



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

Attendees

Sir John Hayes MP (Chair), Baroness Garden of Frognall, Lord Taylor of Warwick, Maf Haddow (Simon Fell MP), Alun Tucker (FFMA), Richard Barradell (APCC), Brendan Day (FBCA), Terry Tennens (SAIF), Paul Allcock (SAIF), Wendy Buchan (Cremation Society), Jon Levitt (NAFD) Steven Wibberley (Cruse Bereavement Care), Jennifer Bryant-Pearson (JBP), Kieran Bergholcs (JBP)

Apologies

Dr Matthew Offord MP, Stephen Timms MP, Sir Edward Leigh MP, Bob Blackman MP, Julie Marson MP, Lord Rennard, Paul Maynard MP, Layla Moran MP, Emma Lewell Buck MP, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Baroness McIntosh of Pickering, Gavin Robinson MP, Dame Diana Johnson MP, Sir Robert Goodwill MP

Introductions

Sir John Hayes MP opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Meeting with John Glen MP

Sir John Hayes MP reported back to the group on his meeting with John Glen MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, regarding Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulation. Sir John noted that it was a very positive meeting and the Minister was receptive to our views. Sir John emphasised the need to balance consumer protection while not skewing the market in favour of larger providers. The Minister committed to discuss the matter further with the FCA.

Terry Tennens added that it had been a very useful meeting. John Glen seemed to be aware of the key concerns of the sector.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff stated that this was a very important issue as funeral plans provide assurances to consumers who are worried about funeral costs for their families.

Re-use of Graves update

Sir John Hayes MP told the group of the APPG activity on the reuse of graves. He and Sir Robert Goodwill had written to all Members of Parliament and Sir John Hayes had submitted PQs on the

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matter. Sir John Hayes added that he will continue to monitor opportunities for a Westminster Hall debate on the reuse of graves.

Civil Contingency Act

Jon Levitt noted that during the pandemic the funeral and deathcare sector needed to argue for inclusion as priority workers and in Local Resilience Forums. The funeral and deathcare sector do not receive recognition under the Civil Contingency Act and the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG) is calling for sector workers to be designated as Category 2 responders. Sir John Hayes MP agreed on the need to push for inclusion of the sector within the current review of the Civil Contingency Act.

Richard Barradell noted that management from central government is necessary in a crisis scenario.

Lord Taylor stated that the need for reliable data is important particularly in the event of emergencies. He added that there is a need to remain attentive to the needs of minority groups with special burial requirements such as the Muslim and Afro-Caribbean community.

Steven Wibberley highlighted that experience with Local Resilience Forums varied significantly across Local Authorities. Forums needed to be encouraged to involve death management and bereavement support organisations in their work. Sir John Hayes suggested that he write to the Cabinet Office on the need for the funeral sector's inclusion as Category 2 responders.

Actions: Sir John Hayes to write to the Cabinet Office to highlight the need to include the funeral sector as Category 2 responders.

Covid 19 Inquiry response

Sir John Hayes noted that the APPG plans to contribute to the Covid 19 Inquiry open consultation on the Terms of Reference. The group will recommend that the funeral and deathcare sector be explicitly included in the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry.

Steven Wibberley added that engagement was needed outside of the inquiry to seek immediate action on Local Resilience Forums. Sir John Hayes proposed that he write a letter to Michael Gove on this issue.

Actions:

- APPG to contribute to the Covid 19 Inquiry open consultation on the Inquiry Terms of Reference.
- Sir John Hayes to write a letter to Michael Gove on the Covid 19 Inquiry

Medical Examiner Scheme – Richard Barradell

Richard Barradell explained that the Department for Health and Social Care and Ministry of Justice intended to fully roll out the Medical Examiners' system this summer. Despite concerns from the

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sector around the amount of work that must be completed prior to the full introduction of the system, the sector has still not received full details or a timetable from central government.

Richard Baradell noted that a rough estimate would suggest at least six months is required for the sector to prepare for the introduction of the system in order for staff to be fully trained, revised paperwork to be circulated, and to ensure that the final specification is fully workable.

Paul Allcock added that this had been an issue for decades and believes the government needs to provide more clarity and training in relation to the forthcoming reforms.

Sir John Hayes MP committed to explore actions once he had received a full brief from Richard Barradell after the meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate note from Richard Barradell with view to determining further actions.

AoB

Sir John Hayes MP stated that the April meeting will be on Tuesday 26 April (online). Sir John noted that the May meeting will be held in person in the House of Commons. He welcomed the opportunity to see DMAG members and APPG supporters in-person. The meeting will focus on the environment and will be attended by DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow.

With no other business, Sir John Hayes closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

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