



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA  
All-Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement

### Attendees

Sir John Hayes MP (Chair), Lord de Mauley, Stephen Timms MP, Tom Tugendhat MP (Connor Dobbs), Philip Dunne MP, Baroness Garden of Frognal, Baroness Finlay (Joshua Grew), Mark Pawsey MP, Lord Taylor of Warwick, Rachel Bradburne (NAFD), Alun Tucker (FFMA), Julie Dunk (ICCM), Richard Barradell (APCC), Brendan Day (FBCA), Terry Tennens (SAIF), Wendy Buchan (Cremation Society), Paul Allcock (SAIF), Mohamed Omer MBE (Gardens of Peace), Alison Scowan (Co-Op), Jade Wilcox (Wilcox Limousines), Jennifer Bryant-Pearson (JBP), Kieran Bergholcs (JBP),

### Apologies

Christian Wakeford MP, Peter Dowd MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Wes Streeting MP, Aspana Begum MP, Sir Edward Leigh MP, Bob Blackman MP, Wayne David MP, Paul Maynard MP, Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

### Introductions

Sir Robert Goodwill was congratulated on his recent knighthood. New members Jim Shannon MP and Phillip Dunne MP were welcomed to the APPG.

### Update on Free Testing scheme for critical workers

Rachel Bradburne noted that the sector had been under significant pressure due to Covid-19. Julie Dunk recognised similar pressures on the crematoria side of the sector. She highlighted the strain on teams due to Covid-19 and noted the risk that a whole team might need to isolate. Terry Tenens explained that positive tests cause significant disruption to small independent businesses.

Richard Baradell echoed these concerns and stated that funeral sector workers should be critical workers. The issue was how to get this status recognised. Mohamed Omer agreed, and noted that workers played a critical role throughout the pandemic and this deserved recognition.

Lord Taylor enquired about the definition of a critical worker and how flexible this category might be. Rachel Bradburne explained that the term is fluid and noted that the sector needs classification as a category two responder.

**ACTION:** It was agreed that the APPG would take this forward with Government and Sir John Hayes would be meeting with Tom Pursglove MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice, to discuss this matter.

Chair: Sir John Hayes

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

## 2022 Covid Inquiry

The Government will be launching its 2022 Covid Inquiry in the spring. The Inquiry will play a key role in examining the UK's pandemic response and ensuring that we learn the right lessons for the future.

Mark Pawsey MP asked about the experiences of sector workers during the pandemic and what changes to operations they believe should be permanent. He asked what safeguards could be included in the inquiry.

Mohamed Omer OBE responded that the sector must be adequately funded in future. He praised the work of those in hospitals and the funeral sector who have played a vital new role when families have been restricted from visiting loved ones.

Paul Allcock highlighted the move to electronic registration processes during the pandemic and proposed this be continued. He welcomed the founding of DMAG and wished for cooperation with government departments to continue.

Rachel Bradburne echoed Paul's comments. Cooperation with parliament had been well-received across the sector. She regretted that the registration of deaths over telephone would soon be wound back given the Coronavirus Act provisions are soon to be terminated. Another concern was that direct cremation might only be used by some as they could not afford a funeral service. Richard Barradell noted we do not yet know whether there has been a 'trend' towards direct cremations. He will share the evidence from his work with the Group in due course.

Alison Scowen also praised new opportunities to work with the government as a sector. She highlighted concerns around workforce planning. The sector must ensure there was a sufficient supply of skilled workers to meet demands in the future, this would require an improvement to current schemes of training and apprenticeships.

Julie Dunk emphasised that the sector coped over the pandemic but this was under enormous strain. This would not be unsustainable moving forward. She noted that better implementation of restrictions would be needed in future as there was currently too much pressure on funeral workers for their enforcement. Baroness Garden conveyed her concern for the mental health for those working in the sector in recognition of their hard work in challenging circumstances.

Brendan Day and Terry Tevens both noted the need for centralised guidance from the Cabinet Office to coordinate the work done across regions. Brendan Day pointed out that the publication of government guidance must not be delayed and cited the speed of guidance in Wales and Scotland compared to England.

Lord De Mauley echoed comments on the usefulness of DMAG. He expressed concerns that direct cremations can sometimes not allow for full processes of grief and emphasised that though the sector survived it was exhausted.

**ACTION:** The secretariat noted that the intention was for DMAG members to submit evidence to the Covid Inquiry, and the APPG will work with DMAG to conduct an evidence session.

Chair: Sir John Hayes

Vice Chairs: Sir Robert Goodwill MP, Rosie Cooper MP, Gavin Robinson 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

## **Funeral Vehicles**

Sir John Hayes MP introduced Alun Tucker and Jade Wilcox to speak about electric vehicles and IPA type approval.

Jade Wilcox presented key issues concerning the manufacture and cost of funeral vehicles. She highlighted the risks facing the industry due to the electrification of vehicles, the type approval system, and chip shortages. These issues could cause a shortage of vehicles.

Sir John Hayes noted the effect of vehicle purchase on overall funeral costs. This was an important issue that impacted consumers. Jade Wilcox explained that this was a complex issue, and only a finite number of vehicles could be sold in the United Kingdom, so costs could not be easily reduced.

**ACTION:** The secretariat will discuss next steps with Alun Tucker and Jade Wilcox and report back to the APPG.

## **Muslim Burials and End of Life**

Sir John Hayes introduced Mohamed Omer OBE to present on the experiences of the Muslim community during the pandemic and educate the APPG on Muslim burial requirements.

Mohamed Emer explained that Muslim graves were identical, and one cannot stand on another's grave according to Islamic faith. These matters reflected a firm belief in equality. He highlighted three further issues for the Muslim community, which included the lack of burial space, the need for out of hours services, and provision of post-mortem services.

The Chair, Sir John Hayes MP thanked Mohamed for his presentation. A note of thanks was also sent from Stephen Timms MP and Lord de Mauley.

**ACTION:** The secretariat noted that the presentation would be distributed alongside the minutes for the meeting.

## **FCA regulation**

Rachel Bradburne explained that she would circulate a brief to DMAG members in the next week with an update on FCA regulation. Alison Scowen added that the standards of training were important and needed to be met.

**ACTION:** The FCA and Treasury would be made aware of the pressures facing funeral directors as they work at pace to meet the FCA's requirements.

*Sir John Hayes MP closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.*

Chair: Sir John Hayes

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