

Planning a funeral; your own or for another

My aim is to guide you through the maze of choices, sharing my knowledge and experience, dispelling misunderstandings and myths and empowering you to plan the most fitting funeral you can imagine for yourself, or for a loved one.

There are many choices to be made. Being well-informed can really help, and can save money too.

You may wish to allow your family to make all the choices. Or you may want to provide some guidelines, some suggestions for them, to support them in the organising when the time comes and they are lost in grief and bewilderment.

I offer face-to-face sessions. Let me guide and support you.

Also available on Facetime, Skype or phone.

Some areas for decision-making are:

Burial or cremation?

Which crematorium?

Which burial site?

Would you prefer a relaxed funeral, with no set time-limit?

Transport? - eg a hearse, a friend's car, a camper van, a particular type of favourite car, a horse-drawn carriage, a vintage bus, a motorbike trailer ...

A coffin or a shroud? Which style / design?

What will your body be dressed in?

Would you like anything special to you to be placed in the coffin or shroud? Or on top of the coffin, or beside your shrouded body, for the ceremony?

Is an 'eco' funeral important to you, with a low carbon footprint, and what are your options, if so?

How much would you like to spend - what is your budget?
How much involvement of a funeral director would you like?

And in the planning of the funeral ceremony itself:

Where would you like it to be held?

How would you like it to look? Aesthetics; colour, lighting...
Who would you like to lead it?

Are there people you would particularly like to be invited to participate e.g. to write a piece they might like to read, to read a poem, play an instrument or sing..?

Would you like some religious content, sacred ritual or none?

What might be your poetry and music choices? Would you like a period of silence for reflection?

Would you like the ceremony to follow the usual flow and structure, or to plan something different?

What is the meaning and purpose of the usual flow and structure, and what might be the effect of changing that?

We can discuss all these possibilities and more.

Would you like your words to be heard at your own funeral?

Does anyone know you as well as you know yourself?

If you think about your funeral, with everyone there waiting, ready to hear about you, your life, what was important to you..... What is it that you'd **really** like them to hear?

Can you identify the significant events in your life that you'd like them to hear about?

Are there personal messages for friends or family members you'd like them to hear after you've gone?

It's good to be heard.

How long is a face-to-face session?

I offer one or two sessions, each of up to two hours in length.

During the first hour, we would explore all the *practical* options for a funeral ceremony, including potential costs and creative possibilities.

If you opt for longer than one hour, then my suggestion would be that any remaining time is reflective: if you are planning your own funeral, I would ask you a series of questions that are designed to lead you through sharing any aspects of your life, and your words, that you may want to be shared at your ceremony.

How would this all happen?

Flexibility is important. We could meet at your home, or another venue of your choice.

Or we could speak on the phone. Or on Skype or FaceTime.

Prior to my first visit, we will have a brief, friendly introductory conversation on the telephone.

I will then send you some guidelines and questions you might like to consider before we meet.

If we take this path together, you will be under no obligation to use me as your celebrant at your funeral.

Will you receive anything in addition to the session?

You will receive, within 7 - 10 days, an electronic PDF copy (as well as a paper copy) of your personal document called, 'My Funeral Wishes,' for you to keep with your will.

You will also receive mp3 audio recordings of our whole conversation during the sessions, if you have given permission and requested this.

This may also include recordings of personal messages to friends or family members that you might like to make during the session. Or you may choose to add these later, in privacy and in your own time.

The recordings may then be used by your family or friends who are organising, and by whoever you may choose to write and lead, your funeral ceremony.

It may also be a comfort to your closest ones to be able to listen to your voice once you are no longer present. A gift to them in their time of loss.

How much will this all cost?

For the 1:1 sessions:

1 hour: £70

1-2 hours: £100

This fee covers my time, travel costs and your personal document, 'My Funeral Wishes.'

It would also include all the audio recordings, should you opt for these.

Could a typed transcript of all the recordings be available to purchase?

Yes of course, at an additional cost of £20 per hour of typing time.

As a general guide, transcribing 1 hour of recorded conversation = 2 hours of typing time.

I look forward to guiding and supporting you.