors in the afternoon.

Once you've settled into your rooms, Clive welcomes you to join him and Leanne for a three-course dinner in the hotel's function suite.

Saturday 24th October 2026

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the morning, and a buffet lunch will follow afterward.

In the afternoon, Clive has tentative plans for an activity of interest; further details will be provided once arrangements are confirmed.

The evening will commence with a drink's reception, followed by a three-course dinner accompanied by wine, cheese and biscuits, as well as tea and coffee. The programme will include the Diploma Awards Ceremony and the official Handover of Offices, concluding with music and dancing later in the evening.

Earlier than 23rd or later than 25th October 2026

Should you wish to extend your stay, we have arranged favourable rates for dates surrounding the Conference, allowing you to enjoy Yorkshire for a longer visit. Kindly inform us of your specific requirements, and we will endeavour to secure the most advantageous arrangements on your behalf.

The British Institute of Funeral Directors Conference 2026:

23rd – 25th October 2026

The Mercure Tankersley Manor Hotel

Church Ln, Tankersley, Barnsley S75 3DQ

The 44th BIFD Conference 2026 Rates

1. Friday Evening To Sunday Morning – THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£675</i>
<i>Friday & Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£425</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 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee</i>		

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£295</i>
<i>Friday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£200</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£395</i>
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£235</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee</i>		
<i>Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only

.....£85 Per Person

<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee</i>

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

5. AGM ATTENDANCE ONLY

.....Free To All Members & Students

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>
--

Saturday Lunch Is Available On The Day At £30 PP

TO STAY BEFORE OR AFTER THE CONFERENCE B&B BASIS

Please add extra dates to booking form:

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

The 43rd BIFD CONFERENCE – 23rd – 25th October 2026

The Mercure Tankersley Manor

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 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

Reference: BIFDCONF

Tariff (3) – Sat to Sun

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Mrs Margaret Dow

C/O The British Institute of Funeral Directors
National Office,
7-9 Station Street,
Meltham,
Huddersfield,
HD9 5NX

Tariff (4) – Gala Dinner Only

Total Attendees £.....

Tariff (5) – AGM Only

£ No Charge

Email: treasurer@bifd.org.uk

Total Amount Due £.....

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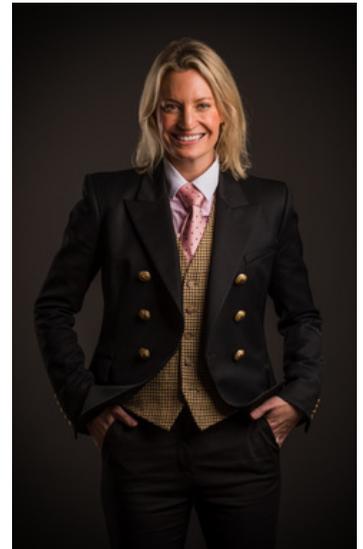
 JC Atkinson

THE GEN Z TRADITIONALIST SHIFT

Victoria Wells

Deputy Editor, Region C

The shift among Gen Z (the Zoomer generation) toward traditional burial is one of the most unexpected developments in the UK funeral industry. While their grandparents moved to cremation for convenience, younger people are reviving burial for entirely different—and often radical—reasons.



Here is a deeper look at why this is happening:

For Gen Z, the environmental impact of a funeral is often the deciding factor. While cremation was long marketed as the cleaner option, modern data has changed that perception:

- **The Energy Cost:** A single flame cremation uses roughly the same amount of gas and electricity as an average domestic household uses in an entire month.
- **Emissions:** One cremation releases approximately 160kg to 190kg of CO₂ into the atmosphere. For a generation that grew up with climate strikes and carbon tracking, this final act of pollution is increasingly seen as unacceptable.
- **The Carbon Sink Logic:** In contrast, a natural burial is viewed as carbon capture. By placing a body in the earth without chemicals or a heavy coffin, the carbon remains in the ground, eventually nourishing new plant life.

There is a growing sentiment among younger people that standard crematoria feel like conveyor belts or industrial facilities. Gen Z is driving a trend toward Natural Burial Grounds, which differ significantly from traditional cemeteries:

- **No Embalming:** They reject the use of formaldehyde.
- **Biodegradable Vessels:** Instead of mahogany and other wood materials, they opt for wicker, bamboo, mushroom, or other eco-friendly coffins —or even simple woollen shrouds.
- **Wilderness over Headstones:** Many natural sites in the UK forbid stone monuments. Instead, a grave might be marked by a GPS tag or the planting of a native tree, turning the cemetery into a nature reserve or woodland.

Interestingly, Gen Z shows a higher-than-average interest in the ritual of a funeral compared to Millennials or Gen X.

- **Religious & Cultural Ties:** Recent surveys by The Farewell Guide found that roughly 24% of 16–24-year-olds say religion or culture strongly influences their funeral wishes, double the rate of those over 55.
- **Presence of the Body:** Many young people find the disappearance of the body in cremation to be sterile. They prefer a physical site—a specific tree or meadow—where they can feel a tangible connection to the deceased.

This trend is so strong that the UK now has over 300 natural burial sites, with local councils increasingly converting land to meet this green burial demand.





SAVE THE DATE!

We're delighted to announce the dates
for CBCE 2026 which will see us
returning to the Hilton Utilita Bowl -
Southampton

There are a number of ticket options - head over
to www.cbce.org.uk
to book your place today!

**TUESDAY 23RD JUNE TO THURSDAY 25TH
JUNE 2026**

Dear Members,

Please note our change of address to
7-9 Station Street
Meltham,
Holmfirth,
HD9 5NX

Membership renewal is due from the 1st April. Could all members (except Associate Members) please take the time to read through the Code of Ethics, before sending a signed copy back with your renewal forms. The new Certificate Membership has been included on the forms.

THE BIFD CODE OF ETHICS

All members of the Institute have agreed to be bound by the following code:

A Fellow and a Member shall not conduct herself/himself at any time in a manner likely to prejudice her/his professional status as a Funeral Director or the reputation of her/his profession.

A Fellow and a Member will treat with respect each dead human body. A Fellow and a Member will pledge a complete confidential relationship to those she/he is called upon to serve.

A Fellow and a Member shall not solicit funeral orders nor employ any person to do so on her/his behalf, nor shall she/he either offer or give any rewards for any recommendations.

I _____ have read, understood and agree to the BIFD Code of Ethics.

I acknowledge that if any concerns arise from my compliance with these commitments, the Board of Directors will assess the concerns and may suspend my membership of the Institute.

Signed _____

Date _____



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

BIFD National Office 7-9 station Street Meltham Holmfirth HD9 5NX

Tel: 0800 032 2733 Email: admin@bifd.org.uk Web: www.bifd.org.uk

Email: admin@bifd.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 032 2733

2026/27 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)	£195.00		
	Full Member	£185.00		
	Certificate Member (non voting)	£ 75.00		
	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 <i>(ONLY available to Full Members with a Licence, as above)</i>		£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	£
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 <i>(please quote your surname as the reference when paying by BACS / Internet Banking)</i>

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 2025/2026 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.



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP - 2026/27

FULL NAME		
Address:		
		Post Code:
Telephone:	Home:	Business:
Mobile:		
Email:		
Website: www.		

Details of qualifications ie Diploma in Funeral Service or Diploma in Funeral Practice

Please complete and return this form to National Office with evidence of your qualifications. ie. a copy of your NAFD Diploma Certificate or IFD Cert FP Certificate. Once we have checked these we will provide you with our bank details for you to send payment prior to us issuing your membership certificate.

Are you or your company a member of NAFD or SAIF **Yes/No**

I Declare that the information furnished by me as part of this Application is correct and I agree to comply with the Rules of the Institute including the Code of Ethics.

I Acknowledge that any Membership Certificate issued to me will remain the property of the Institute

I Confirm that on termination of my Membership of the Institute, for any reason, I will return my Membership Certificate and cease using the logo or any advertisement containing reference to the Institute.

I Agree to my details being shared with Institute members

Signature:	Date:
-------------------	--------------

Please forward the completed application form to:
British Institute of Funeral Directors
BIFD National Office 7-9 station Street Meltham Holmfirth HD9 5NX
Tel: 0800 032 2733 Email: admin@bifd.org.uk Web: www.bifd.org.uk



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

APPLICATION FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP - 2026/27

FULL NAME or COMPANY NAME		
Address:		
		Post Code:
Telephone:	Home:	Business:
Mobile:		
Email:		
Website: www.		

Involvement with the funeral/bereavement sector :

Please complete and return this form to National Office.

Once the Board of Directors have approved your application, we will provide you with our bank details for you to send payment prior to us issuing your membership certificate.

I Declare that the information furnished by me as part of this Application is correct and I agree to comply with the Rules of the Institute including the Code of Ethics.

I Acknowledge that any Membership Certificate issued to me will remain the property of the Institute

I Confirm that on termination of my Membership of the Institute, for any reason, I will return my Membership Certificate and cease using the logo or any advertisement containing reference to the Institute.

I Agree to my details being shared with Institute members

Signature:	Date:
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Suicide Bereavement UK's
15th International Conference

September 16 2026

Different city, same light that unites us



Venue: **Titanic hotel, Liverpool**
Time: **9am - 4.30**
More info to follow

Suicide Bereavement UK's 15th international hybrid conference is going to be our biggest and boldest yet.

🗨️ Theme: Suicide Bereavement: Silence Isn't Always Golden

 Date: 16th September 2026

 Venue: Titanic Hotel, Liverpool (and online)

 Time: 9:00am – 4:30pm

Join us for an inspiring and thought-provoking day where new research findings will be presented for the first time.

To view our interactive flyer and to register visit https://suicidebereavementuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/4049_SBUK_Conference_2026_flyer_online_v2.pdf

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How Celebrants and Funeral Directors Can Communicate More Effectively During Difficult Services



Most funerals pass through our hands without major incident. They may be sad, heavy, or emotionally demanding, but they follow a familiar rhythm. Roles are understood. Information flows. People do what they do.

And then there are the other services.

The ones with complicated family dynamics. The sudden or traumatic deaths. The cultural, religious, or identity complexities. The short timeframes. The situations where nobody quite knows what will happen next.

It is in these services, more than any others, that the quality of communication between celebrants and funeral directors becomes visible.

Not in a dramatic way. In a quiet, cumulative way.

Over the years I have noticed that when things go wrong, it is rarely because someone does not care. It is usually because something was not said. Or something was assumed, or said too late.

I have also noticed that many professionals believe they are “good communicators” because they are polite, responsive, and well-intentioned. All of which matter. But effective communication in complex situations requires something slightly different.

It requires a willingness to name uncertainty.

To flag discomfort early.

To share partial information.

To speak even when there is no neat solution yet.

One of the most helpful shifts I have seen is when both celebrants and funeral directors stop thinking about communication as a transactional exchange of details and start thinking about it as a form of shared safeguarding.

We are not just swapping logistics. We are collectively protecting a family from additional distress. That mindset subtly changes what feels important to say.

However, there is an essential ethical and legal foundation underneath all of this.

Information-sharing between a funeral director and a celebrant is not automatic. It must be agreed by the client. Families have a right to know who will have access to their personal information, and for what purpose. They have a right to consent to that sharing.

Without that explicit consent, conversations about families (however well-intentioned) move into unsafe territory. They risk breaching confidentiality, GDPR, and, perhaps most importantly, trust.

This can feel uncomfortable.

Families are grieving. They are overwhelmed. They are already signing paperwork. It can feel awkward to introduce yet another form or permission statement.

But framing matters. Rather than presenting consent as a bureaucratic necessity, it can be positioned as an act of respect.

“We work closely with celebrants to make sure your ceremony reflects your wishes. With your permission, we share relevant information with them so we can support you properly. Is that okay?”

In my experience, families almost always say yes. And when they do, a foundation is laid. Everyone involved can then communicate more openly, more honestly, and more helpfully, knowing that this collaboration has been authorised by the people it is intended to serve.

Without this foundation, professionals may either overshare - creating risk, or under share - creating fragmentation. Neither serves families well. Once consent is in place, early information sharing becomes one of the most powerful tools we have.

For example, a funeral director might know that a family is deeply divided about the tone of the ceremony. They may not yet have a clear plan for how that will be managed. In some environments, the instinct is to wait until there is something concrete to report.

In practice, telling the celebrant early that “there are significant differences of opinion in the family about tone” can make a profound difference.

It allows the celebrant to enter the first family conversation with a different level of sensitivity.

It changes the questions they ask, the pace they take and what they listen for.

Similarly, celebrants sometimes discover important information in family meetings that affect logistics or flow. Perhaps a particular family member must speak. Perhaps a ritual is essential. Perhaps there is a strong wish for informality that will impact how people enter or leave the space.

If this information stays only with the celebrant, the funeral director may be unknowingly planning a service that does not quite fit.

Neither person has done anything wrong. But the family experience becomes slightly more brittle.

Early, imperfect information is often more useful than late, polished information.

Another pattern I have observed is around language. Small phrases carry enormous weight.

“There’s a problem.” versus “There’s something we may need to think through together.”

The second invites collaboration. The first often triggers defensiveness.

In high-pressure situations, many people default to efficiency. Short messages. Minimal context. Fast decisions.

Efficiency has its place. But in emotionally complex work, relational clarity often matters more than speed. A short phone call can sometimes save ten emails. A quick check-in of “Are you OK with this?” can prevent an assumption from hardening into a problem.

I am increasingly convinced that one of the most under-valued professional skills in funeral work is the ability to say: “I’m not sure yet.” Or: “I don’t have the full picture, but I wanted to flag this.” These sentences create space. They allow people to hold ambiguity together, rather than in isolation.

Before services, I have found enormous value in brief, intentional touchpoints. Not lengthy meetings. Not formal conferences. Just a few minutes to quietly confirm:

This is the order as we understand it.

These are the key emotional sensitivities.

These are the moments that may need particular care.

When these conversations happen, everyone relaxes slightly. When they do not, everyone holds a little more tension.

On the day itself, tone becomes even more important.

Families are often within earshot. Colleagues are often under pressure. Communication that is calm, low-volume, and solution-focused sets a temperature for the whole space.

After difficult services, I believe there is an opportunity that is frequently missed.

A short, reflective conversation. Not a post-mortem. Not a blame session. A simple, human exchange:

“That was a tough one.”

“Is there anything we could do differently next time?”

“Thanks for how you handled that moment.”

These conversations build relational memory. They accumulate. They create partnerships that feel safe enough to handle complexity.

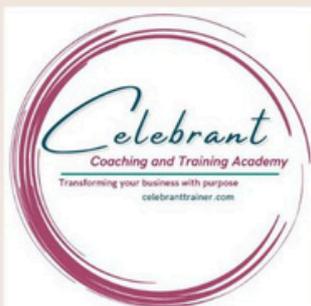
I do not believe effective communication in this context is about perfect systems or rigid protocols. It is about orientation. Are we oriented toward protecting our own role? Or are we oriented toward protecting the family experience?

When both celebrants and funeral directors hold the second orientation - supported by clear client consent and ethical information-sharing, communication becomes more generous. More thoughtful. More proactive.

Difficult services will never become easy. Nor should they. They carry weight because they matter.

But they can become less damaging. Less fracturing. Less isolating.

When communication is approached not as administration, but as an extension of care, something subtle shifts. We stop working alongside each other. And start working with each other.



Have you thought about becoming one of our sponsors?

Benefits include, but not limited to:

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- Links in Member Communication
- Promotion at Conference and Events
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Letters To Heaven

Sherryl Smorthit Campaigns to get several Letters to Heaven Post boxes around Calderdale

I started fundraising in 2010, just little charity's locally to Calderdale such as Unique Ways, SIDS, Invictus and many more. but then in 2013 my 2 year old was diagnosed as a type 1 diabetic.



I wanted to fundraise for JDRF which is a juvenile diabetes charity .

I got hooked on the fundraising and been able to give back. But the fundraising also helped me with my own mental health. To have something to focus on.

Being bipolar I was able to fixate on something that was beneficial for not only myself but for the wider community

In 2024 my mother in law passed away from cancer seeing the children especially hurting and not really understanding the situation and grief I wanted to try do something about it. I saw the idea for “ letters to heaven” on social media and I knew then that’s what I needed to do.



I told everyone I was doing a “secret fundraiser” which I didn’t tell anyone what for until I reached the amount to pay for the first letter box.

Many people offered donations to raffle off inc. a £100 cake to the lucky winner.

When I raised the amount I went live on my social media to tell everyone and it went crazy, everyone loved the idea.

I was then able to get a personalised plaque and decor and that’s when Parkwood Crematorium in Elland got the 1st letter box which is used so much and everyone is able to write letters post cards etc. When there’s enough, they then put all letters into a gentle cremation and then scattered in the grounds When that was finished I felt a little lost as it was a massive high so I then decided to do it all again for Stoney Royd Cemetery. That was placed in their grounds by the entrance on the 18th February 2026.



During another little valentines fundraiser that me and a friend at work did, for someone who needed a pick me up, a lady I know asked me how much all the letter boxes cost etc

She then asked me if she could buy some raffle tickets

When she told me to check the bank there was a hell of a lot more in than just for a few raffle tickets.

I asked her what was going on she said

“She’s proud of me and the things I do and wants me to buy a 3rd letter box to heaven “

I was gobsmacked, so now me and the lady Jen, are trying to get one in her chosen place and it will be a special place for her and her family.

With the money she sent there is now a lump sum towards a 4th which will be fundraised for after the 3rd is completed.

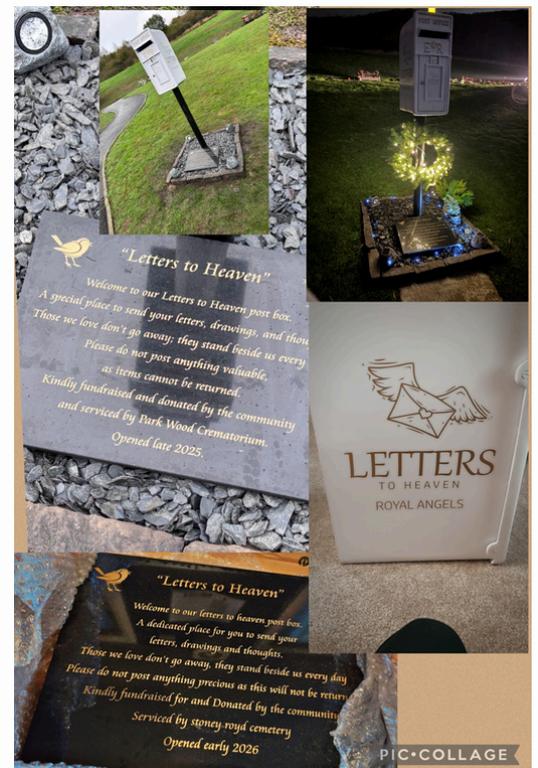


I buzz off people winning raffles or football cards, I like people being happy and if I can make people happy, my job is done.

I got a message at Christmas off a complete stranger. It was a picture of her grandson age 4, holding a picture of his mummy in heaven, to which he posted in the letter boxes

As much as it’s sad it’s also good that children have a place to go, adults have a place to go too.

I just love the focus and when all this is done I will be onto the next thing



Funeral Partners CEO ‘Sleeps Out’ To Support Youth Homelessness Charity



Funeral Partners Chief Executive Sam Kershaw in foreground joining others with bedding laid out on the terrace of Somerset House, London.

Chief Executive of Funeral Partners, Sam Kershaw, braved a cold and damp February night sleeping outdoors to raise awareness and funds for Centrepoin, a charity dedicated to ending youth homelessness.

Sam took part in an organised sleep-out in central London on February 6, helping to raise money towards a £118,000 fundraising target for the charity, which estimates that more than 118,000* young people face homelessness each year.

Motivated to take part in the challenge by personal experiences during 2025, Sam stepped in to help two individuals who had unexpectedly become homeless – a man in his 30s whose life choices had caught up with him, and a young mother fleeing an abusive relationship. Despite their very different circumstances, both were left without a safe place to stay.

“The reality of having nowhere is incredibly daunting,” said Sam. “From not being able to charge a phone to having no means of washing and storing clothes, or even access to a toilet, every part of daily life becomes a challenge. Even navigating the benefits system is almost impossible without internet access or a temporary address. Seeing this first-hand made me determined to do something to help.”

Sam joined around 150 supporters for Centrepoin’s event, which was held on the terrace of Somerset House. While fundraisers stayed in a secure environment and were not attempting to replicate rough sleeping, the evening included group discussions about homelessness and powerful personal stories from those affected.

“I’m not fit enough to run a marathon and too ‘chicken’ to attempt a skydive,” Sam added. “So I chose something I excel at – sleeping. The event was incredibly informative and rewarding, and it reinforced just how important Centrepoin’s work is.”

Sam completed the challenge with little more than a stiff neck and backache, but the effort proved worthwhile. Together with his supporters, he raised nearly £2,000 for the charity. Donations can still be made directly via Centrepoin’s website: [London Sleep Out | Centrepoin](#)

*Centrepoin estimates that more than 118,000 young people face homelessness each year, providing accommodation, health support and life skills to help them build a brighter future.



A career path that makes a difference



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Advertorial

Harpin's Funeral Service Expands To Normanton, Honouring Family Promise

A long-established Wakefield funeral business has strengthened its presence in the local community with the opening of a new branch in Normanton.

Harpin's Funeral Service, part of the Funeral Partners family of high-quality funeral businesses, has opened its latest funeral home in Normanton High Street, expanding its network of branches which already serves families in Wakefield, Outwood and Horbury.



Jane Britton (Funeral Arranger), Georgina Harpin Shipley (Funeral Director) and Sean Harpin (Senior Funeral Director) in front of their new Normanton premises

The decision to open in Normanton is rooted in Harpin's family history and long-standing ties to the area. Business Principal Sara Harpin's aunt served the community as a District Nurse, while her late uncle was a Funeral Director, both based in nearby Altofts.

Over the years, conversations with local families repeatedly highlighted how valuable it would be to have a Harpin's Funeral Service that was easy to reach and offered genuine choice close to home.

Sara Harpin said: "Normanton has always held a special place in our family. My Uncle Les and Aunty Doreen both dedicated their working lives to caring for people in this area, and opening in Normanton feels like keeping a quiet promise we made through those conversations.

"We've cared for many Normanton families for years, and now we can be closer to them, right at the heart of their community."

The Normanton branch is being managed by Funeral Director Jane Britton, who joined Harpin's in October 2025.

Jane has strong personal links to the town, having spent a great deal of time in Normanton while her brother played for the Normanton Knights Rugby Club all the way from a child to his professional career, with her father coaching the under-8s team for several years.

Jane said: “I joined Harpin’s because I wanted to work within a personal, family-focused service. I was first drawn to the profession because I wanted to provide the best care I could during a really difficult time – joining Harpin’s means I can spend meaningful time with families, and serve the local community with the same compassion, dignity and personal care that Harpin’s has been known for almost 100 years.”

Founded in the 1930s by Leonard and Vera Harpin, the business was led from the early 1960s by Sara Harpin’s father, David Harpin, together with his wife Eileen, brother Les and sister Beryl, who built its reputation for warmth, integrity and genuine community care. In April 2022, Harpin’s Funeral Directors chose to join Funeral Partners to help secure the business for the long term – ensuring the Harpin’s name, staff and way of working could continue while gaining the extra support and investment needed to keep serving local families for many years to come.

The new funeral home brings Harpin’s long-established care to a wider area, offering a welcoming, modern space for families at a difficult time. Alongside the traditional and personalised funerals Harpin’s is known for, the new premises provide improved facilities, private arrangement rooms and easier access for local people. Families will also have the option of unattended (direct) cremations, as well as the opportunity to take out a funeral plan for those who wish to make arrangements in advance.

Community involvement is already a key focus for the new branch. Jane is creating a community support board within the funeral home and has secured kit sponsorship for the Normanton Knights Under-11s Girls Team. She has also become a regular face at Normanton Library’s Tuesday morning Coffee & Chat group.

Sam Kershaw, CEO of Funeral Partners, said: “Harpin’s is a business with deep roots in the Wakefield area and a long-standing reputation for compassionate, personal care. The opening of the Normanton branch reflects everything we value as a group – supporting trusted local funeral homes to grow in a way that genuinely benefits the communities they serve. We are proud to support the Harpin’s team as they extend their care into the heart of Normanton.”

The Foundation for Infant Loss Training has been supporting professionals that work with bereaved families for many years. This work has been stemmed by the death of my daughter Marnie, who died unexpectedly aged six weeks in 2004 to the horror that is a Sudden Infant Death.

Apart from our funeral director we had very little kindness or support. You can read a little more about me here: <https://www.uel.ac.uk/about-uel/news/2026/january/bereavement-care-pioneer-honoured>

I have developed a one hour recorded webinar specifically for funeral directors on how to best support bereaved families post baby loss which is available at no charge.

This webinar includes:

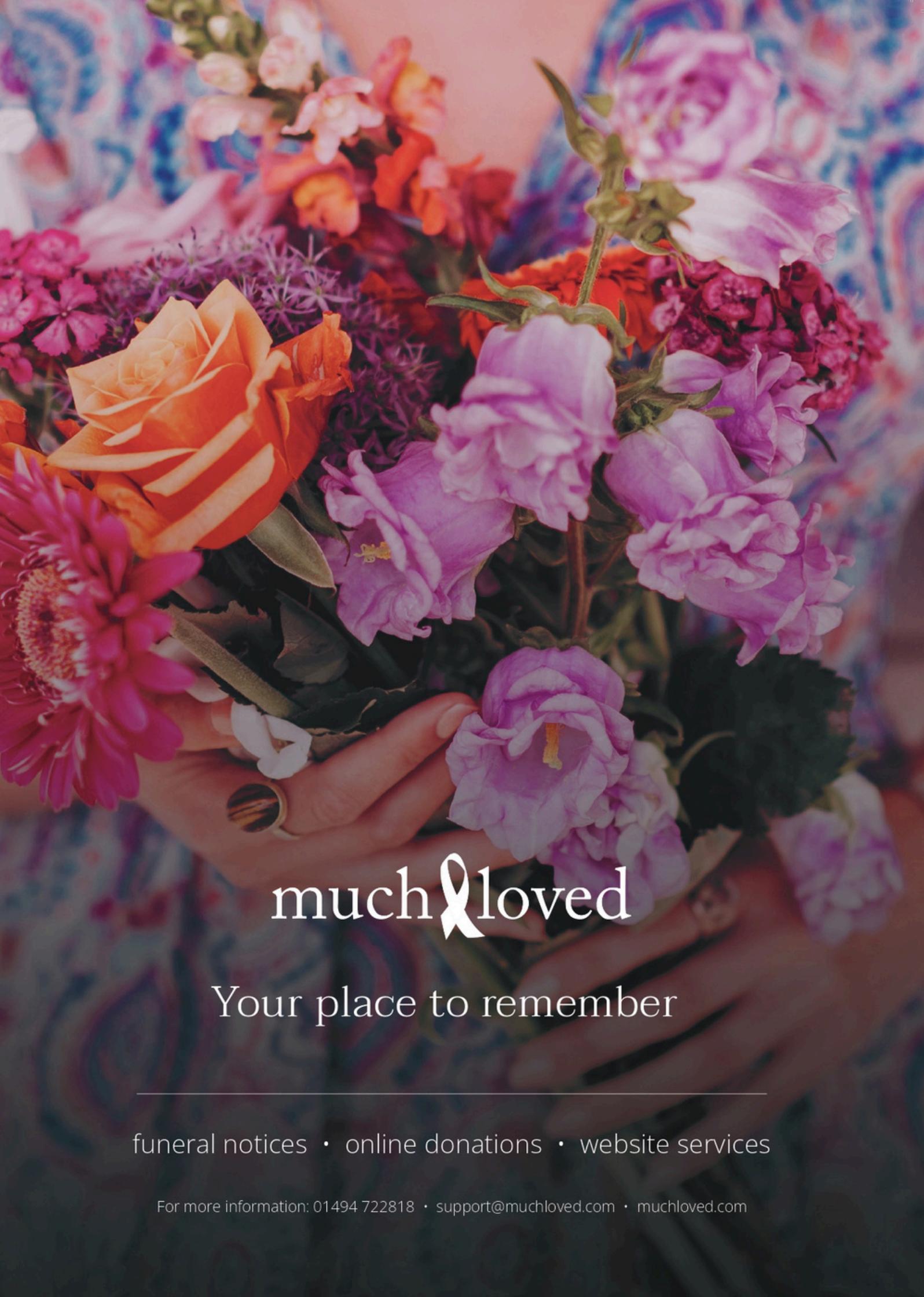
- An overview of baby loss, why do babies die?
- Is baby loss still a taboo?
- Bereavement Care in the UK - A geographical lottery?
- Marnie: My story of loss
- Dilys: Our funeral director. What she did and said to make my time with Marnie the best that it could be.
- Considerations for the funeral director
- The importance of retaining a sense of innocence
- The importance of sensitive communication, what to say? What not to say?
- What is important to bereaved parents?
- Signposting to support



If you would like to access this please email me on:

Info@foundationforinfantloss.co.uk

A CPD certificate is also available on completion



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For more information: 01494 722818 • support@muchloved.com • muchloved.com

MuchLoved Supports Organisations That Work With Bereaved People



Grief touches every community, but it's often the grassroots projects run by passionate changemakers that offer meaningful care, education and support. That's why MuchLoved Charitable Trust offers grants to small organisations or initiatives to help with vital running costs, to pilot new ideas, or to expand the reach or capacity of a service to better serve the community.

Catherine Betley, Head of Charity at MuchLoved, said: "We have had a wonderful response since launching the grants scheme, and we are delighted to be able to support some truly inspirational organisations."

These are just some of the organisations that have MuchLoved is proud to support:

Living On

Living On is a children's bereavement charity based in Orpington, Kent, supporting children, young people and their families following the death of someone they love. Each year, they work with around 200 individuals, providing support tailored to each child's needs. Services include one-to-one sessions, creative therapeutic groups, family drop-ins and partnership work with local schools.

Mosaic

Mosaic is a Dorset-based charity supporting bereaved children and young people following the death of someone special in their lives. Working collaboratively with families, schools and other agencies, Mosaic creates a clear pathway of support before, during and after bereavement, helping children and young people process grief, feel understood and build resilience.

Creating Conversations

Creating Conversations is dedicated to transforming how we talk about death, dying and grief in communities. Through the grant, four Grief Awareness Talks will be delivered across Waltham Forest, creating safe and welcoming spaces. These sessions help reduce isolation, build understanding around grief and equip people with the confidence and tools to talk about what matters most.

The Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends is a national charity supporting bereaved parents after the death of a child, of any age and from any cause. Run by bereaved parents, the charity offers a helpline available 365 days a year, local and online support groups, one-to-one support, retreats and bereavement publications. MuchLoved is sponsoring the printing of a series of bereavement information leaflets for families.

The Never Alone Project

The Never Alone Project is a bereavement charity based in Northamptonshire dedicated to supporting children, young people, families and communities as they navigate grief. By creating safe, compassionate spaces and connecting people with others facing similar experiences, The Never Alone Project helps reduce isolation and ensures that no one has to face grief alone.

The Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service (JBCS)

The JBCS offers confidential counselling to individuals, couples, children and families in the Jewish community who are experiencing loss. Its work supports people at different stages of grief. MuchLoved's grant will enable JBCS to extend access to counselling for people who would otherwise be unable to afford it, ensuring that support is available when it is most needed.

Extending MuchLoved's Impact

The grants scheme reflects MuchLoved's purpose of helping bereaved people. Organisations can arrange an informal discussion about their project with Catherine Betley, or request an application form by emailing support@muchloved.com. Information can also be found on <https://www.muchloved.com>.

ATTENTION MEMBERS!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We want to know what you would like to see from the Institute and your membership.

What do you want to see covered in CPD Sessions? Both online and in person.

Please send your ideas to your Regional Director or to admin@bifd.org.uk



DON'T FORGET!



Our next conference runs from Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th October at Tankersley Manor Hotel.

Remember to book your places soon to secure your place.

**March whispers of new beginnings,
where winter's chill fades and the
promise of spring stirs in every breeze.**



Secure, professional Live Streaming

With our specialist technology and team, we can professionally stream a funeral service and make it available for a further 28 days. This gives people the chance to attend and pay their respects, even if they can't make it in person.



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Woodall Nicholson Group Signals Bold New Chapter for Luxury Transport

With a heritage spanning more than two centuries, the Woodall Nicholson Group is setting the stage for a transformative move into the luxury transport sector.

From the manufacture of horse-drawn cabs and carriages in 1820 to today's production of specialist vehicles, Woodall Nicholson Ltd has continually evolved - blending craftsmanship, engineering precision and customer-focused innovation.

Now, drawing on the vast engineering expertise and collaborative strength across its group businesses - the company will soon announce a series of new additions to its portfolio that will redefine expectations in premium passenger experience, under the brand name of **Nicholson**.

Engineering Excellence Meets Elevated Experience

Thanks to its deep technical capability and long-established relationships with leading OEMs and supply chain partners, Nicholson is uniquely positioned to bring fresh thinking to every aspect of luxury transport.

Nicholson brings together in-house engineering expertise and decades of artisan vehicle manufacturing experience across vehicle design and innovation, blended with advanced materials and specialist vehicle integration, enabling the development of vehicles that combine traditional craftsmanship with modern structural and manufacturing techniques.



Nicholson will introduce an exceptional range of products serving the luxury and bespoke transport market. Its first programmes will include:

- A new generation of British coach-built limousines and luxury vehicles, re-imagined and tailored to some of the world's most prestigious automotive platforms, such as Bentley and Mercedes-Benz
- A re-imagined long-wheelbase luxury 4x4 programme based on the iconic Mercedes-Benz G-Wagon platform
- A new line of luxury coach-style products spanning tourist through to VVIP specification.

Vehicles offered by Nicholson combine next-level interior detailing with unrivalled optionality and bespoke configuration. Backed by decades of specialist vehicle engineering and artisan expertise, each vehicle delivers the quality and luxury synonymous with British craftsmanship.

Legacy Drives the Future

Few manufacturers can claim a lineage dating back to 1820. That enduring legacy, combined with modern engineering capability and a culture of innovation, ensures Woodall Nicholson is best placed to elevate standards in the luxury sector.

Q3 2026 will mark the official launch of these new products.

In the lead-up, the Group welcomes conversations with customers who value luxury and exclusivity in every detail, and who are keen to combine the technical expertise of an established vehicle manufacturer with artisan craftsmanship to create a truly unique and desirable vehicle



CEO John Randerson said;

“Under the stewardship of Guido Dumarey, and the direction of the Woodall Nicholson leadership team, Nicholson represents a return to the tradition of true British artisan vehicle building - where exceptional vehicles are created in small numbers for clients who value craftsmanship, heritage and individuality.”

Ends.

Press Information

The Woodall Nicholson Group is a UK-based leader in the design, manufacture, and distribution of specialist vehicles and commercial solutions. With a rich heritage spanning over 200 years, the Group is renowned for delivering high-quality, innovative products that meet the evolving needs of private, commercial, and government sectors, engineered to the highest standards of safety, reliability, and performance. Committed to sustainability, operational excellence, and customer satisfaction, Woodall Nicholson Group continues to set benchmarks in the UK specialist vehicle industry.

Contact: Rachael Buckley

Email: rachael.buckley@woodall-nicholson.co.uk

*The British Institute of
Funeral Directors welcomes
you to join them at*

Obitus

WEDNESDAY 24TH
JUNE 2026
12pm - 4pm

Numbers are limited to 15 visitors so
booking is essential

Obitus is a 'customer first' company, dedicated to delivering more ways to say goodbye through high quality, personalised Music, Tributes, Streaming and Keepsakes for funeral services.

The British Institute of Funeral Directors have organised a day to join Obitus to see how the process works behind the scenes, it's an opportunity to become more familiar with the choices that can be offered for the families we care for.

The visit can also go towards your CPD
Please support the event if you are able.

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