



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement

## **All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement Virtual Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 2pm**

### **Attendees**

Sir John Hayes MP, Heather Wheeler MP, Dr Matthew Offord MP, Lord de Mauley, Fleur Anderson MP, Rachel Bradburne (DMAG, NAFD), Terry Tennens (DMAG, SAIF), Alun Tucker (DMAG, FFMA), Richard Barradell (DMAG, APPC), Wendy Buchan (DMAG, The Cremation Society), Julie Dunk (DMAG, ICCM), Brendan Day (DMAG, FBCA), Colin Rickman (DMAG, The Cremation Society), Jennifer Bryant-Pearson (JBP), Marc Pooler (JBP), Charlie Souster (JBP)

### **Apologies**

Jon Levett (DMAG, NAFD)

### **Update on new Members and Officers**

Sir John Hayes updated the Group on new Members and Officers. The following were elected as Vice-Chairs of the APPG: Baroness Garden of Frognal, Heather Wheeler, Rosie Cooper, Gavin Robinson, Robert Goodwill.

The following were elected as Officers of the APPG: Mark Pawsey, Baroness Ludford, Dame Diana Johnson, Fleur Anderson.

Sir David Amess stood down as an Officer of the APPG.

### **Responses to letters sent to Police and Crime Commissioners**

Letters from Sir John Hayes MP have been sent to all 43 Police and Crime Commissioners. The majority of these responses have been positive, offering to work with the sector to ensure that no funeral director and/or venue owner is held unfairly liable for mourner breaches of Covid-19 regulations.

Terry Tennens updated the Group on discussions he has had with Jon Levett and police forces on this issue. There seem to be persistent offenders that continually break Covid-19 regulations pertaining to attendance. Jon and Terry are meeting with West Yorkshire police on Friday.

Chair: Sir John Hayes

Vice Chairs: Robert Goodwill MP, Rosie Cooper MP, Gavin Robinson MP, Heather Wheeler MP and Baroness Garden of Frognal

Officers: Dame Diana Johnson MP, Mark Pawsey MP, Fleur Anderson MP and Baroness Ludford

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## **Cross-departmental working group update**

Two different options were discussed, both of which would provide better representation in government for the sector. Firstly, each Department should include within it a minister directly responsible for the sector within their portfolio. Secondly, it was discussed that one cabinet minister could have it within their portfolio.

Brendan Day emphasised the importance of having a point of contact to raise an issue with.

Richard Barradell raised the need for a more co-ordinated approach from government and major agencies should a third wave of Covid-19 result in restrictions.

## **Engagement with devolved administrations**

JBP have begun engaging with devolved administrations on behalf of the APPG. This is to ensure cross party groups in devolved administrations can work more effectively with the APPG going forward.

## **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) consultation discussion**

Rachel Bradburne informed the Group of the scope and timescale of the FCA's consultation into prepaid funeral plans. This consultation opened on March 2 2021 and will remain open until April 13. Both the NAFD and SAIF will be submitting a response to this consultation, along with individual firms within these organisations.

Fleur Anderson MP questioned Rachel on price comparison sites within the sector and asked for a definition of the term 'appointed representative'.

Rachel Bradburne responded that often funeral plans are sold on price comparison website, similar to other industries. However, this needs to be more transparent and beneficial to the consumer. Furthermore, firms must have an appointed representative to sell funeral plans. Terry Tennens added that any future rules must take into account smaller firms, as the approved representative model can be very intrusive to these businesses.

## **Parliamentary and media update**

Marc Pooler informed the meeting that the new APPG Twitter account continues to grow and encouraged members to interact with tweets to increase traffic and engagements.

Sir John Hayes has submitted two written Parliamentary questions on behalf of the Group. The subject of these has been the potential cross-Departmental working group.

Rosie Cooper has written and submitted an article to House Magazine which has been published, whilst an article by Robert Goodwill has been submitted but is yet to be published.

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and Baroness Garden of Frognal

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## **Any other business**

Fleur Anderson raised two issues that she would like to be discussed on the next agenda. These are funeral poverty and child bereavement. It was agreed that these will form part of the agenda for the next meeting.

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