



House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

## All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement

### Attendees

Sir John Hayes MP (Chair), Baroness Garden, Robert Goodwill MP, Shannon from the office of Rosie Cooper MP, Paul from the office of Dr Lisa Cameron MP, Rachel Bradburne (NAFD), Jon Levett (DMAG, NAFD), Teddy Prout (Humanists UK), Alun Tucker (DMAG, FFMA), Paul Allcock (DMAG, SAIF), Richard Barradell (DMAG, APPC), Nigel Ellway, Terry Tenens (DMAG, SAIF), Julie Dunk (DMAG, The Cremation Society), Brendan Day (DMAG, FBCA), Debbie Smith (Representing Mark Isherwood MS), Jennifer Bryant-Pearson (JBP), Charlie Souster (JBP), Benedict Croft (JBP)

### Apologies

Mark Pawsey MP, Dame Diana Johnson MP, Heather Wheeler MP, Baroness Ludford, Bob Blackman MP, Sir Edward Leigh MP, Carolyn Harris MP, Baroness McIntosh of Pickering, Grahame Morris MP, Stephen Timms MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Emma Lewell-Buck MP, Bishop of Coventry, Bishop of Portsmouth, Lord Griffiths, Fleur Anderson MP, Christian Wakeford MP, Hannah Bardell MP, Lord De Mauley, Tom Tugenhat MP, Peter Dowd MP

### New member update

Jennifer Bryant-Pearson informed the Group that new members had joined the APPG. They are Martyn Day MP, Patricia Gibson MP, Dr. Lisa Cameron MP, John McNally MP, Jamie Stone MP and Lord Griffiths of Burry Port.

### CMA report and directives update

Jon Levett noted that following publication of CMA final report last year, this month the order was published, which implements several the actions as decided by the CMA. The order places new legal requirements on Funeral Directors and Crematoria, particularly around pricing and business information. One of the key things it does is require Funeral Directors and crematoria to put their prices online.

Chair: Sir John Hayes

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

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

Registered Contact: Sir John Hayes MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: [hayesj@parliament.uk](mailto:hayesj@parliament.uk) Tel: 020 7219 1389

Website: <https://www.appgfunerals.co.uk/> Twitter: @APPGFB

Jon explained that there is still some confusion around how to comply and that some will find it difficult to comply with the deadlines. He explained that the NAFD are working hard with the CMA to try and clarify some points. Funeral Directors and crematoria have 3 months to comply to the new regulations (16<sup>th</sup> Sept).

Terry Tennens explained that this is a cultural change for the sector and that it is going to be difficult for members to comply, especially with confusing regulations. Terry is hoping for a review of some of the conflicting points.

Robert Goodwill MP explained how customers see price as a deciding factor.

Jon Levett highlighted his frustrations at the CMAs lack of engagement with the sector.

### **Child Bereavement Roundtable next steps**

Following the last meeting, a letter was agreed that would go from the group to educational leads.

Fleur Anderson MP is still chasing a parliamentary debate and planning on submitting the debate before the summer recess.

### **Independent Funeral Standards Organisation**

Jon Levett told the meeting that the CMA final report calls for an inspection body to be established within the sector, and as such, the Independent Funeral Standards Organisation is to be set up, which will be a voluntary regulator. The Ministry of Justice believed that now was not the time to establish a statutory scheme but that they would work with the sector to put in place some quality standards. The Rt Hon. David Heath is to be chair of board. He noted that the NAFD complaints process to be transferred over to IFSO once it has been established.

### **Annual Report**

Charlie Souster informed the meeting that there is an internal deadline of 15 July for the first draft of report to be circulated. This allows members to feed back any comments before publication.

### **Bereavement Guide**

The final version has been circulated and will be sent out to all parliamentarians to be used as a resource for constituent enquiries surrounding bereavement.

### **Cross departmental working group**

Sir John to continue trying to establish group and take forward.

### **The reuse of grave sites**

Chair: Sir John Hayes

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

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

Registered Contact: Sir John Hayes MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: [hayesj@parliament.uk](mailto:hayesj@parliament.uk) Tel: 020 7219 1389

Website: <https://www.appgfunerals.co.uk/> Twitter: @APPGFB

Baroness Garden mentions the recent Highgate cemetery private members bill and highlights the lack of suitable grave sites.

Julie Dunk presented to the meeting that this has been a crisis for 20 years and cemeteries across the UK are running out of space. The UK is currently reliant on the Victorian provision of burial sites and there has been no programme of building since then. As full cemeteries offer no income, it is therefore left to local authorities to maintain them. It is also hard to find land suitable for new cemeteries to be built, particularly in replace of alternative land usages such as new homes. The logical solution would be for graves to be reused, subject to ethical safeguards. Current legislation allows for graves to be reused in Greater London in certain situations but not in the rest of the UK. These can happen in the UK after 75 years and with the consent of the family of the existing grave site.

Julie Dunk mentioned a variety of different methods used to alleviate this issue, such as the 'lift and deepen' method. Julie adds that all ethical factors are taken into consideration when re-using graves. She goes on to explain that burial must remain an affordable local option in the future.

Jennifer Bryant-Pearson tabled the idea of using statutory instrument to find a political solution to this issue.

Sir John highlighted the lack of space and how London has special requirements to deal with this issue. He went on to mention amending Section 25 1857 Burial Act for the reuse of public and private graves to ensure that graves can be reused in a properly agreed framework. The framework is critical and must satisfy all interested parties. On top of this, it is also important to cancel exclusive rights to burial, rights which have not been used for a long period of time.

Sir John proposed some fact-finding discussions and that he should approach the Church on behalf of the APPG to test the water, whilst simultaneously approaching ministers to see if there is interest in solving this issue and to explore legislative solutions.

*Sir John Hayes MP ended the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.*

Chair: Sir John Hayes

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

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

Registered Contact: Sir John Hayes MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: [hayesj@parliament.uk](mailto:hayesj@parliament.uk) Tel: 020 7219 1389

Website: <https://www.appgfunerals.co.uk/> Twitter: @APPGFB