

Funeral suggestions for _____

Section 1 General Information

Your will. Please do ensure that you have a written will. We will all die and so everybody ought to have one, no matter how much longer you hope to live. Please record where your will may be found and your next of kin (name, address and any other contact information).

Dealing with your body. Some people wish to leave their bodies or organs for transplants and/or medical research purposes. Some people want all organs to be used whilst others may prefer to restrict those that can be used. Sometimes permission is asked for a post mortem - would you like it to be given?

You can decide where you would you like your body to be taken after death. Some people are happy to remain in the care of the funeral director; others would like their body to be taken home.

Embalming

Embalming can play an important part in looking after the person who has died but it is not always necessary and it is never compulsory. It is only carried out with the permission of the family but it is very difficult to describe the embalming process to anyone when they are grieving.

It is very important, therefore, that in collating all the information which you will need to plan the details of a funeral, that you talk to your funeral director about the benefits and the disadvantages of embalming, so that you can make an informed choice. The process involves removing bodily fluids and replacing the blood with a formalin based fluid. The funeral director has to have permission from the family before embalming takes place.

If you wish for more information for planning your funeral, talk to your funeral director for more details to help you make your choice.

It may be recommended in order to enhance the appearance of the body for relatives to see, as it preserves the body for a longer time.

Sometimes embalming is necessary, for instance, it may be required for reasons of hygiene when a death occurs abroad and the body is flown home, or when there is a long delay before the funeral.

Where your choice is for a woodland burial, you will not be asked for permission to embalm as this conflicts with the "environmentally friendly" concept of such a burial.

Section 2 Initial Arrangements

Financial planning. *Trying to arrange a funeral for someone who has died, when you are unsure about his or her wishes, can be very upsetting. The clergy, in conjunction with any funeral director will be able to give free advice and written estimates on the arrangements for a funeral and the costs involved so that you can plan accordingly. You may make formal provision to cover the cost of your funeral by taking out a funeral plan or you may have made informal provision with, for example, your executor. Record any financial arrangements you have made.*

Funeral planning. *There are many aspects of planning a funeral that, if not considered in advance can seem just too much to bear at the time of bereavement. You could consider the style of coffin or casket you require; whether hearses, horses or limousines are required; whether the entourage should follow the coffin; what, and how much the funeral director's staff should be tipped; what the clothing etiquette should be; whether any ushers or special seating arrangements are required.*

Who would you like to be responsible for the arrangements? Ultimately the next of kin or executor will agree the decisions that have to be made regarding the funeral service. You may wish to consult a solicitor if you wish to make alternative arrangements.

Which funeral director would you like to be used? You do not have to use the services of a funeral director but they can be of enormous help. Your choice of funeral director should not be based on cost alone, but consider also the standard of service, premises, whether you want to be viewed at their chapel of rest, whether they will dress and make up your body as you require, vehicles and most of all, customer care. Some funeral directors will make a note of attendees, flowers and donations for you.

Would you like the funeral and its arrangements announced in any special newspapers? This may include a local paper in another part of the country. Or would you like any special people informed of your death? Would you like to send invitations to service and / or house? Formal or informal ?

Section 3 The Funeral

Where would you like the funeral to take place? You may decide exactly where the service takes place. It is possible to hold the whole service in church, or a part of the service may take place in church followed by a committal at the crematorium, graveside (church or woodland) or scattering location afterwards. Many families appreciate the body being brought in the coffin to lie in the chapel on the night before a funeral and sometimes prayers are said with the family. This is an opportunity for them to prepare privately for the funeral the following day.

What will happen in the service? Some people have no particular wishes about the service, others want to plan absolutely everything. Consider music, hymns, readings, bible passages, poems, time for reflection to be used at the beginning, end or as part of, the service..

Who would you like to lead/participate in the service? You may have a preference for the type or contents of the service; who should lead or participate in the service; you may wish for a personalised Order of Service that the mourners can keep as a memento; you may want to decide who best to talk about yourself - you may even want to tell them what to say!!

Involvement with preparation. *There are many ways to become involved with the organising of the funeral and you can usually do as much or as little as you would like. Remember that the funeral director may not know you or the person who has died, and he will appreciate your help with the preparation of the deceased for the coffin. Dressing the person, getting the hairstyle correct and using just the right amount of make-up, is important but you can also ask the funeral director to deal with this on your behalf, if you prefer. You can provide the coffin yourself, help to carry the coffin into and out of church or at the cemetery / crematorium, or even provide the transport if you wish. If you have any strong feelings*

about what you would like to do, inform the funeral director at the time of planning the funeral.

Many relatives consider carrying the coffin a privilege and if they are reasonably fit it will present no problem. If a cremation has taken place, then somebody can be asked to carry the casket and place it into the grave.

Before and after the Funeral Service

Decisions relating to any reception before or after a funeral will be affected by the nature of the service, who will be coming, and from where they have travelled. It may be appropriate to have a small gathering in a home or restaurant. Sometimes a room is hired with a small buffet to save the family the trouble of making personal arrangements.

You may have a particular wish concerning the arrangements made for those attending your service. Organising suitable food, drink, seating and even accommodation for the mourners attending your funeral can be as complex as if arranging a formal dinner so it might be appropriate to ask a neighbour, friend or relative to adopt a co-ordinating role; consideration has to be given to who will travel to the funeral from your home and what accommodation, food or drink they will require; many of those who are not immediate family such as your neighbours welcome the opportunity to help, perhaps by organising the food at your home ; you may want to define the format of your 'wake'; you may have some mementos of your life that you would like made available; the bereaved may like a book where guests can record their memories of you;

Section 4 Burial, Cremation and last place of rest

Last place of rest. Many people have graves purchased or reserved before they die for burial, or a plot for the cremated remains. Some people prefer to be cremated and their ashes scattered in a special place. Sometimes there is a burial arranged in a family grave. There are also many people who have not given the subject any thought at all and who are bewildered when it comes to deciding what to do. If you have decided on cremation but are unsure what can happen with the cremated remains afterwards, make sure that you delay the decision until you are certain. Ask the clergy or the funeral director to explain the options to you.

Special types of burial. These can be expensive and not always available, but for some people it fulfils an important need or carries on a family tradition to be buried in a vault, catacomb or mausoleum. Please indicate if any of the following are important to you.

Green Burial. People often ask for burial in an environmentally sensitive way. This can be achieved by using biodegradable coffins and the burial can take place in a woodland burial ground where the emphasis is on caring for the environment. The Church of England has a consecrated woodland burial ground in Barton, Cambridgeshire, and more are planned for the future. This is usually a simple burial in a natural environment. Visit their website to find out more- <http://www.arborytrust.org>

Flowers. Some people like lots of flowers, others ask for only family flowers or even no flowers at all. Occasionally donations are requested instead to a special favourite charity.

Lasting Memorials. When a person dies, it is often requested that some form of memorial be provided to mark the spot where the person is buried. This also applies to the interment of cremated remains. This may take the form of a bench in the churchyard, a tree or shrub planted as a living memorial, or a wooden or traditional stone memorial. Often, the church, crematorium or cemetery will have a book of remembrance in which names can be inscribed. You may wish for acknowledgements to be sent to specific newspapers or periodicals or to have personal acknowledgements sent to specific mourners; the bereaved may want to hold a second remembrance or memorial dinner; you may also want to make provision for ongoing maintenance costs of any lasting memorial that you'd prefer.

The information contained in this document is made by me in preparation for my death. This document gives my wishes but I understand that my next of kin may decide it is not appropriate to abide by my wishes.

I have made the decisions indicated at a time when I am sound in mind and wish them to be followed wherever possible.

Signed _____ Date _____

Name, Address and contact details: