

# FREEMAN BROTHERS

## FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Provided by **FREEMAN BROTHERS**  
Independent Funeral Directors Since 1855  
Peter & Brigid Freeman

# Guidelines for arranging a funeral





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# Introduction

Freeman Brothers has been a funeral director in West Sussex since 1855, and is proud to be an established part of our local communities in Horsham, Billingshurst, Crawley, and Hurstpierpoint. We have written this booklet to try and assist with some of the practicalities of arranging a funeral and answer some of the most Frequently Asked Questions that we are used to helping with.

It's our experience that some people find dealing with the practical aspects of a death to be helpful in the early stages immediately following a bereavement. The death of someone close to you can impact you in many ways, none of them 'right' or 'wrong'. Our responsibility is to help you through this time, using our expertise to help you make decisions that ensure the funeral you plan is a fitting send-off for the person who has died.

Funerals are very personal and this booklet will never be able to cover all eventualities. If you need more information to help you make decisions or understand what could be possible, please contact one of our offices. Our experienced team will be only too happy to assist.



# Words This Booklet Uses and What They Mean

<i>Applicant</i>	The person who is taking official responsibility for the funeral arrangements
<i>Catafalque</i>	A fixed structure on which the coffin rests in some service venues
<i>Certified Copy of an Entry</i>	The document given when the death is registered, and used to confirm the death has taken place to financial institutions and other interested parties. Sometimes called a death certificate
<i>Committal</i>	The part of the funeral service when the formal goodbye to the person who has died takes place. Can also refer to a separate service in a different venue, which follows the main funeral service – for example, a committal at the graveside following a service in the church
<i>Coroner</i>	An independent officer who investigates deaths reported to them
<i>Death Certificate</i>	Used informally to refer to either the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) or Certified Copy of an Entry
<i>Diocese</i>	A group of churches, usually overseen by a Bishop, which will share common rules over matters such as permitted monuments in churchyards

***Embalming*** A process to preserve a person who has died. See full entry on page 25

***Executor*** The person named in the Will as the person responsible for carrying out the instructions listed in it

***Informant*** The person who registers the death – usually a family member or Executor of the person who has died

***Interim Death Certificate*** Given by the Coroner’s Office where there is an inquest, it fulfils the same purpose as a Certified Copy of an Entry until the time when the death can be registered and these can be obtained

***Inquest*** An investigation into a death which appears to be due to unknown causes, or violent or unnatural ones – it aims to find out who the person who has died was and where, when, and how they died

***Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)*** Issued by the Doctor who attended the Deceased person in the time leading up to their death and provided to the Registrar to enable the death to be registered. Sometimes called a death certificate

***Post-Mortem*** An examination of the Deceased person’s body and internal organs by a pathologist, carried out to find out why they died

## *Probate*

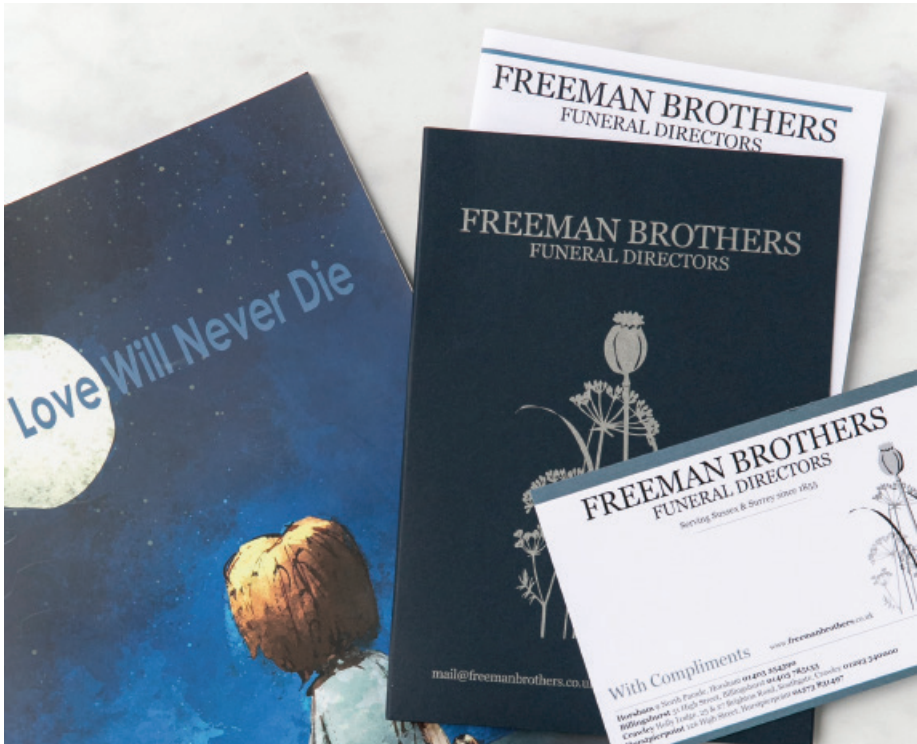
The legal right to deal with someone's possessions and money after they have died. To be applied for by the Executors of the Will, or closest living relative

## *Registrar's Certificate for Burial or Cremation*

Often called the 'Green form', this piece of paperwork confirms a death has been registered. The funeral director will require a copy of this to pass to the burial place or crematorium

## *Will*

A legal document, setting out what happens to your assets after you die, and nominating an Executor to ensure this happens





# Expected and Unexpected Deaths — What Happens Next?

An **'expected' death** is the term we use to refer to any death where there is a doctor who will be prepared to sign the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) to state what has led to the person dying. This might be a GP, or a doctor from a hospital or hospice where they have been having treatment (including as an outpatient). Sometimes, a medical condition or illness progresses in a way that means family and friends are told that someone is likely to die soon. In other situations, someone might decline rapidly and die sooner than anyone has predicted. This doesn't mean that their death is unexpected. 'Expected deaths' can still be a shock when they happen – it is often the case that people find it hard to understand that someone they are close to is truly going to die until it happens.

The MCCD is used to register the death. The person who registers the death is known as the Informant. Appointments need to be made to register the death in the area where the person has died. Please see the resources section at the end of this booklet for contact information for local registration services.

When you register the death, you will be given as many copies as you request of a Certified Copy of Entry of Death (usually called the 'death certificate'), which confirms the death has taken place, and which you usually need to provide to companies like banks or insurance providers to get affairs in order. It's usually a good idea to get a few copies. The Registrar will also produce a Certificate for Burial or Cremation (which we call the Green Form due to its colour), which is the document the funeral director needs. It confirms the Registrar didn't have any concerns about the information given, and that a funeral can take place.

These are sometimes given as physical copies, sometimes emailed, and sometimes both. Our email addresses for each of our branches are on the back cover of this booklet.

**An unexpected death** is one where there is not a doctor to complete a MCCD. This could be where someone dies without being known to be unwell, or in an accident, by suicide, or as the result of a crime. Unexpected deaths come under the responsibility of the Coroner, who will delegate responsibility for investigating the circumstances to their Coroner's Officers. The investigation might include a post-mortem examination, which will be carried out by a pathologist, and is where the Deceased person's organs are examined to see what information they can provide about the cause of death. There may also be haematology (tests of the blood) or histology (examination of tissues).

The Coroner's Officer will tell you when a funeral can proceed and might, in rare cases, mandate that it has to be a burial in case of a need for more examination later.

If an unexpected death is deemed to be of natural causes, the Coroner's investigation will conclude and the death will be able to be registered as with an expected death (although the paperwork will vary, depending on whether the funeral is a burial or cremation). If the death is determined to require an Inquest (an inquiry into the circumstances around it), this will usually be opened and adjourned to enable you to arrange the funeral (again, this may need to be a burial but the Coroner's Officer will tell you if this is the case).

It can be several months – or sometimes years – before the Inquest is held and the death can be registered, so you will be given an Interim Death Certificate to enable you to start concluding the deceased person's affairs – including applying for Probate.

# Burial or Cremation?

Most people will have a preference as to burial or cremation, which may be dictated by religious customs or family tradition, or simply preference. The wish for one or the other may also be expressed in a Will. Knowing which type of funeral affects everything, including the paperwork which needs to be completed and so this is one of the first pieces of information we will ask you for. If you aren't sure, you could consider any views expressed by the Deceased person about funerals they had attended, or what they had organised for anyone whose funeral they arranged (such as a spouse), but ultimately, the Applicant will be the person who instructs the funeral director and so it will be their decision in the absence of other information.

**Burials** can take place anywhere, but we have listed below some of the likely places together with information which might be useful.

**Churchyards** can only accept 'new' burials if they are still 'open'. Many are full and will only allow someone to be buried in an existing grave – in this case, the relationship between the person who has died now and the person in the grave will need to be established, as well as that there is space in it. If a churchyard is open for burials then there are criteria as to who can be buried there – the person needs to be a Christian and, if they did not live or die in the Parish, have close connections there such as being a regular attendee. Graves cannot be reserved in churchyards unless a faculty is obtained from the Diocese and so anyone hoping to be buried in a new grave in a churchyard should ensure they have an alternative plan in case there is no space by the time they die. Churchyards often have very strict rules set at Diocesan area level around permitted memorials and, for example, new headstones in the shapes of books are now not allowed locally.

**Cemeteries and Burial Grounds** are owned and operated by Local, District or Parish Councils. They will charge for the purchase of the grave space and each interment, and may well levy a fee for the placing of a Memorial on the plot. They will usually allow a plot to be purchased ahead of time for future use but may restrict this to a certain number of years (and may charge more for longer durations). They may also have increased charges for anyone who lives outside of the area to buy a plot or be buried in one. They will still have rules about memorials but these will more usually be around the maximum size, which will be in place to enable groundskeeping to take place around grave spaces.

**Natural/green burial grounds** have a mandate to maintain or encourage environmental benefits for at least 100 years from their inception. They may be operated by local authorities or private companies. Like burial grounds and cemeteries, they will usually allow purchase of a plot in advance and charge for interments. They will usually have strict rules around the type of coffin that can be used for a burial and the floral tributes permitted. Embalming will not be allowed to take place. There will probably be a very limited range of memorials allowed, if any. Trees are often planted for each person who is buried and you may be allowed to choose the type of tree – although it may not be sited on or near the grave itself but rather in the general area.

*If you would like more information about the regulations in specific burial places in the local area, please ask us and we will be happy to help.*

In any case where we are arranging a burial in a new grave, we will ask you if the grave is to be prepared to single or double depth, if this is allowed in the burial place. There may be additional costs for preparing the grave to a deeper level. It may be that there is an intention for someone else to be buried in the grave in due course, but even if not, we would always suggest a double depth is chosen where this is permissible and any extra charges are manageable.

This means the space is always there for someone else, which is not true of a single depth burial.

There is no reason why a burial cannot take place on your own land, although this may have implications in future if the land needs to be sold – having a person buried there may affect the value, and a future owner of the land may wish to prohibit visitors. It may be that there is a parcel of land with separate access that could be retained in the event of a sale of most of the property and grounds. If you are considering this option, then please do ask us for advice.

**Headstones or other memorials** are permitted in some settings and, as suggested above, there will be rules about what is allowed depending on the burial place. Freeman Brothers' sister company, J.Gumbrill Monumental Masons, have over 120 years' experience and are experts in what is permitted in our area. If you require a new memorial, or the removal and replacement of an existing one, then please do contact them so they can advise what is possible. They also specialise in renovation work.

**Cremations** can take place at any crematorium, and there is no need to be restricted to one nearest to you or which you have always used. There can be differences between crematoria in terms of facilities, service durations and costs, especially for the cremation itself – and some crematoria themselves charge different prices depending on time of the day and day of the week.

Whether the death is unexpected or not, all cremations require the Applicant to complete an Application for Cremation, which gives permission for the cremation to take place. Other paperwork, issued by the attending doctor or Coroner (depending on circumstances), as well as the crematorium's own forms, will also need to be prepared. We will assist the Applicant with this paperwork, collate it, and arrange for it to be delivered

to the crematorium in good time for the planned cremation. This paperwork has to be inspected a certain period of time in advance of the cremation taking place, and it is therefore virtually impossible to have a cremation at very short notice.

There are different types of cremation service available at different crematoria. A **'full service'** offers a standard duration (anywhere from 30 minutes up to an hour which varies dependent on venue) at the time of day of your choosing. A **'limited service'** might be shorter in duration, or only available earlier or later in the day, and priced at a lower rate than the full service.

An **unattended cremation** is one where there is no congregation present. This may also be called a **direct cremation**, but the two are not exactly the same. A direct cremation involves the Deceased person being conveyed directly to the crematory, while an unattended cremation usually requires the coffin being brought into the Chapel and placed on the catafalque, without anyone being present. They therefore have different staffing and possibly vehicle requirements. Some crematoria offer what they call an **attended direct cremation**, where a small number of mourners are permitted to attend and listen to music while the coffin is brought into the Chapel, but nothing further is permitted in terms of a service.

**Standardised cremations** have to be offered by all funeral directors who provide cremation services. They take the form of a set package which is proscribed by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), a statutory body in the UK which has power to mandate the types of service that businesses offer. All funeral directors are required to publish the price for the standardised funerals they offer. You can find Freeman Brothers' at [freemanbrothers.co.uk/information](http://freemanbrothers.co.uk/information) or pick up a leaflet which gives the same details from any of our offices.

*All crematoria are required by the CMA to provide local funeral directors with their current prices to ensure that you are able to compare them. For any information about services offered by local crematoria, please contact us.*

**Cremated remains or 'ashes'** can be returned a short while after the cremation has taken place, if you wish. Most crematoria provide a simple container for this purpose, which is suitable for their short term storage but isn't necessarily considered attractive. Some may make you choose and provide the container but we will advise you if this is the case. All crematoria will also have a variety of places they can be scattered or interred. You are able to have a cremation at one crematorium and place the ashes in the grounds of another upon completion of a form and payment of a small fee – we will be pleased to assist you with this process if requested. They can also be interred in many churchyards, cemeteries and burial grounds, depending on prevailing rules. Scattering of ashes is also possible but please ask for our guidance as the chosen location will have a bearing on how you proceed with this. Scatter tubes, in a variety of designs, can be used for this purpose – please ask us what is available.

Many people find it hard to decide what to do with the ashes and there is no need to do anything if you prefer not to – they can remain at home, and we can transfer them into an urn or casket you provide if you wish them to be in something more decorative. However, our experience is that it often becomes harder rather than easier to make a choice about what to do with them as time passes. Many people retain the ashes of their partner or other close relative until their own death with the intention they can be interred or scattered together, but any choices should be made clear to whoever will likely be fulfilling this task. If you really don't have any preferences, then this should be expressed too, so that the decision can be made without any guilt that it's the wrong one.

# Bequeathal

Some people decide that they wish to donate their body to a Medical School to be examined or used to assist in teaching. This is a decision that has to be made by the donor themselves in advance of their death by filling out a consent form, which has to be witnessed and provided to the school. There is then a process that is followed after death. Eventually, the body can be returned for a funeral if wished, but medical schools will usually pay for a simple, possibly unattended, cremation. They may return the cremated remains if requested, and many medical schools have a service to acknowledge the donation of the body and commemorate the Deceased people who have done so.

If you wish to donate your body, this should be discussed with your family or representatives, as they need to know you have made this decision so that the donation can be facilitated quickly once you die. They may also find your decision difficult and it may be important to explain why you feel you would like to make this choice. You should also ensure your GP and any other teams responsible for your healthcare are aware.

Wishing to have your body donated is not a guarantee of acceptance in due course and so it is always important to have an alternative plan about the type of funeral you prefer, in case the circumstances leading to your death, or other factors, make the donation impossible.





# Service Locations

A funeral service can take place anywhere, as long as the venue allows it. All crematoria have at least one chapel and many cemeteries and burial grounds have service halls or chapels. If you wish for a religious service, this can take place in a place of worship before the Deceased person is then taken to be buried or cremated (this is often called the committal).

*You can also have the service in a completely separate venue such as a place which carries out other events like weddings, or the chapel of one location before the committal at another. Please ask us for information on local venues.*

Freeman Brothers operates Hills Cemetery Chapel in Horsham and offers this as a venue for funeral services even for those who are not then having a burial in the cemetery. It has all of the facilities of a crematorium chapel including a state of the art music system and webcasting facilities, and flexible seating for up to fifty people. We also offer a package for this service followed by a direct cremation. Please contact us for more information.



# Who Can Take the Service?

This depends on what type of service you want, and sometimes where the service is. If you are having a **service in a place of worship**, you should expect they will provide someone to take the service for you, and you may not have any choice over who this is.

In other venues, you have more of a say, and these are some of the options:

**A religious officiant** can still take the service for you outside a place of worship, although some may not be willing to do this or it can impact on the service content. They may also only wish to take a service for a member of their congregation.

**A civil celebrant** is a professional officiant who will work with you to create a service of your choosing. They will usually be happy to include any type of content, religious or not. We can recommend an officiant based on your requirements and the type of service you would like, whether that be reflective or celebratory.

**A Humanist officiant** will lead a funeral which is non-religious in nature. Some Humanists will include religious content, especially if it relates to the person who has died in a non-religious context (for example, allowing 'Abide with Me', associated with football, to be sung for someone who was known to be a big fan). However, because Humanism is a belief system, this should not be expected or taken for granted (in the same way as you would not expect a Rabbi to include a Catholic prayer in a service).

Someone in the **family or a friend** can take the service, but this should be carefully considered. There are practicalities – operating the music system or cueing musicians, keeping an eye on the time if you are in a venue that needs this – which may feel at odds with emotions on the day. This may be better suited to

less formal funerals, those in venues without time limits, or being delegated to someone who is used to public speaking in other aspects of their life. Your funeral director can help with how to operate the music system and offer other assistance.

If you would like someone specific to take the service, whether that be your religious leader or a friend, we will need to consider their availability as well as yours and the service venue's, when making the booking – and we will not arrange a date and time for the funeral without consulting with them to check it suits them.



# Booking the Funeral...

When the funeral can take place is dependent on many things:

- Paperwork being in place (the Coroner's release for unexpected deaths and the death being registered in cases where the death was expected)
- Availability of key attendees such as close family or longstanding friends
- Existing commitments at the service venue(s)
- Availability of specific officiant (if this applies)
- Preference as to a particular day or date (or avoiding one)



Some venues hold services at particular times, some may only allow a certain number in a day. There can be busier times when there may be a general need to wait a little longer and there are also times

of day which are more popular (and some venues may charge more for services at these times). We will ask you to provide us with any dates/times that aren't suitable for important attendees during the likely period the service will take place in, and then will book something which meets those requirements, taking into account all the other factors and practicalities such as travel time between venues when there is more than one. Occasionally, we may also have to consider other commitments we already have in place although we are generally more able to be flexible than, for example, a service venue (which will either be available or not).

# What Should the Service Contain?

Again, this is up to you – but may be dictated by your choice of venue and/or officiant. Many **religious denominations will have a set form for a funeral service** (in Christianity, this is called the ‘liturgy’), and this may only be able to be customized to a certain extent. You may still be able to choose components of the service, though – for example, you might be obliged to include a piece of religious text, but will be allowed to choose what this is in order to reflect the Deceased person’s life and values. In a non-religious service, or one led by family or friends, you have much more choice.

In any case, many services contain:

**Music** to listen to or sing. A religious officiant may wish to have a say in the nature of this. Most service venues have a music system which plays digital music, or will make other arrangements for you to be able to play songs. There are particular times in the service when music is especially suitable – at entry and exit, and at a time of reflection. If you want to sing together, a hymn is not the only choice (although may be expected in a Christian funeral service) – any well-known piece of music will work, as long as the congregation has access to the lyrics.

**Poetry or readings** which might reflect feelings about losing someone or, in a religious service, thoughts on what the denomination believes in. There are lots of online resources which have collections of poetry grouped by topic or author, as well as websites specifically featuring funeral content. Your officiant should also be able to help you. There is no reason why someone in the family or friendship group can’t write something specific for the occasion if they have the skill to do so.

**A eulogy or tribute** to the person who has died. This is usually a mixture of factual information about their life history and anecdotes provided by people close to them, and it’s not unusual

for some of these to be comical and offer a bit of light relief. If there are attendees from throughout the Deceased person's life – for example, schoolfriends and colleagues as well as friends and family – then this is a good chance for everyone attending to learn a bit more about the person outside the parts of their life that they are familiar with. Some officiants may wish to collect the information and write the eulogy, or it may be written by someone close to the Deceased person, perhaps with help from others. The Officiant will read it for you if you don't feel able (even if you have written it) so we always suggest they have a final copy in advance to enable them to familiarise themselves with it, and see how long it is so they can plan the rest of the funeral around it.

**A 'message'** about life, death, bereavement or grief. This will vary depending on the officiant and the context. Religious services will probably focus on what the person who has died believed, and how we can live those values ourselves. Humanists don't believe in an afterlife and so will look at how we can make a positive impact during our lifetime. A non-religious officiant may seek to provide comfort to us by thinking of our happy memories with the person who has died, and remembering them positively.

**A committal** will usually take place, whereby the person is bid a final farewell. The phrase 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust', which many of us will associate with funerals, is from the Committal part of the burial service in the Book of Common Prayer. The Committal acknowledges the end of the person's earthly life and their passage onwards.

Depending on the venue and your preferences, there are many other possibilities for a funeral. Most service venues have facilities for a photo display or visual tribute where a photo or montage of photos can be shown on a screen, sometimes accompanied by music. They can also webcast the funeral so that people who can't attend in person are still able to watch in real time.

These people at home can be referred to or acknowledged during the service. You can engage a singer, choir, musician or group to perform for you. A bagpiper or bugler may be appropriate for a person of the deceased's background. Shared remembrances can take place. Especially in less formal venues which aren't working to a timetable, the sky is the limit and your funeral director and officiant can help you create the service and source suppliers.



# Checklist

This checklist contains all of the major decisions you need to make. They are all explained in detail, in the order they are listed, throughout this booklet.

## **Burial or Cremation?**

- Where should the burial or cremation take place?
  - If burial, is this in a new or existing grave?
  - If a new grave, is it to be prepared to single or double depth?
  - If existing, who is buried in the grave already and when did they die? Is there a headstone on the plot?
- .....
- .....

## **Where should we have the service?**

- At the place of burial or cremation, or somewhere else?
- .....

## **Who do we want to take the service?**

.....

## **What commitments do we have that might affect when the funeral can be?**

.....

## **What music and readings do we want in the service?**

- What else might we like it to contain?
- .....

## **Transport**

- Do we want a hearse for the coffin? Or something else?
  - Do we want limousine(s) to take us to the service?
- .....
- .....



**Does anyone want to visit the Chapel of Rest?**

.....

**What would we like the person who has died to wear?**

- Do we have any particular effects we would like to be placed with them?
- .....

**Would we like embalming to take place?**

.....

**What coffin would we like to choose?**

.....

**Flowers or donations?**

- Do we want flowers for the funeral?
  - If not, do we want to decorate the coffin with something else?
  - What charity/ies do we want for donations?
- .....
- .....

**Do we want Orders of Service or a Condolence book?**

.....

**Do we want to put notices in newspapers?**

.....

**Do we wish to follow the hearse or meet it at the venue?**

.....

**What is to happen to the ashes (if a cremation)?**

.....

**Do we need to start arranging memorial work?**

.....

# Transport

There are two main necessities for transport on the day of the funeral – that for **the coffin** and that for **the attendees**.

A **hearse** is a traditional choice for the coffin, and has the advantage of being able to transport the funeral director's staff who are usually required to convey it into the service venue. However, hearses come in all shapes and sizes, we have personally facilitated funerals where the hearse was

- Horsedrawn
- A Volkswagen camper van
- A motorbike
- A flatbed truck
- A white van
- A Land Rover

We also know of companies who will hire a vintage fleet, or even a double decker bus, as well as a traditional hearse in rainbow colours and one painted with bluebells.

We also offer a **hearse** (a smaller version of a hearse, in our case a discreet estate car with blacked-out windows) and a **private ambulance** as coffin transport.

The attendees do not have to travel in funeral cars but, if they wish to, the usual vehicle would be a **limousine** which enables a larger group to travel together than a standard car. It's possible to hire large fleets of a hearse and matching limousines if required.



# Visiting the Chapel of Rest

Whether or not to visit the Chapel of Rest and spend time with the person who has died (this is sometimes known as 'viewing') is a very personal decision and there may be strong feelings about it. If you do wish to visit the Chapel of Rest, we will let you know when appointments can be made from (this is usually once the person has been placed in their coffin) and ask that you come and see them as soon as is practical. We will also discuss embalming with you – see the section below for more information.

There are some occasions when we might recommend against viewing someone. This could be for many reasons but is often linked to how they died, or in cases where it might be a long time since they have passed away. You can still spend time with the person in their closed coffin if you would like to.



# Clothes, Jewellery and Personal Effects



Once upon a time, it was usual for a person to be dressed in their best clothes for their funeral. This is not necessary now, but can still be accommodated if you would like. We tend to suggest that the best choice of what to wear is something which they would like to be dressed in – smart or casual as would have been their normal preference. We are often asked if underwear should be provided and the answer is that we will dress someone in everything you provide, so you can do so if you wish. The only exception to this is that shoes

cannot be cremated and so, if the funeral is a cremation, shoes cannot be worn. If you don't wish to provide clothing for someone, we will place them in what is called a closing set – a long-sleeved, high-necked gown which covers their body fully.

If the person was brought into our care dressed, or with any jewellery or other effects on their person, we will check with you your plans for these. They can be returned to you (in which case, we will ask you to sign for them) or remain with the person and be buried or cremated with them. You can also bring items to be placed with the person, and either do this yourself or ask us to do so for you. For a burial, anything is permissible unless the rules dictate otherwise, while there are some common-sense rules around items for a cremation.

You should always remember that anything which is placed with the person for their funeral is non-recoverable afterwards.

# Embalming

Embalming is the proper name for what is sometimes called 'hygienic treatment'. It is a process which preserves the body by preventing the natural breaking down of our cells, which starts to happen after we die. The body's own fluids are replaced with a carefully-mixed solution of chemicals which slows down these processes and is also often thought to restore a more natural appearance to the person who has died.

Some religious denominations might not allow embalming to take place and, if the funeral is in a natural burial ground, they will also request it does not happen.

If there is a wish to visit someone in the Chapel of Rest, we will discuss your preferences for embalming with you. We will never embalm someone without your consent.



# Coffin Choice

Deciding which coffin to choose can be difficult, especially when there are misconceptions over how they are priced. For example, many people believe that a **willow coffin** is cheaper than a **traditional one**, and this may be true if the traditional one is made of **solid wood**, but if it is **veneered** then it may be cheaper. People also think a **cardboard coffin** is a cost-effective choice. However, because these are something that Freeman Brothers' customers rarely choose, each one is ordered individually and so the delivery costs are added to the price, which can increase it substantially.

As well as personal choice, the location of the funeral can have a bearing on what coffins are suitable. For example, crematoriums expect any coffin which they cremate to be supplied by an accredited provider to ensure they are free of materials which shouldn't be cremated. Natural burial grounds will want something biodegradable to be used. We can advise on the requirements which pertain to the funeral being arranged, and provide you with prices of coffins to help in your decision-making. In some cases, it may be practical to choose a particular type of coffin – for example, a special order one might not be suitable for a funeral taking place at short notice.



# Flowers or Donations?

## Flowers

Whether to have flowers on the coffin, and/or to ask people to send them to the funeral in memory of the person who has died is a personal choice. Many people feel that a coffin is bare without flowers, but some also feel that a large floral tribute is an excessive cost. It has become increasingly common to suggest that only those closest to the person who has died send flowers, and they may share the purchase of one large tribute instead of several smaller ones.

At Freeman Brothers, we suggest you use a florist that you have a positive previous experience of, and ask them to deliver to us in good time for the funeral – we will give you details of exactly when we need them by once the funeral is arranged. If you live outside the area, we can offer local recommendations, which we tend to suggest offer a better service than an internet-based delivery where we quite often find there can be problems.

Sometimes there are reasons to avoid flowers on top of the coffin or restrict the type of arrangement. Natural burial grounds will have restrictions around the materials used to construct a floral tribute and will probably ask you to avoid foam, pins, or plastic.

Some people don't enjoy cut flowers and so using them for their funeral may feel inappropriate. There are lots of ways to get around this – perhaps potted plants can be used instead. Or you may like to decorate the coffin, provide a drape to cover it, or supply some of the deceased person's possessions to rest on it instead. These can then be buried or cremated with them or returned to you as per your instruction. We have lots of experience in assisting people with alternative coffin tributes so please do ask us.

## Donations

Many people nominate a charity/ies for donations in lieu of flowers, often choosing organisations which meant something to the person who has died or which were involved in their care or otherwise associated to a condition which was relevant to them. Freeman Brothers has partnered with MuchLoved, the UK's foremost online tribute page, to facilitate the easy processing of **charitable donations online**. Your funeral arranger will create a tribute page for you; here people can see the details of the funeral and click through to MuchLoved's website to make a donation in favour of the nominated charity/ies. You are able to personalise the tribute page by becoming a Guardian, and can add photos and memories of the person who has died, visitors to the page can write messages and light virtual candles. We can also accept donations by **cash or cheque payable to the charity**, and will provide a **donation box** at a funeral service upon request. Our donation administration service includes collating the details of all donors who contribute in this way, forwarding their donations to the specified charity/ies, and providing details of all donations received – both on and offline.





# Orders of Service and Condolence Books

We can provide printed **Orders of Service** to accompany the funeral, using the proposed running order provided by your officiant and taking account of your preferences for the covers including photos, invitations to a reception afterwards, thank yous to attendees and so on. These can be a keepsake for attendees at the funeral or be sent to anyone who was unable to attend afterwards. We are able to produce these in-house or can recommend a local printing company for more complex requirements or those which are needed in large quantities.

**Condolence books** are a good way to record people's thoughts and comments in one place, and can also subsequently be used as a place to keep other correspondence. They are probably best suited to be handed to attendees of a reception or a service without a strict time limit; writing a message can take time and it's often not practical for people to form a queue to do so in the crematorium chapel. We have a selection of books available to purchase but anything is suitable for this purpose, although a hard back and plain pages are probably practical.



# Death Notices in the Press

It used to be traditional to announce someone's death to the wider community, and provide funeral details, by way of a notice in local and/or national newspapers. This practice continues to this day, although many people feel that there are more modern ways, such as social media, to ensure people find out the useful details. If you would like to place a notice, we can assist – including with suggested wording to keep the costs down, as the national newspapers in particular charge more for lengthier content, and can be very expensive even for something quite simple. Which paper is best for a notice will vary per area. For national newspapers, The Times or The Telegraph are the most common. There may also be publications connected to particular professions, for example The Church Times, which publish death notices. Obituaries, where a writer researches information about the person who has died and publishes those details for readers' interest, are usually written about people who have been prominent in some way, and are different to paid-for death notices.



# A Baby or Child's Funeral

Many people express the idea that the death of a baby or child is the worst thing that someone can experience, and it is certainly true that it feels against the natural order in a way that losing your parent or other people from an older or same generation might not. You may feel that the death of a younger person also means the loss of their potential and the hopes and dreams you had for them and their future.

There is no reason why a funeral for a baby or child can't be the same in scale as that of an adult, if that's what is wanted – like all funerals, there is no obligation to have anything you don't want. Some of your preferences might simply be based on how you feel about certain things – for example, you might not like the idea of a traditional hearse considering the smaller size of the coffin.

Our professional and compassionate team have experience of helping people bereaved of a child work out what is right for them, and will work with you at your pace to create the funeral service which is right for you, whatever your wishes might be. Your instinct may be to prefer something on a smaller scale, and we can help make this meaningful for you if this is your choice.

Many costs for the funerals of babies and children will be covered by the Children's Funeral Fund, which was introduced in the UK in 2019 to ensure that people bereaved of a child did not have to face the additional burden of paying for their funeral.

Freeman Brothers will claim from the Children's Funeral Fund on your behalf to reduce the administration that is required of you at this difficult time.

## On the Day

As part of the arrangement meeting, we will ask for your preferences as to **follow the hearse or meet at the service venue**, whether **limousines** are taking you or if you wish to make your own way. We will advise you of the times we will arrive at the address, if applicable, and ensure we have plenty of time to travel to the venue. Between the initial contact with us and the day of the funeral, we will give you the help you need to make decisions about how the day will look: what **music** you would like, whether there are **Orders of Service**, if there are **flowers or other articles for the coffin** and so on. We will take careful note of these and ensure our team who are with you on the day understand your requirements and are able to carry them out. For example, if your chosen venue has **curtains which can close** around the coffin, we will ensure that we understand whether you want this to happen or not.

You may feel you would like to be **seated in the venue first**, or you might decide you would like to **follow the coffin in**, or perhaps a mixture of the two with most attendees being seated and those closest following afterwards. It is also possible to provide family or friends to bear the coffin instead of our team; please let us know if you would like this and we will explain how this will work in the particular circumstances of the funeral you are arranging.

We will check all of the pertinent details with the staff at the service venue to ensure they also have a good understanding of what is intended to happen, as well as greeting your officiant and checking he or she is comfortable and has everything they need. We may double check details with you to ensure our understanding is clear and wishes haven't changed.

Your officiant will lead the attendees through the service which has been arranged and keep an eye on the time to ensure everything happens as it should. At the end of the service,

attendees will be invited to leave the venue; it may be that you have a preference for the order this happens in, and if so we will make sure this happens.

If your service is at a **crematorium**, you will usually leave the chapel via a different exit. Any flowers for the funeral will be displayed in a particular area; this is usually a good place to chat to other attendees afterwards. If your service is at a **place of worship or other venue**, you may have more time to stay in the venue and may not even need to leave at any given time. If there is an **attended committal**, whether burial or cremation, following the service, our team will make sure you are ready to leave for this in good time. You may wish to think about who you would like to attend this portion of the funeral. It's not unusual to restrict attendance at the committal, and you can always tell people where you will meet them on the rear of the Order of Service, or your officiant can announce this for you if requested.

If you have used our limousine(s) to take you to the service, then they are available for a return journey if you wish – please let us know in advance where you would like us to take you. Please note that our transport is not able to wait for you during a reception to take you home afterwards, as we will likely have another commitment.



# Afterwards

If the funeral was a cremation, after the service, there are several things that might happen, depending on the funeral and your requests. We will **return the ashes** to you if requested (they need to be given to the Applicant for the funeral unless someone else is nominated in writing to receive them), or begin the process of assisting you with the interment of them. If the funeral was a burial, or if the interment of ashes is in a place that permits this, you can start considering **a memorial** – whether that be a new headstone or tablet or an additional inscription on an existing one. Our sister company J.Gumbrill will be happy to assist you – and may well already be looking after the existing memorial if this was removed to enable this funeral to take place.

**Ashes can be interred** at any time following the funeral, but we suggest this is not arranged until after the service has taken place. The arrangements depend on the place of interment so please let us know your plans and we will assist you accordingly. In sites where a memorial is permitted, you will need to decide if you want this to be completed first, or if you wish for the interment to take place in the meantime and the plot to be unmarked for a short time until the memorial work is completed.

After the funeral, we will also send **our account** as per the instruction provided to us – this could be to the Applicant, a Solicitor or a bank or other institution. Our accounts are itemised in the same way as the Estimate given when the arrangements are made so you will be able to see any places where the costs have varied – although we will always ensure you are aware if any changes you wish to make to the planned arrangements result in significant cost changes. The balance of our account is due within one month of the date it is generated, and payment can be made by cash, card, cheque (payable to

Freeman Brothers) or BACS – our bank details are printed on your account.

We will also conclude **any other matters** relating to the funeral for you – for example, if you have requested a physical copy of the service webcast or visual tribute, we will let you know when we receive this from the media company. If you asked us to place a post-funeral notice in a newspaper we will do so. We will also keep the collection for any donations open for at least five weeks before contacting you to let you know the amount that has been raised and the names of donors.



# Being Bereaved, and Grieving

Bereavement can be a difficult and confusing time. There is some research that suggests our body's hormone balance changes when we are bereaved, which means that we are literally a different person. Bereavement is often bound up with other emotions – we might feel angry that someone has left us behind or relieved that someone experiencing a long illness is now out of pain, for example. Many people express feeling guilt, although this takes various forms.

It's important to remember that **everyone experiences each bereavement differently** – not only differently to other people, but we all have different experiences each time someone we know dies, depending on the circumstances and relationships concerned. For example, the cause of someone's death might resonate with us. The loss of a sibling might feel like a connection to our childhood is gone. A friend may have been our confidant and we might find it hard to imagine filling that space. Someone's death may happen very suddenly and we might have unresolved emotions or feel we didn't say what we needed to. What's important is not to compare ourselves to others, or think we 'should' be feeling any particular way. We can often be shocked at someone's death, which might leave us feeling nothing at all for a period, and it isn't unusual to feel sad when we remember that someone we care for has died.

Although there are no hard and fast rules, many people find that the funeral marks an end to what could be called the first stage of grieving. Some people will say that time heals, but more often than not it simply passes as we adjust to the reality of a new life without that person – whatever that looks like. Grief can be all-consuming, and **some people's grief journey will last longer than others**. If you feel your grief, or someone else's, is debilitating, or you are concerned about mental ill health as a result of grief, some



kind of therapy or counselling might be appropriate. Your GP may be able to refer you to a local practitioner or group. Charities can also help – some will assist you with grief more generally, while others are for people who have experienced a particular type of loss – perhaps by suicide or of a child. We have included some of these in our resources section.

### **Children experience bereavement in different ways to adults.**

Society teaches us that there are ways we might be expected to behave when someone dies, but children often haven't learned these yet. Very young children may not understand that they are never going to see someone again, and so may not seem to be sad that they have died. Advice from charities suggests using plain language with children to ensure they aren't confused, and avoid the use of terms like 'heaven' if you aren't religious. References to someone going to sleep can scare children and

it's often hard for us to understand what they might take from what we say, which is why being simple and honest is always the best approach. There are charities set up to assist bereaved children, and guide their families through helping them – we have listed some of these in our resources section. We also have a small supply of books which you might find useful – please ask.



# If Something Goes Wrong



At Freeman Brothers, we always strive to deal with everyone we meet with professionalism, courtesy and kindness, and we are committed to treating every deceased person in our care with dignity and respect. Freeman Brothers is a member of the **National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD)** and the **National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF)**, meaning our processes

and standards are subject to independent scrutiny. J.Gumbrill is a member of the **National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM)** and our masonry team have undertaken training which qualifies them for entry on the **Register of Qualified Memorial Fixers**, ensuring their work is in accordance with British Standard BS8415. Our embalming team members are fully trained and professionally qualified, and members of the **British Institute of Embalmers (BIE)**, ensuring they maintain an appropriate standard of knowledge and agree to abide by a Code of Ethics.

We set ourselves high standards and aim to meet them every time.

If we should fall short of these standards and you wish to make a complaint, please let us know, and we will provide you with the full details of our complaints policy. We promise to investigate your complaint thoroughly and learn lessons from it.

# Resources

## **Registration Services**

*You will need to contact the Registrar in the area where an expected death took place. For unexpected deaths, the Coroner's Officer will advise you where you need to register.*

**West Sussex:**            [westsussex.gov.uk/find-my-nearest/registration-office/](http://westsussex.gov.uk/find-my-nearest/registration-office/)  
01243 642122

**Surrey:**                    [surreycc.gov.uk/birth-death-and-ceremonies/register-offices](http://surreycc.gov.uk/birth-death-and-ceremonies/register-offices)  
0300 200 1002

**East Sussex:**            [eastsussex.gov.uk/registration](http://eastsussex.gov.uk/registration)  
0345 608 0198

**Brighton and Hove:** [brighton-hove.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages-civil-partnership-and-citizenship](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages-civil-partnership-and-citizenship)  
01273 292016

## **Coroner's Office**

*The Coroner's Office is where the Coroner's Officers, who investigate unexpected deaths on behalf of the Coroner, are based.*

**West Sussex,**            [coronersofficers@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:coronersofficers@westsussex.gov.uk)  
**Brighton and Hove:** 0330 222 5560

**East Sussex:**            [eastsussexcoroners@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:eastsussexcoroners@westsussex.gov.uk)  
0330 222 3599

**Surrey:**                    [enquiries@surreycoroner.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@surreycoroner.gov.uk)  
01483 404530

## **NAFD**

The National Association of Funeral Directors is the UK's largest funeral trade body

[nafd.org.uk/](http://nafd.org.uk/)

0121 711 1343

## **SAIF**

The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors upholds standards among independent funeral directors

[saif.org.uk/](http://saif.org.uk/)

0345 230 6777

## **NAMM**

The National Association of Memorial Masons give quality assurance for the memorial industry

[namm.org.uk/](http://namm.org.uk/)

01788 542264

## **BIE**

The British Institute of Embalmers offers membership to suitably qualified individuals, and obliges them to adhere to a code of ethics

[bioe.co.uk/](http://bioe.co.uk/)

01564 778991

## **Gov.uk 'When someone dies'**

A step-by-step guide from the UK Government on what needs to be done after someone dies

[gov.uk/when-someone-dies](http://gov.uk/when-someone-dies)

## **CMA Funerals Market Order**

In 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority obliged funeral directors and crematorium operators to publish certain information about pricing and services. More information on this can be found here:

[gov.uk/government/publications/funerals-market-investigation-order-2021](http://gov.uk/government/publications/funerals-market-investigation-order-2021)

## **Wills and Probate**

**This UK Government page explains Wills:**

[gov.uk/make-will](https://gov.uk/make-will)

**This UK Government page explains Probate and how to apply for it:** [gov.uk/applying-for-probate](https://gov.uk/applying-for-probate)

**This UK Government page helps to locate probate records or find a Will:** [probatesearch.service.gov.uk/](https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/)

## **Bereavement Support**

Here are some resources to assist at a time of bereavement in general, or after certain types of death:

**NHS Grief and Bereavement Advice:** [nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-bereavement-loss/](https://nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-bereavement-loss/)

**The Good Grief Trust – information for the bereaved, by the bereaved:** [thegoodgrieftrust.org/](https://thegoodgrieftrust.org/)

**MIND (The Mental Health Charity) bereavement advice:** [mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement/](https://mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement/)

**Jigsaw Southeast – children’s bereavement charity:** [jigsawsoutheast.org.uk/](https://jigsawsoutheast.org.uk/)

**Winston’s Wish – support for children bereaved of a parent or sibling:** [winstonswish.org/](https://winstonswish.org/)

**SANDS – the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity:** [sands.org.uk/](https://sands.org.uk/)

**SoBS – Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide:** [uksobs.com/](https://uksobs.com/)

**National Suicide Prevention Alliance:** [nspa.org.uk/](http://nspa.org.uk/)

**WAY – Widowed and Young:**  
[widowedandyoung.org.uk/](http://widowedandyoung.org.uk/)

**Coroner’s Courts Support Service – an independent voluntary organisation offering emotional support and practical help for those needing to attend an Inquest:**  
[coronerscourtsupportservice.org.uk/](http://coronerscourtsupportservice.org.uk/)

### *Other Charities*

*Resources to find charitable organisations*

**Gov.uk charity register:** [gov.uk/find-charity-information](http://gov.uk/find-charity-information)

**Find that charity organisation directory:** [findthatcharity.uk/](http://findthatcharity.uk/)







9 North Parade, Horsham  
01403 254590  
mail@freemanbrothers.co.uk

31 High Street, Billingshurst  
01403 785133  
mail@freemanbrothers.co.uk

Holly Lodge, 25 & 27 Brighton Road, Southgate, Crawley  
01293 540000  
hollylodge@freemanbrothers.co.uk

126 High Street, Hurstpierpoint  
01273 831497  
hurst@freemanbrothers.co.uk

**[www.freemanbrothers.co.uk](http://www.freemanbrothers.co.uk)**

