

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



THE JOURNAL

ISSUE 7



Let's prevent suicide today.
Because tomorrow's too late.



SAMARITANS

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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

www.cpdstandards.com

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www.bifd.org.uk



Please send all Adverts,

Articles & News

c/o The Editorial Team:

journal@bifd.org.uk



**National President's
Chosen Charity**



**The Presidential Team:
National President, Clive
Pearson**

**1st Vice President, Dr Philip
Gore**

**2nd Vice President, Judith
Dandy**

**Immediate Past President,
Amanda Pink**



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Obitus

Letter from the National President

Clive Pearson

Dear colleagues

What a busy, inspiring, and rewarding month it has been! I have spent the last few weeks travelling the length and breadth of the country, and it has been an absolute privilege to connect with so many of our members, celebrate incredible milestones, and champion the next generation of funeral professionals.



Here is a look back at where our journey took us this month.

Networking and Learning at the CBCE in
Southampton

Our first major stop was in Southampton, where Leanne and I attended the Cremation & Burial Communication & Education (CBCE) event.

It was a fantastic event packed with valuable insights and CPD sessions, for anyone who's never attended you should look at attending next year. The highlights were undoubtedly the wonderful banquet and the opportunity to catch up with old friends while making new ones. Events like these remind us of the strength of our community, offering an excellent space for networking, sharing best practices, and supporting one another.

From Southampton, we headed to Bournemouth to join the celebrations for a truly monumental occasion, the 100th anniversary of Head & Wheble.

Reaching a centenary is an incredible milestone for any business, but in our profession, it represents something even deeper.



It stands as a testament to generations of family excellence, unwavering commitment, and deep rooted dedication to the local community. You can read about Head and Whebles remarkable journey in the journal.



Heading back up the country, I had the pleasure of visiting the team at Cliff Bradley & Sons in Gainsborough. It is always incredibly valuable to sit down face-to-face with our members on their home turf. We had some excellent, open discussions regarding the ongoing issues and challenges currently facing the funeral profession.

Hearing your hands-on experiences helps shape how we, as an Institute, can best support and advocate for you in an ever-evolving industry landscape.

Finally, I travelled right up to Falkirk for one of the most rewarding duties I have as your President, celebrating education and achievement.

I was incredibly proud to present two Certificates in Funeral Service to Chloe Mooney and Chloe Kerr. Both of these ladies have put an immense amount of hard work, dedication, and study into achieving these qualifications. Please join me in sending them our warmest congratulations as they continue to progress in their careers. The future of our profession is in very safe hands with dedicated young professionals like Chloe and Chloe leading the way.



As we look ahead to the coming months, I remain incredibly proud of the dedication, resilience, and high standards displayed by our members across the UK.

Thank you to everyone who welcomed us so warmly on our travels.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the journal.

Warmest regards

Clive

Clive Pearson
National President, Region C

BIFD FUNDRAISING WALK: CONQUERING THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS FOR SAMARITANS



SAMARITANS
Leek & District

National President, Clive Pearson, took on the Three Peaks on Thursday 4th June to raise money for his chosen charity The Samaritans

Please show your support by donating via the link, or through our social media pages.



British Institute of Funeral Directors Presidents Charity Supporting the Samaritans

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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

Friday Dinner	Double Room (per couple)	£675
Friday & Saturday Bed & Breakfast	Single Room (per person)	£425
Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea & Coffee		
<u>Saturday Lunch Included</u>		
Saturday Evening Drinks Reception		
Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee		

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

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

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

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

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only

.....£85 Per Person

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

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

5. AGM ATTENDANCE ONLY

.....Free To All Members & Students

Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

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:

.....Double Room (2 People) £POA
.....Single Room (1 Person) £POA

The 44th 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: £.....

Tariff (2) – Fri to Sat

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Tariff (3) – Sat to Sun

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Tariff (4) – Gala Dinner Only

Total Attendees £.....

Tariff (5) – AGM Only

£ No Charge

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”:

Bacs Payments To:

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

Reference: BIFDCONF

Mrs Margaret Dow

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

Email: treasurer@bifd.org.uk

Total Amount Due £.....



THE CPD STANDARDS OFFICE
CPD PROVIDER: 60065
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www.cpdstandards.com

Online Continued Professional Development provided by The British Institute of Funeral Directors



Wednesday 26th August 2026



Session starts at 6.30pm



[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87293721515?
pwd=M63J6bQujCq7f1vbBidbpytQD2qHPr.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87293721515?pwd=M63J6bQujCq7f1vbBidbpytQD2qHPr.1)



hayleyowenfd@gmail.com





The Law Firm Group

The British Institute of Funeral Directors welcomes the Law Firm to present their specialist advice when it comes to helping families during bereavement

- **Supporting Families Beyond the Funeral: Common Legal Issues and How to Navigate Them**
- **Helping funeral professionals understand the legal journey after a death, recognise common pitfalls and know when specialist legal advice can make all the difference.**



THE LAW FIRM
— G R O U P —

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:
------------	-------

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

1st April 2025-31st March 2026

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

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:

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

National Office will require this log in support of your Licence application for 2026/2027. This information must be retained for a minimum of three years.

A continuation sheet may be used.



THE CPD STANDARDS OFFICE
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Online

Continued Professional Development provided by The British Institute of Funeral Directors



Wednesday 9th September 2026



Session starts at 6.30pm



[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82905064109?
pwd=xaSsQ0CSfa4xlfhzlPlNN44ugnA4ME.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82905064109?pwd=xaSsQ0CSfa4xlfhzlPlNN44ugnA4ME.1)



hayleyowenfd@gmail.com





Everlight Tribute Films



Lucy, founder of Everlight Films is our guest in September talking about personalised tributes. With over 5 years of experience creating bespoke tribute films, Lucy has created hundreds of tributes to honour loved ones through meaningful, beautifully crafted memorial keepsakes. Everlight Tribute Films was created with compassion at its heart – to offer a personal, caring service during some of life's most difficult moments. Every tribute is thoughtfully created to reflect a unique life, treasured memories, and the love that remains.



Join the session to see if Lucy can be an asset to your working life easing the burden of creating personal tributes for families



Head & Wheble Centenary Celebration

Reaching a centenary in business is a milestone worthy of recognition, so on the warm evening of Thursday 25th June, family, friends, colleagues and members of the funeral profession gathered at the Marsham Court Hotel in Bournemouth to celebrate 100 years of Head & Wheble Funeral Directors – a truly remarkable achievement for one of Bournemouth's longest established funeral businesses.



A Century of Compassion: The Head & Wheble History

The roots of this esteemed Bournemouth firm trace back to the early part of the 20th century. Founder George Head, supported by his wife Minna, established the business with a clear vision: to advise and support bereaved friends, relatives, and associates with the utmost care.

Having worked alongside J.J. Allen (of Westbourne) since the 19th century with his brothers from a young age, George developed the deep sensitivity and care required to excel as a funeral director.

From these early beginnings, the family business grew year after year, built on the foundations of community recommendations. In 1926, George officially established his Funeral Service at 1a Oxford Road, Lansdowne, Bournemouth—the very premises where the current generations continue to operate to this day. In 1943, George formed a partnership with another existing funeral director, Charles Wheble. Both partners, supported by their wives, were leading lights in their respective churches and clubs, cementing the firm's place at the heart of the community.



Passing the Torch Through the Generations

The post-war era brought the next generation into the fold. In 1946, following his service in the Royal Navy, Philip Head joined his father in the family business. Ably supported and encouraged by his wife Esmé, Philip maintained and developed strong friendships within the local community, upholding cherished family traditions while steadily carrying the business forward.

Recognizing the timeless importance of trust and compassion during bereavement, Philip welcomed his son—and grandson of the founder—Simon, into the business in 1992, alongside his wife, Catherine. Both Simon and Catherine remain actively involved in the day-to-day operations today, and their tireless efforts have been paramount to sustaining the business into the modern era.

The future of the firm looks equally bright. In 2016, Simon and Catherine's two sons, James and Robert, entered the business. As the fourth generation, they are successfully retaining the strong family influence that surrounds a traditional independent firm, ensuring its longevity for many years and generations to come.

Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

Since George Head first opened his doors in 1926, societal attitudes towards death and the expectations placed upon a funeral director have undoubtedly evolved. However, the Head family continues to serve the Bournemouth community by firmly adopting the strong principles laid down by their founders, seamlessly blending them with modern facilities and contemporary service.

National President Clive Pearson, his wife Leanne and First Vice President Phil Gore attended the 100th anniversary celebrations of Head & Wheble Funeral Directors in Bournemouth, where they thoroughly enjoyed an evening filled with warmth, reflection, and celebration.

To reach 100 years of continuous family service is a rare and beautiful achievement in our profession. The BIFD applauds Head & Wheble for their unwavering commitment to dignity, tradition, and community over the last century, and we wish them continued success for the next hundred years."



**The British Institute of Funeral Directors
invites Members, Students, Associate
members & Guests to a visit to
Halliday Funeral Supplies**



THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2026



6.30



Visit includes a factory tour



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Save The Date



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



**Silence Isn't
Always Golden**

Princess Diana: Three Decades After Her Death – Her Final Journey from Paris to Britain

Victoria Wells

Deputy Editor, Region C



The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, on 31 August 1997 was one of the most shocking events of the twentieth century.

Twenty-eight years later, her passing continues to be remembered around the world, not only for the tragedy of her death but also for the extraordinary public response that followed.

After being seriously injured in a car crash in the Pont de l'Alma tunnel in Paris, Diana was taken to Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, where doctors fought to save her life. Despite extensive surgery and medical intervention, she died in the early hours of the morning at the age of 36.

In accordance with French legal requirements, a post-mortem examination was carried out. Before Diana's body was returned to Britain, it was embalmed by a qualified French embalmer.

Later that same day, Diana's coffin left the hospital under police escort and was taken to the airport. It was flown aboard a Royal Air Force aircraft to RAF Northolt in west London. Prince Charles accompanied the journey, together with Diana's sisters, Lady Sarah McCorquodale and Lady Jane Fellowes.

After arriving in Britain, the coffin was transported to the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace, where it remained while preparations were made for the funeral.

On 6 September 1997, six days after her death, Princess Diana's funeral took place in London. Millions of flowers had already been laid outside Kensington Palace and other royal residences, reflecting an unprecedented outpouring of public grief.



The funeral procession travelled through the streets of London, where an estimated one million people gathered to pay their respects. Behind the coffin walked Prince Charles, Diana's sons Princes William and Harry, Diana's brother Earl Spencer, and the Duke of Edinburgh in one of the most memorable images of the day.

The funeral service at Westminster Abbey included tributes, prayers, and Elton John's performance of the rewritten version of Candle in the Wind, a song that became closely associated with Diana's memory.

The ceremony attracted one of the largest television audiences in history. Approximately 32 million people watched in the United Kingdom, while an estimated 2.5 billion viewers across more than 180 countries followed the funeral worldwide.

Nearly three decades after her death, Princess Diana remains one of the most recognised and admired members of the Royal Family. Her final journey from Paris to Britain, the dignity with which she was prepared for burial, and the unprecedented scale of public mourning continue to mark one of the most significant royal funerals of the modern era.

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.



REGION C WELCOMES



ORTHO METALS

**To provide an educational talk about
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Parkwood Crematorium, Park Road,
Elland, HX5 9HZ



Wednesday 18th November



6.30pm



Zoom

Meeting ID: 870 0563 1159

Passcode: 907544



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UK funeral directors get their first purpose-built payment platform as Ensembl launches to the sector

New fintech platform replaces outdated, one-size-fits-all payment systems with considerate, flexible tools designed specifically for the realities of arranging a funeral

Ensembl Payments has announced the launch of its payment and finance platform for UK funeral directors, the first solution of its kind built from the ground up for businesses operating at the intersection of commerce and grief.

While virtually every other sector has been transformed by modern payment technology, funeral directors have been left behind, still relying on disconnected systems, manual invoicing, and awkward payment conversations that add unnecessary pressure to families at their most vulnerable.

Ensembl changes that.

The platform gives funeral directors a complete set of payment tools designed around the emotional realities of their work: secure payment links sent by SMS or email, flexible instalment options, FCA-regulated finance for families who need to spread the cost, automated reminders that remove the need for uncomfortable manual chasing, and a single dashboard giving full visibility across every location and outstanding balance.

"The funeral sector has been underserved by payment technology for too long," a spokesperson for Ensembl said "Funeral directors are running emotionally sensitive businesses with the same rigid, transactional tools designed for retail. That creates real problems for cash flow, for teams, and most importantly for families who are already under enormous pressure. We built Ensembl because this sector deserves better. Payment should never be the hardest part of arranging a funeral."

Ensembl's platform is built around a simple but powerful insight: that how a business asks for payment is as important as the service it delivers. For funeral directors, a clumsy payment experience can undo the trust built throughout the arrangement process. Ensembl replaces that friction with clarity, flexibility, and calm, giving families more manageable ways to pay while protecting the funeral director's cash flow and reducing the operational burden on their teams.

The platform is live and available to UK funeral directors today.

Find out more at www.ensemblpayments.com



Ensembl

Have you thought about becoming one of our sponsors?

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- Promotion at Conference and Events
- Promotion on CPD Invites and our website



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BRITISH INSTITUTE OF
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
**SPRING
EDUCATION DAY**
Saturday 6th March



Venue: Gedling super Venue, Nottingham Crematorium,
NOTTINGHAM

Join us for a day of informative sessions,
industry speakers, and networking.

For Bookings and Registration:
email admin@bifd.org.uk

EVENT SPONSORS



westerleigh
GROUP

Obitus

Somerset Business Precious Thoughts Wins Gold at the Business Women Unltd Shining Star Awards



Taunton, Somerset – Precious Thoughts is celebrating after being awarded Gold at the prestigious Business Women Unltd Shining Star Awards, recognising the business's commitment to helping people preserve their life stories and leave a lasting legacy for their loved ones.

The Gold Award was presented by Debbie Gilbert, founder of Business Women Unltd. Winners were selected by an independent panel of judges, recognising businesses that demonstrate excellence, innovation and outstanding impact.



Founded by Elaine Lomas, Precious Thoughts offers a unique and compassionate service that enables people to record their own life stories, personal messages, eulogies and treasured memories. These recordings provide families with an enduring keepsake, ensuring that future generations can hear their loved one's voice, stories and reflections.

The award is a significant milestone for Precious Thoughts and recognises the care, compassion and dedication that underpin the business.

Elaine Lomas, who leads Precious Thoughts, said:

"We are absolutely delighted to receive this Gold Award. To have our work recognised by an independent panel of judges makes this achievement even more meaningful.

At Precious Thoughts, we believe every life has a story worth preserving. Helping people leave behind their voice, their memories and their personal messages for loved ones is a privilege, and this award reflects the importance of that mission.



We are incredibly grateful to Business Women Unltd, Debbie Gilbert and the independent judges for this wonderful recognition. We hope this award encourages more people to think about the legacy they would like to leave for those they love. We send our heartfelt congratulations to all the other winners"

Precious Thoughts continues to support individuals and families across the UK by preserving personal stories, memories and messages that become treasured gifts for future generations.

Funeral Partners celebrates 300th funeral home milestone and reflects on its journey

As Funeral Partners celebrates a significant milestone in its history, we would like to thank the family businesses that have entrusted us with their legacy, and the many clients and families who have placed their trust in us to care for their loved ones.

Over the past 19 years, Funeral Partners has grown through acquisitions and new branch openings while maintaining a commitment to preserving the heritage, identity and community connections of the funeral homes it supports.

From its first acquisition – Huntleys Funeral Services in Redditch in 2007 – Funeral Partners has grown into a network of more than 300 branches across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Today, the business brings together more than 150 family brands, supports over 30,000 funerals each year and represents more than 10,000 years of combined heritage.

This balance between growth and local identity remains central to the business. Each funeral home retains its name, history and connection to the community, while benefiting from the support needed to continue serving families for generations to come.

As the organisation has evolved, so too have its people. Experienced colleagues from funeral homes across the business have progressed into support and leadership roles, while expertise from sectors including retail, healthcare, financial services and technology has strengthened the organisation's ability to innovate and adapt.

Kevin Nichols, Head of Finance, who joined the company in 2007, remembers:

"When I joined Funeral Partners, our first Head Office was in a flat above Woking Funerals and the meeting room was a lounge with a small round table. We've long since outgrown that tiny meeting room, but while Funeral Partners has grown significantly, some things haven't changed. The professionalism of colleagues and the original team spirit are still very much with us."

Brett Benton joined Funeral Partners as a Funeral Service Operative in 2010 and is now a Regional Support Manager in the North of England:

"It has been incredibly rewarding to witness the company's growth. Despite progressing into management roles, I have always valued remaining connected to the local business where I began my career. Even with significant growth, Funeral Partners has retained the close-knit, supportive culture that has been present from the beginning."

Chief Executive Officer Sam Kershaw adds:

"I'm proud that despite our growth, we've maintained that family feel. Our aim is continued growth, but in a manageable way that protects our culture, core values and the service we provide to families."

The past 19 years have built a strong foundation, but 300 homes is not only a measure of growth – it's a reflection of the trust placed in us by funeral home owners, colleagues and the families we serve.

Funeral Partners are recruiting

Join a Leading Funeral Services Group Opportunities Across the UK

We are recruiting for multiple roles across our funeral homes throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, offering the opportunity to build a meaningful and rewarding career within our trusted, respected and growing funeral services network.

We are looking for individuals who demonstrate compassion, professionalism, integrity, and a commitment to delivering the highest standards of service to our clients and their families.

For a list of current vacancies and how to apply visit
www.funeralpartners.co.uk/vacancies

If you are considering longer term succession planning for your funeral home business, get in touch for an informal confidential conversation.

Steve Wilkinson

Mergers & Acquisitions Director

07528 970531

steve.wilkinson@funeralpartners.co.uk



funeralpartners.co.uk



About Funeral Partners:

Funeral Partners is the UK's third largest funeral business, with more than 290 funeral homes staffed by over 1,300 dedicated funeral professionals serving communities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as a regulated funeral plan provider of Choice Funeral Plans.

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw has over 45 years' experience in the funeral profession, joining the business back in 2016 as Chief Operating Officer. Funeral Partners has been established for over 18 years and has grown rapidly, building a strong reputation as a trusted, well-run, high-quality funeral services business and funeral plan provider, with exemplary standards of care for the deceased and their clients, overseeing more than 30,000 funerals nationally each year.

It now includes more than 150 family businesses, which have entrusted their reputation and heritage to Funeral Partners.

Funeral Partners Limited (FPL) is an appointed representative of Alternative Planning Company Limited (APCL) which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority with firm reference number 965282. Choice Funeral Plans are provided by APCL. Both FPL and APCL are part of the Funeral Partners Group

St Leonards Funeral Arranger to run 5K event in full funeral attire for local charities



Molly Dowling of Douglas Mercer & Son Funeral Directors in full funeral attire holds her flyer for the event.

A Funeral Arranger/Director at a well-known St. Leonard's funeral home will be raising eyebrows as well as money at this year's Out Of The Blue Battle event at Ashburnham Place on Thursday 25th June 2026.

Molly Dowling of Douglas Mercer & Son Funeral Directors will be running the 5K course in full funeral attire in aid of four local charities: Beachy Head Chaplaincy Team, Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), Dragonflies Bereavement Project and Winston's Wish – giving hope to grieving children.

Not put off by the prospect of running in warmer weather, Molly knows the extra layers of clothing won't hold her back. She's dedicating her run to the memory of her dear friend Andy who sadly passed away in 2024.

Molly says: *"Andy was a very good friend, personally and professionally, and always inspired me to achieve my goals, no matter what."*

As a Funeral Arranger/Director, helping families during one of the most challenging times of their life is extremely rewarding, and being entrusted to care for loved ones is one of the highest honours."

Molly has been in the funeral industry since leaving school and has recently passed her Diploma in Funeral Directing

To donate to any of the charities mentioned, search "Molly, running in memory of Andy" to find her JustGiving page, or scan the QR codes on Molly's flyer, which will be available at the event and at Douglas Mercer & Son Funeral Directors premises on Sedlescombe Rd North.

Links to Molly's JustGiving pages are: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/molly-dowling-dragonflies>

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/molly-dowling-calm>

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/molly-dowling-beachyhead>

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/mollyrunningforandy>

Understanding What Celebrants Need from Funeral Directors (and Vice Versa) to Create Exceptional Ceremonies

Most professional tensions are not born from hostility. They are born from unspoken expectations.

Over time, I have become increasingly aware that many of the quiet frustrations between celebrants and funeral directors are not about people doing a poor job.

They are about people doing different jobs, from different vantage points, with different pressures, and assuming that the other side understands those pressures instinctively.

Often, they do not. Because much of the work happens out of sight, it is easy to underestimate what the other person is carrying.

Celebrants may not fully see the volume of logistical coordination, regulatory responsibility, and time-sensitive decision-making that funeral directors manage every day. Funeral directors may not fully see the emotional and cognitive labour involved in sitting with families, listening deeply, shaping narrative, and crafting language that carries meaning.

Both roles are complex. Both roles are demanding. Neither is simple. When this complexity is not acknowledged, small irritations can quietly accumulate. When it is acknowledged, a different quality of relationship becomes possible.

In my experience, celebrants tend to need a small number of things from funeral directors to do their best work:

They need timely and accurate information. Not perfect information, but honest information. If something is uncertain, it is often more helpful to know that it is uncertain than to be given a premature version of events that later changes.

They need early notice of changes wherever possible, because last-minute alterations ripple outward into writing, structure, and emotional preparation.

They need realistic timeframes. Writing a personalised ceremony takes time. Families often underestimate this, and sometimes professionals do too. When celebrants feel pressured to compress thoughtful work into impossibly short windows, quality inevitably suffers.



They need appropriate access to families, with clear consent, so that conversations can happen directly rather than through layers of relay. Nuance is easily lost second-hand.

They also need their preparation time to be respected as real work, not as something that happens invisibly or effortlessly.

None of this is about special treatment. It is about recognising what the role actually involves.

From the other side, funeral directors also tend to need a small number of things from celebrants to do their work well:

They need reliability. When a celebrant says they will send a draft by a certain time, they need to trust that it will arrive.

They need responsiveness, particularly when services are imminent.

They need professional conduct in interactions with families and colleagues, including appropriate boundaries and respectful communication.

They need flexibility, because funerals exist in the real world, not in ideal conditions. Plans change. Families change their minds. External factors intervene.

They need clear, transparent pricing so that there are no awkward surprises for families later.

Again, none of this is unreasonable. It is about predictability. Predictability reduces stress.

One of the most common sources of friction I see is around last-minute changes.

Families change music, they add speakers, they remove readings, they shift tone.

From a family perspective, this is entirely understandable. They are processing grief and making decisions under pressure.

From a professional perspective, these changes land differently depending on role.

For a celebrant, a “small” change may require rewriting multiple sections of a script.

For a funeral director, a “small” change may require re-coordinating people, equipment, and timings.

When each professional understands the impact of changes on the other, conversations become more compassionate.

Another frequent source of tension is differing interpretations of urgency.

For one person, “urgent” may mean “within the next hour”. For another, it may mean “before the end of the day”. Clarifying expectations around response times can prevent unnecessary irritation.

Not through rigid contracts. Through simple, human conversation. “I usually check emails every X hours.” “If something is time-critical, a phone call is best.” These small agreements remove guesswork.

I am increasingly convinced that one of the healthiest things a local professional community can do is talk openly about mutual needs.

Not in a confrontational way. Not in a complaint-led way. But in a curious, collaborative way.

“What helps you do your job well?”

“What makes things harder?”

“What could we do differently?”

These conversations are often surprisingly relieving. People realise they are not alone in their frustrations. They also realise that many issues are systemic rather than personal.

When needs are named, solutions become possible. When needs remain unspoken, stories get invented.

“She doesn’t care.”

“He’s always disorganised.”

“They’re impossible to work with.”

These stories are rarely true in the way they are imagined.

More often, they are placeholders for *“I don’t understand what’s going on for them”*.

Exceptional ceremonies are not created by one person. They are co-created through a series of small, interdependent actions carried out by multiple professionals who are trying, in good faith, to serve a family well.

When celebrants and funeral directors understand each other’s needs, expectations become more realistic. When expectations become more realistic, disappointment decreases. When disappointment decreases, goodwill increases.

Goodwill is not fluffy. It is operationally useful. It makes people more patient, more flexible. More willing to problem-solve and more inclined to assume positive intent.

None of this requires perfection. It requires willingness. Willingness to talk, to listen, to adjust.

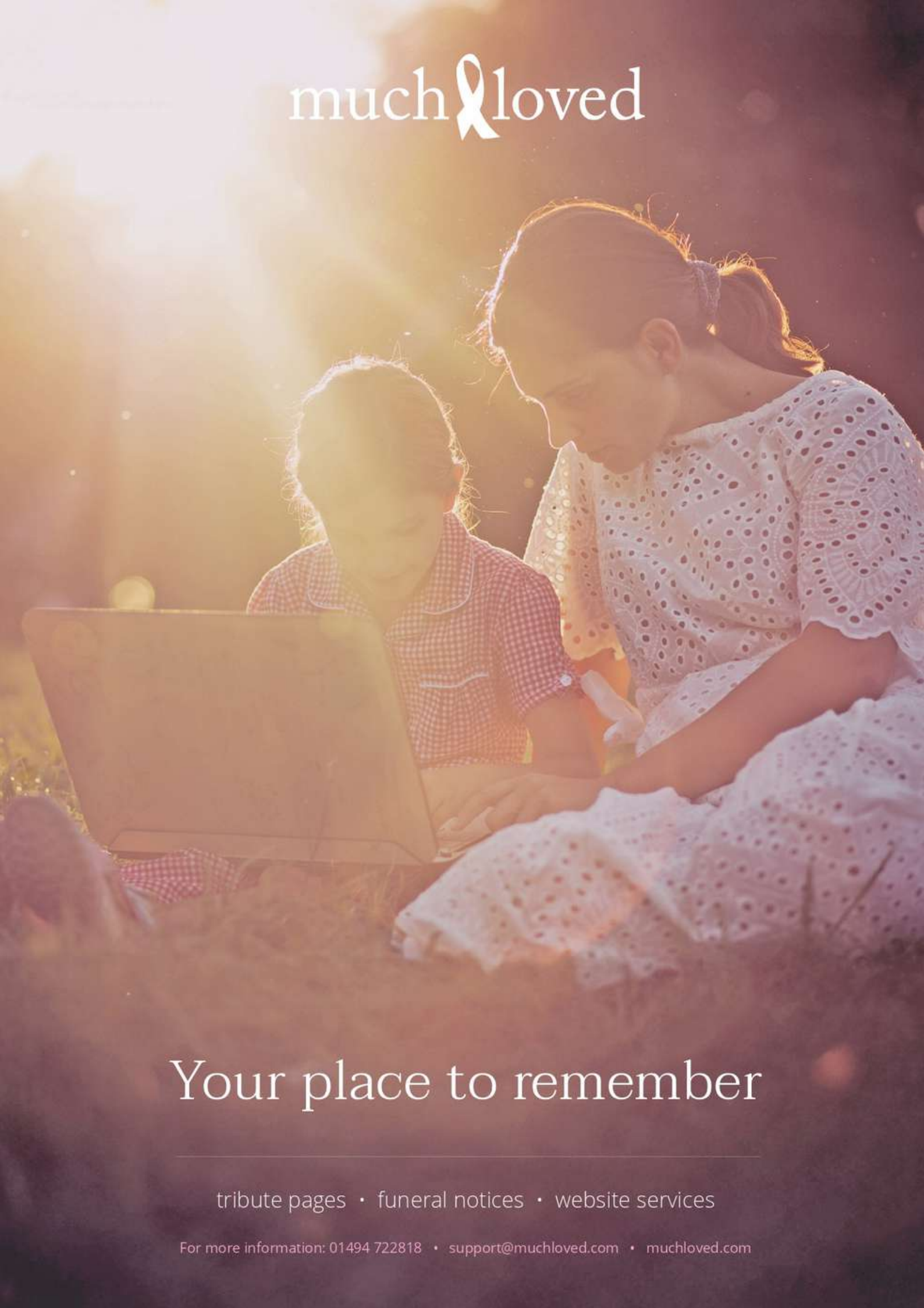
I would be genuinely interested to know what celebrants and funeral directors identify as their most important needs from each other. Not as a wish list. But as a starting point for conversation.

Because the more clearly we understand one another, the easier it becomes to do what we all ultimately want to do: Create ceremonies that feel deeply supportive of the people who have trusted us with their stories.



June is a door to sunshine,
a step into joy, and
a reminder that every
day holds a little
more light.

Catherine Pulsifer



much  loved

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MuchLoved's Five Tips For Helping Families Make The Most of Their Tribute Pages

Digital tributes are becoming ever more popular as a place to remember a loved one. Today, online tributes are created for around one in four UK deaths, and many more are shared informally on social media.

Dedicated digital spaces

More families now expect their funeral director to offer a secure online tribute. These dedicated digital spaces differ from social media services like Facebook. They are designed for sharing funeral details, inviting donations, and most importantly for remembering a loved one.

Over the 20 years since MuchLoved was established, we have noticed patterns for how tributes are used. Activity on tributes does not end with the funeral. 20% of all page activity occurs more than a year later, and around half of those who return after the first year continue returning even 10 years on.

Using these top-tips from MuchLoved, funeral directors can help make every tribute a lasting source of comfort, connection, and remembrance.

Tip 1 - Inform

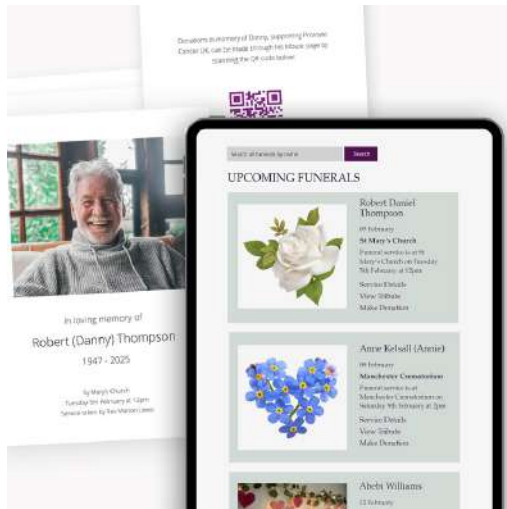
A tribute often begins as an online funeral notice, providing a secure alternative to social media. Include service details, maps, livestream links and dress codes, and add a photo to personalise the page. Sharing the tribute is simple through a unique link or QR code.

Tip 2 - Collect

Online tributes offer a shared space for condolences and charitable giving. Create a tribute for every funeral so families can receive messages of comfort, even when donations are not collected. Explaining the charity's significance to the family will encourage donations. Make access easy with QR codes on orders of service.

Tip 3 – Appreciate

Families often get the greatest value from the photos, stories, music, and videos added by their friends and relatives. Let them know that their tribute can remain active indefinitely and hold unlimited memories. They may not want to look at the tribute straight away, so reassure families that they can take their time.



Tip 4 – Remember

Unlike physical memorials, digital tributes can be visited from anywhere at any time, providing comfort on important occasions like birthdays. Give your families ownership and control of the tribute and make sure they know the page is theirs to keep permanently and revisit whenever they choose.

Tip 5 – Empower

Some families choose to use their tribute pages to turn grief into action by supporting a charity that is important to them. With tribute event pages, all sorts of activities can be shared through one place. Help families by connecting them with charities or sharing stories from other clients.

Online tributes offer comfort long after the funeral

By making tribute pages a standard part of every funeral, funeral directors can extend their care well beyond the day of the service, helping families create meaningful digital memorials. Follow MuchLoved's five tips to guide every family through the possibilities, ensuring each tribute grows from a simple funeral notice into a lasting place of remembrance to provide comfort for years to come.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

What do you want to see from your membership?

Have you any ideas that you want to see for CPD sessions either online or in person in your area?

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





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