



A monthly review of news and events from within the bereavement sector



COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY

The CMA has published its final report following its **Funerals Market Investigation**.

You can read more details on page six.

We are pleased to bring you our last news review of what has, undoubtedly, been one of the most challenging years for us all.

While we continue to face the difficulties that accompany our socially distanced world, in many areas we have seen individuals and organisations working more closely than ever before. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work.

We wish you a safe and happy Christmas.

Wendy Buchan
Acting Executive Officer & Secretary to
The Cremation Society

COVID-19 - UPDATE

Deceased Management Advisory Group



There have been updates on guidance for managing a funeral in both England and Wales and you can find the current guidance below, along with other relevant updates:

- 21.12.2020 **Scottish Government** confirms travel for funerals not impacted by new restrictions
- 19.12.2020 **Public Health England** issues amended funeral arrangement details for Tier 4 in England - attendance numbers at funerals remain at 30
- 14.12.2020 **Public Health England** issues updated 'Guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)'
- 10.12.2020 **Public Health England** and the **Department of Health & Social Care** issues updated 'COVID-19: guidance for arranging and attending a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic'
- 09.12.2020 **Public Health England** and the **Department of Health & Social Care** issues updated 'COVID-19: guidance for managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic'
- 07.12.2020 **Welsh Government** issues updated 'Guidance on funerals: COVID-19'
- 24.11.2020 **Scottish Government** announce temporary changes to the Death Certification Review Service

The guidance is being updated on a very regular basis so please do ensure you are following the latest guidance for your area.



NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

Plans to build a town's first crematorium have been revealed. **Westerleigh Group** has submitted proposals to **Canterbury City Council** to construct the building on a 14-acre plot off **Bullockstone Road, Herne Bay**. The plans include a 98-seat chapel, waiting room and crematory, while the rest of the site will be used for parking and converted into memorial gardens. CEO Roger Mclaughlan said: "The proposed crematorium would, for the first time, also provide services within a 30-minute cortege drive for at least 90,000 people. Not only will the new facility provide local communities with the same level of exceptional care and empathy as our existing sites in Barham and Charing, but it will also be provided at a significantly reduced travel time for many families." You can read more on this proposed development in the [Kent Online article](#).

Stourbridge Crematorium is set to reopen in a few weeks following a £2 million upgrade. The South Road crematorium has been closed since July for repairs and refurbishments to be carried out. Although the grounds have remained open to mourners throughout the work, the crematorium is set to re-open in mid-December. The upgrade work has included replacing two outdated cremators to enable them to accommodate larger coffins. Councillor Ian Kettle, Dudley Council's cabinet member responsible for crematoriums, said: "I'm pleased that we can re-open Stourbridge crematorium following these important upgrades. The work had to be done this year due to the age of the cremation facilities." The full story can be found on the [Stourbridge News website](#).

Civic bosses are being asked to back a £559,000 investment in **BCP Council's** bereavement services – which will include an extensive upgrade to the chapel at **Poole Crematorium**. Proposals setting out a five-year business plan for the authority's bereavement services will be considered at BCP Council's cabinet later this month. The report sets out a two-phased approach, with the overall aim of consolidating the service into a single crematorium model based at Bournemouth. However, initial investment is set to benefit Poole, with £419,000 earmarked for the chapel upgrade at that site, and to finance building modifications at Bournemouth Crematorium. You can read more on the [Bournemouth Echo website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

Councillors will decide on plans to potentially build three new crematoriums in different locations across **Doncaster**. Members of Doncaster Council's planning committee will decide on a new site off Armthorpe Lane in **Barnby Dun**, an area off South Green Lane, **Brodsworth** and a plot off Sheffield Road close to **Conisbrough**. Planning bosses say the current Rose Hill Crematorium, in Bessacarr at present has 'insufficient capacity'. But Doncaster Council planning officials are only recommending the Barnby Dun application is approved subject to conditions. The Barnby Dun application, submitted by Jamieson Hodgson, of **Memoria Limited**, also includes associated car park space, an access road, gardens of remembrance and an area for natural and traditional burials. You can read more details on the proposed developments, in the [Doncaster Free Press article](#).

Council chiefs plan to launch a new funeral service as a low-cost option for grieving families. **Newcastle Borough Council** is looking to team up with a local funeral director to provide the affordable service, due to concerns over increasing costs nationally. The borough council, as a burial authority, runs **Bradwell Crematorium** and seven other cemeteries, and charges for graves, interment and cremation. But it says that most of the costs of funerals relate to services provided by funeral directors. According to a council report, the aim will be to 'provide a simple, dignified end-to-end funeral service at a fixed cost', to borough residents. Find more information on this proposal on the [Stoke on Trent Live website](#).

Plans to set up a crematorium in **Turners Hill** have been rejected by Mid Sussex District Council. The outline application from **Hartmires Investments Ltd** asked permission for a single chapel crematorium, cremator and natural burial site plus 112 parking spaces, off Turners Hill Road. Members of the planning committee, though, agreed with planning officers that it should not be allowed. You can read more on the [Mid Sussex Times website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

Work to build **East Renfrewshire**'s first crematorium is underway. The multi-million pound project will see the new business take shape on 15 acres of greenspace in **Barrhead**, meaning mourners can attend funerals closer to home. Horizon Cremation, who are behind the development, had hoped to have the crematorium up and running by the end of this year. However, delays caused by coronavirus restrictions mean these plans have been pushed back. Jeremy Hamilton, director of Horizon Cremation said: "This development will make a huge difference to Barrhead families and the wider communities across East Renfrewshire by providing a dedicated, high-quality and inspiring crematorium facility." The new crematorium will be able to seat up to 100 people within the main ceremony hall, with a floor-to-ceiling feature window offering uninterrupted views across the surrounding countryside. You can read more on the [Barrhead News website](#).

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS

Joe FitzPatrick, Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing has appointed two **Inspectors of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors**. **Robert Swanson QPM** is appointed as Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors and **Professor Gordon Findlater** is appointed as Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors. Their appointments are effective immediately. Professor Findlater is currently the Inspector of Anatomy for Scotland and will continue in that role as well as becoming an Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors. Mr Swanson and Professor Findlater will be joined in 2021 by further inspectors who are yet to be appointed, and will contribute to the development of the Scottish funeral industry inspectorate. You can read the text of Mr FitzPatrick's letter making the announcement [here](#).

NEWS REVIEW

GOVERNMENT NEWS

The **Competition and Markets Authority** has published the final report on its in-depth **market investigation into funeral services**, confirming its remedies for the sector. The remedies include:

- an obligation for all funeral directors and crematorium operators to disclose prices in a manner that will help customers make more informed decisions;
- that information must be provided in advance of a customer committing to purchase a service so that people know the price they will be charged and the key terms of business – for example if a deposit is required;
- that customers should be made aware of any relevant business, financial and commercial interests of the funeral director, and that certain practices – such as payments which may incentivise hospitals, care homes or hospices to refer customers to a particular funeral director – will be prohibited;
- a recommendation to government to establish an independent inspection and registration regime to monitor the quality of funeral director services as a first step in the establishment of a broader regulatory regime for funeral services.

You can read the full report on the [CMA's Gov.uk webpage](#).



NATIONAL MEDICAL EXAMINER NEWS

Dr Alan Fletcher has released his latest **National Medical Examiner update** for December 2020. The update includes news on the medical examiners' annual conference; moving to a statutory medical examiner system; improved working with registrars; and implementation in Wales. You can [read the latest update here](#).



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Welters - interment and memorial specialists.

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