

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, Zoom 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?

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 that they might like to read, to read a poem, to play an instrument or to 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 we would explore practicalities in more detail. Plus, 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, on Skype, Zoom 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?

I offer 3 options, with different prices.

For all 3 options, I offer the same high quality attention to detail and a very personal approach, listening to what you would like and sharing information with you, so you are more aware of what is (and isn't) possible.

Options 2 & 3 include an audio recording 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.

The 3 options

Option 1: Session only, for one or two people

1 hour: £40 for session

1-2 hours: £75 for session

I would work with you, but I would not make any written notes.

For your records, it would be up to you to take notes and / or make an audio-recording for future reference.

Option 2: Session + audio-recording, for one or two people

1 hour: £50 for session

1-2 hours: £80 for session

I would work with you, and make an audio-recording for you to keep, for future reference.

I would email you the audio recording, using a website called 'We Transfer', which is simple to use. Or, if you would rather, I would give you the recording on a memory stick.

I would not make any written notes so, as a record, it would be up to you to take notes.

Option 3: Session + audio-recording + printed document

1 hour: £85 for one person

1-2 hours: £155 for one person

In addition to the audio-recording, you would receive, within 4 weeks, 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.

This fee covers my time with you, time spent transcribing and typing your personal document, 'My Funeral Wishes,' and it would also include the audio recording, should you opt for this.

I would welcome two people for the session, as always, but please be aware that if your funeral wishes differ from each other, and two separate bespoke documents are required, there will be an additional cost.

I look forward to guiding and supporting you.

Please note: there may be additional travel costs if outside a 15 mile radius of M16, Manchester.

Skype or phone options are always available.