



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



All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement

Sir John Hayes MP, Chair of the APPG for Funerals and Bereavement, has paid tribute to people working in the funeral sector: “Among the pandemic’s tidal wave of grief across the country, those whose work is to provide a final send-off for those who loved and lost, while ensuring the safety of staff and mourners, have gone to extraordinary lengths to support bereaved families.”

You can read more on the APPG on page 7.

We reach the end of February with a new 'road map' for our journey out of lockdown. This appears to suggest that funeral restrictions will be in place until 21 June 2021. It remains to be seen what the effect of the easing of social restrictions and the resultant impact on the funeral sector, will be. We continue to work with Government representatives from across the UK, and through our membership of the Deceased Management Advisory Group, to tackle the inevitable issues that will arise from the lifting of restrictions.

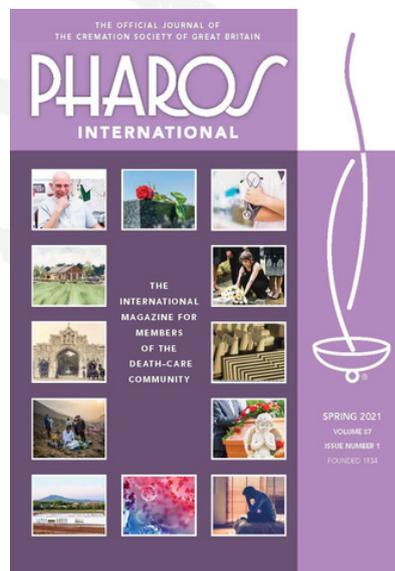
Wendy Buchan
Executive Officer & Secretary to
The Cremation Society

CREMATION SOCIETY NEWS

The Council of The Cremation Society are delighted to announce the recent appointment of Wendy Buchan as Executive Officer and Secretary to the Society. The Chair of Council, Professor Hilary J Grainger said, 'Having qualified as a private client lawyer and worked in the legal sector for over 20 years, Wendy will bring a wealth of valuable experience and a range of key skills to the role. We very much look forward to working with her in furthering the aims and objectives of the Society in the future.'



The Spring issue of our journal, **Pharos International**, will be published shortly. This issue includes articles covering bereavement during the pandemic, a reflection of the impact of COVID on cremator manufacturers, and how funeral restrictions have affected society. You can order your subscription or a single issue, via our [online order form](#).



NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

A government planning inspector has approved plans for a second crematorium to be built a mile from the site of its proposed **Sevenoaks** neighbour. **Bluebell Cemetery** in Badgers Mount was given the go-ahead after taking its application for extension of its chapel of rest, to appeal. In coming to her decision, planning inspector Rachael Pipkin said "it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition between different commercial interests". You can read more on this development in the [In Your Area article](#).

A planning application for a new crematorium and memorial garden in **Woodhatch** has been submitted by **Reigate & Banstead Borough Council**. A pre-application consultation was held in the autumn for feedback on the plans. Over 300 responses were received, and over 130 people attended an online question and answer event with the design team. This resulted in some changes to the proposed scheme including reviewing the hours of operation, reducing the site boundary to maintain access for recreation, and changing the building layout and construction materials to soften its appearance. To read more, visit the [Reigate & Banstead Borough Council website](#).

East Riding councillors have approved plans for a new £9 million crematorium in Preston. East Riding Council's planning committee approved local authority plans for the crematorium, off **Lelley Road**, by nine votes to two. Committee chair Cllr David Tucker said the application was always going to be a "contentious one". The committee heard from Council Project Development Manager Gail Cahill who said a number of changes had been made to the plans in light of concerns over traffic. She added council officers had spoken with funeral directors on helping them to plan routes that would avoid adding to congestion in the village. You can read more on the [Hull Live website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

Caerphilly county borough’s first crematorium has opened for use. Located in Pontllanfraith, it means residents of the borough can have a shorter journey than 30 minutes to reach a crematorium. **Sirhowy Valley Crematorium** is operated by **Westerleigh Group** who operate 35 sites across the UK. It joins three other sites in Wales to be run under the group. Kevin Davies, regional manager at Westerleigh Group, said: “We are delighted to have developed this new crematorium in Sirhowy Valley. We are pleased to be able to offer a facility that will significantly reduce this travel time, improving the experience for the bereaved and ensuring that their time can be fully focused on the funeral service itself.” For more details on the new crematorium, please visit the [South Wales Argus article](#).



Bradford Councillors have voted to approve plans for a new crematorium in **Bierley** – despite an MP’s calls for the decision to be deferred. But because the site, off Shetcliffe Lane, is on Green Belt, the Secretary of State could still halt the plans. The facility will replace Scholemoor Crematorium, which members were told was “past its sell by date.” A report by planning officers had urged the committee to approve the plans. It said that despite the development being “inappropriate” due to it being in the Green Belt, officers felt it met the “extraordinary circumstances” needed to push a Green Belt development ahead. You can read more on this development, on the [Examiner Live website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

CREMATORIA NEWS

A new crematorium planned for **Heaton** has overcome its last hurdle after the Secretary of State declined to "call in" the plans. The facility at Long Lane will replace the existing Nab Wood Crematorium, and plans for the multi million pound facility were approved by **Bradford Council's** Regulatory and Appeals Committee last year. It has now emerged that Secretary of State has contacted the Council to inform them that he would not be calling in the decision. The Council says it does not yet have a date for when work at the site would start. For more on this story, visit the [Telegraph and Argus website](#).

More money is needed to carry out plans to build a huge new crematorium in Nottinghamshire. In 2018, **Rushcliffe Borough Council's** cabinet approved the principle of a new crematorium in Stragglethorpe, near **Cotgrave** to better serve residents. Once complete, it is expected the crematorium could deal with 1,000 cremations a year. A sum of £6.5 million was included in the Council's capital programme to purchase the site opposite The Shepherd's Stonehouse pub and develop a crematorium. But following the appointment of design team, Ridge and Partners, the estimated cost plan was found to be greater than the budget previously agreed. A report has now been put together to outline the reasons why, the impact, and the request to approve a further £2 million. For more details on this development, please visit the [Nottingham Post article](#).

Families who have memorials at crematoria run by the **Westerleigh Group** are being offered an extra year free of charge. The goodwill gesture recognises the fact that restrictions placed on people because of the COVID-19 pandemic have meant people have been unable to visit the memorials to their loved ones for many months. Roger Mclaughlan, Chief Executive Officer of the Westerleigh Group, said: "Through providing an additional year to the length of existing memorial dedications at our crematorium, we are aiming to extend the precious opportunity of remembering a loved one." You can read more on the [Westerleigh Group website](#).

NEWS REVIEW

GOVERNMENT NEWS

The Department of Health & Social Care has issued updated 'guidance on the prioritisation of vaccination for 'funeral operatives', in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. The guidance covers 'the driving of private ambulances; funeral direction; preparing the deceased and embalming in a hospital-based mortuary' as functions that represent potential exposure to COVID-19 infection. You can [read the guidance here](#).

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS

In 2019 the Burial and Cremation Team at the Scottish Government carried out a consultation on the draft **Funeral Director: Code of Practice**. The Analysis Report of this consultation has now been published and can be read on the [Scottish Government website](#).



NATIONAL MEDICAL EXAMINER NEWS

Dr Alan Fletcher has issued an update on the national medical examiner scheme. It includes news of the 'Health and Care White Paper' which highlights plans to bring forward measures that contribute to improved quality and safety in the NHS, including the introduction of a statutory medical examiner system. It is anticipated that the non-statutory medical examiner system will continue throughout the 2021/22 financial year whilst parliamentary procedure is followed. You can read [Dr Fletcher's update here](#).



National Medical Examiner update

February 2021

Welcome

I am delighted the government published the White Paper earlier this month, including measures to put medical examiners on a statutory footing. The Royal College of Pathologists also shared their success with the 1000th medical examiner trained. You can read more about these important milestones below.

In my October 2020 bulletin, I mentioned my plan to publish a series of brief good practice papers for medical examiners, to support medical examiners and medical examiner officers in working more effectively with colleagues and partners. The Royal College of Pathologists recently published the first of these, which considers [how medical examiners can support people of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage and their relatives](#). I am very grateful to the college, and to Dr Habib Naqvi MBE, the Director of NHS Race and Health Observatory, who with other colleagues helped to shape this document. I plan to publish papers exploring other relevant issues in coming weeks and months.

We now have medical examiner offices in almost all acute trusts in England, and in all areas of Wales the medical examiner service continues to make excellent progress. I am delighted to welcome Rajiv Prinja to the national medical examiner team in the role of finance analyst for England. I am encouraged that despite pressures, the overwhelming majority of medical examiner offices in England have successfully submitted Q3 data. Together with information from the medical examiner service in Wales, this will provide more comprehensive information about medical examiner activity in both nations.

Dr Alan Fletcher, National Medical Examiner

NEWS REVIEW

APPG FOR FUNERALS AND BEREAVEMENT NEWS

The Cremation Society has joined the **All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement** and will use this forum as an opportunity to represent the cremation sector. The APPG aims to provide a first port of call for anyone looking for advice, information, or assistance from any representative organisation of the funeral sector. Sir John Hayes MP, Chair of the APPG, recently raised issues facing the funeral and death care sector, during a Parliamentary debate on establishing a 'bereavement standard'. You can read details of Sir John's contribution and other news on the [APPG website](#).



SECTOR NEWS

Autopsies determining a person's cause of death could take place digitally in Kent. **Kent County Council** (KCC), who run the local coroners service, seeks to invest £3 million into the creation of a 600 square metre digital autopsy facility in Aylesford. The site would be a base to carry out virtual post-mortems. On the virtual plans, a KCC spokesman said: "Kent's digital autopsy service will mean a significantly reduced number of invasive post mortems and quicker return of the deceased to their families for cremation or burial." The council is hoping to work with iGene to deliver the work, but no final decision will be made until a contract has been tendered. For more details, please read the [Kent Live article](#).



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The **CDS Group** offer our clients a complete solution of in-house environmental, design and planning services covering Cemeteries and Crematoria, Parks and Leisure, and Environmental Solutions



The Columbaria Company - specialists in the production of personalised memorial artwork and after cremation memorials.



F G Marshall supplied the very first Book of Remembrance to Woking Crematorium in 1938. To this day technology still hasn't replaced the precision, skill and touch of the human hand.

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Fordingbridge - designers, manufacturers and installers of innovative canopies and walkways.



Greenbridge Designs - from individual memorials to complete garden schemes, Greenbridge produce a range of memorials that will seamlessly fit into existing schemes as well as some that will create a stunning alternative.



IFZW is an established manufacturer of cremator and emission filter systems.



Matthews Environmental Solutions - a manufacturer of combustion technology, including waste incineration, human and animal cremation and emission abatement systems. They are a part of the Matthews Family of Companies (MATW).



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Obitus - provider of bereavement technology services, delivering music, webcast and tributes for families, funeral directors and leading funeral venues throughout the UK.



OrthoMetals - a family owned and operated business, recycling metals remaining after cremation.



PlotBox is an international death care management solution that facilitates cemeteries and crematoria in operating to world-class standards through integrated software and georectified mapping modules.



Treske - one of the UK's leading makers and suppliers of bespoke crematorium furniture and soft furnishings.



Welters - interment and memorial specialists.

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