



St. Helens Council

Bereavement Services

Guide to Personalised Cremations in St Helens

Introduction

Many families know little about funerals having been touched for the first time by their loss, they are not clear as to whether they intend to use a funeral director or make arrangements themselves. Other requests are about making funerals less formal and more of a celebration of the life of the deceased, or about being more natural and green.

In response to these requests, the enclosed notes set out the routine followed by a funeral director using our services, to which matters of interest to all the bereaved are added. This, it is hoped will help the bereaved understand their rights and complete as little or as much of the funeral arrangements as they wish, even to carrying out the funeral without a funeral director.

The completion of these notes is intended to widen choice and help the bereaved and others obtain a meaningful funeral. St Helens Council does not wish to promote any particular type of arrangement or choice and it is hoped that these notes do not imply this. St Helens Bereavement Services does not provide a funeral directing service and cannot collect bodies and convey them to the cemeteries/crematorium that they operate.

Choosing a Funeral Director

Funerals can be arranged from anywhere in the country without difficulty, although the distance can increase costs. If you use a funeral director, you can choose one from your locality or alternatively from elsewhere. Some funeral directors are members of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) and have a Code of Practice. Under this code, they should offer you a price list at your request.

Our Location

The Bereavement Services office is based within the crematorium building and you can make your funeral arrangements there either by calling in or by telephone, the address and telephone number is as follows:

St Helens Cemetery/Crematorium
Rainford Road
St Helens
Merseyside
WA10 6DF
Tel: 01744 677406/7

Provisional Booking of the Funeral

You can contact us by telephone on the above number during office hours:
Monday - Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm.

Please state that you require a cremation booking. This provisional booking ensures that a day and time is reserved for your funeral arrangements and so all other aspects can now be organised.

You can arrange a service Monday to Friday at the following times:

9.00am - 4.00pm - Services are booked every half an hour (on the hour and the half hour)

Saturday funerals can be accommodated when necessary at an additional cost.

A total of 30 minutes is reserved for each service. If you require more time, a double booking can be arranged (there is an extra charge), and you must inform the office at the time of the booking. The 30 minutes allows for the cortege to arrive, enter the Chapel have a service and then exit the Chapel.

Sufficient time must be allowed from booking to the day of the funeral to obtain the necessary medical forms. Usually three days or more is sufficient. If the death is reported to the Coroner or occurs during a bank holiday, then more time will be required.

The information you will need to give over the telephone is as follows:

1. Date and time of funeral
2. Name of deceased
3. Your name and telephone number, if you are making arrangements yourself
4. Full Service or Committal (this will be explained later in the notes)

The above is the minimum required to book your provisional booking, however, if you have the following details you may give these to the Funeral Coordinator who is taking your information:

5. Music (options are explained later in the notes)
6. Final placement of cremated remains (choices are explained later in the notes)

These details will be repeated back to you to ensure they are correct.

Once the provisional booking is made a series of arrangements must be made as soon as possible.

Statutory Cremation Forms

A cremation cannot take place if the required statutory forms are not prepared in time or are incorrect for the Medical Referee to allow cremation.

All the statutory forms can be collected from our office or sent to you by post. The forms are listed below:

1) Confirmation of telephone booking - (white Instruction for Cremation form)

This form confirms the information you have given over the telephone and confirms any details missing from your telephone booking. It also requires you to sign the form to confirm your instructions as to the final disposal of the cremated remains after the funeral has taken place.

2) Cremation Form 1 - Application for Cremation of the body of a person who has died.

This form must be completed by the nearest surviving relative or executor. If not, a reason why someone else has applied must be given to the satisfaction of the Medical Referee. The details required are quite straightforward and should not pose any difficulties to you.

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| 3) Form 4 | Certificate of Medical Attendant |
| Form 5 | Confirmatory Medical Certificate |
| Form 10 | Authority to Cremate |

You must notify the deceased's doctor, who attended their last illness and tell them you are arranging a cremation. Whether this doctor is the GP or a hospital doctor, they will obtain these forms for you and complete them.

The completed forms 4 & 5 will cost approximately £147.00 (£73.50 per doctor's form - fees as of November 2010). On some occasions the Doctor will only complete form 4 if he/she knows the result of a post mortem. This will reduce the cost by half. Forms 4 & 5 are printed by the Council as a booklet with form 10 on the back page. The Medical Referee, when satisfied that the forms submitted are completed properly, will complete form 10 "Authority to Cremate".

If the death has been reported to the Coroner, he or she may issue a certificate Form 6 (Certificate of Coroner) which takes the place of forms 4 & 5. Form 6 usually necessitates a post mortem or an inquest. This should not alarm you, as reporting the death in this way is quite usual. If form 6 is issued by the Coroner this is free of charge and because forms 4 & 5 are not requested, then the doctors will not require payment. The Coroner's office will guide you and keep you informed of progress.

4) Registrar's Certificate

You will need to register the death at the Births, Deaths and Marriages in the district where the deceased died. If the Coroner is involved then you will not be

required to register the death at the Registrar's office, but you will still be required to attend before the day of the funeral to record the details of death, once the Coroner has released the paperwork to the Registrar of Births & Deaths.

The Registrar, if he is registering the death will issue a Certificate for Cremation (called the green disposal), which you should pass to us as soon as possible.

This will complete the legal requirements, and you must now consider organising the funeral.

Choosing the Container or Coffin

With cremation a coffin is essential to allow us to place the body into the cremator. The base of the coffin must be smooth and hard to enable it to be placed onto the rollers and into the cremator safely.

Options for your consideration:

- 1) You can purchase a coffin from a funeral director. All standard coffins are made of chipboard with approved veneers and plastics for cremation purposes.
- 2) You can construct your own coffin using chipboard or wood. Help and advice is available from the office to assist you should you decide to construct your own coffin.

The material you use must be suitable for cremation and chipboard is generally preferred. Ferrous screws are acceptable in small numbers. If you use wood braces which will give the coffin strength you must place them inside and not on the bottom, which will cause difficulties when placing the coffin into the cremator.

No heavy metals, PVC or plastics should be used.

- 3) Environmentally friendly coffins often referred to as a 'green' design are available.

These coffins are made of cardboard or wicker and are readily available for cremation and they come in different designs. If you wish to decorate this type of coffin, gloss or many other paint finishes are not acceptable because of the emissions into the atmosphere during the cremation process. Water base children's paint will be acceptable. The coffin must contain a nameplate or card or the name can be written into the lid. As fluid can leak from a body it's as well to place absorbent cloth or cotton wadding in to the coffin.

The maximum dimensions of a coffin for access into the cremator are 80 inches (length) 28 inches (width) 18 inches (depth). Please discuss this measurement further with staff at the crematorium office when making arrangements.

Transporting the body

You may be able to hire a hearse from a local funeral director or you can use an estate car or van of a suitable appearance and size. If the body is to be collected

from the mortuary (local address and telephone numbers to assist are at the end of these notes) then you will need to telephone and make arrangements for a collection time. You will also need to take the green Registrar's Disposal form with you to prove to the hospital staff that you are the nearest surviving relative of the deceased and that the death has been properly recorded. The staff there will place the body into the coffin and advise you if a post mortem has been completed. A small fee may be payable for the staff assistance.

If you wish, the deceased may be laid out at home but you must consider the conditions of the room, which must be cool, and have no difficult stairs to access through. Your neighbours and small children also need to be considered when the deceased is moved into your home.

You may wish to preserve your loved one for a longer period by contacting a funeral director to request hygienic treatment. A leaflet on the subject is available from the cemetery office if you wish to consider this option.

Crematorium Facilities

The crematorium has no formal waiting areas but does have toilet facilities. The chapel is laid out conventionally with seating in rows each side of a center aisle and seats comfortably up to 140 mourners.

We have symbolic crosses in the chapel that may be removed during the service upon request.

The lectern has a microphone and controls for the curtain around the catafalque and the music.

The chapel also has a loop system for the hard of hearing.

The chapel has an organ that you can arrange to play or you may bring CD's which we require the day before the service so that we may plan the next day's work and ensure that the quality of the recording is acceptable for the funeral service. If you require certain pieces of music in, out or during the service please write your requirements on a blank sheet of paper and submit with the music.

If you require musicians/piper, etc. to play just let the office know and as long as it's not too noisy and is conducted in an orderly manner then arrangements can be organised.

You will have to bear in mind that the service allotted time scale in between services is only for 30 minutes and the service should be organised to take into account the time it takes to ensure everyone is seated and the time for everyone to leave the service. The fee for the chapel is included in the cremation fee. If you wish to book an extra time please let the office know this will ensure that the service is not rushed or cut short. An extra fee, however, will be charged.

We provide hymnbooks but you may have to provide leaflets for hymns or songs, which are not printed in our books.

Preview

You can inspect the chapel prior to the service that you wish to arrange. Please telephone the office first to arrange your visit, during times when funerals are not taking place.

You can have a service in a church or chapel before coming to the crematorium and then a short committal service will be held. A minister may require a fee for officiating at your service and you will arrange this yourself. We do have a list of most of the faiths and non-religious persons who can conduct your service.

You can devise your own service and deliver it yourself or, through a family member or friend. This can make the service a meaningful experience, which can be more personal and moving. The deceased may have composed the service with the family carrying out their wishes. If you ask a minister to officiate check he/she is happy with your wishes for the service

You will need to provide 4 bearers, to carry the coffin to the catafalque, these may be family members. Unfortunately, the crematorium staff are not able to assist in the carrying of the coffin at this stage.

The Funeral

Most mourners meet at the chapel entrance with the coffin arriving with the family at the agreed service time.

Once at the crematorium, the chapel attendant will be ready to receive and help you.

You can have a religious or non-religious service of your choice. The chapels are dedicated but not consecrated allowing anyone the service type they wish.

The Committal

The coffin rests on the catafalque during the service and the committal ceremony is usually towards the end of the service. The person officiating will press a button on the lectern just as the words of committal are spoken and the curtain will close around the coffin. This part of the service was introduced to symbolize the lowering of the coffin into a grave. Many mourners find this part of the service highly emotional and very upsetting.

This part of the service is not an essential requirement, and the curtains do not have to be drawn. Many religious or non-religious services have their own way and do not use the committal words.

The crematorium staff can help and advice you if you so wish.

Cremation Procedure

We operate the crematorium in accordance with the Code of Cremation Practice issued by the Federation of British Cremation Authorities. You can request a copy of this code from our office.

We also have a useful information leaflet called 'Questions People Ask About Cremation' which is available from the office.

If you wish to witness the placing of the coffin in the cremator then this can be arranged and the Chapel Attendant will advise you when you can view. If the cremation is the first of the day then you can view straight after the service, however later in the day you may have to come back when the cremator is free. It is only possible to allow up to 4 family members to witness this procedure. Please consider this when making the funeral arrangements.

When making the confirmation booking let the office know of your intention and they will help and advice. The cremation time varies but usually takes about 1 hour 30 minutes.

The Cremated Remains

If you wish, you can collect the cremated remains the next day.

If you intend to bury them away from St Helens Cemetery then you will need a 'Certificate of Cremation', which we issue, free of charge. This will also be necessary if you place the cremated remains at another crematorium. We can give you information for all the choices you have in St Helens Cemeteries/Crematorium grounds and if you wish we would advise regarding scattering at sea or taking the cremated remains away.

Choices for final resting place of Cremated Remains in St Helens

The cremation fee includes either the burial of the cremated remains in the Garden Of Remembrance or Scattering of the cremated remains in the Memorial Garden. A plan of the gardens is available from the office.

Alternatively, the cremated remains may be placed in an existing family grave or a new cremated remains plot may be purchased. Please ask the staff for further information.

Columbarium Wall niches are also available within the Memorial Garden at St Helens Crematorium.

The office will advise you of any charges and any forms you may have to complete.

Memorial Facilities

We have a selection of crematorium memorials listed below:

- 1) The Book of Remembrance - a unique artistic record of permanence

2) Miniature Book/Card of Remembrance - personal copies of the Book of Remembrance

3) Memorial Tablets - located in the Garden of Remembrance (10-year lease) (St Helens & Newton-Le-Willows)

4) Memorial Plaques - located in the Memorial Garden (10 year lease) (St Helens only)

5) Columbarium Wall niches

Chapel of Remembrance - St Helens

The Book of Remembrance is located in a separate building within the crematorium grounds the opening times are:

November to February	9.00am to 4.00pm
March to April	9.00am to 5.00pm
May to August	9.00am to 7.00pm
September to October	9.00am to 5.00pm

Open Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 10.00am

Chapel of Remembrance - Newton-Le-Willows

The Book of Remembrance is located within the Chapel. The opening times are:

Open Daily 10.00am to 4.00pm

Additional Information and Advice

Please note that all fees and charges may be subject to a slight increase at various times of the year as agreed by the Council.

If you arrange a funeral directly with the Cemetery and Crematorium office only the fees mentioned above will be charged. These cover administration, registration and all other costs mentioned. The cost of the container, conveyance, flowers, obituaries etc is your responsibility.

All fees must be paid to the office before the funeral takes place and are payable to "St Helens Council".

Disbursements

Flowers - you can provide your own funeral flowers or ie. Rosemary for remembrance, dried flowers, flowers can be picked from your garden etc. Alternatively, you may use the services of a commercial florist.

Obituaries - if you require these in the local newspaper then you need to make these arrangements yourself or through your funeral director.

Some newspapers, due to hoaxes do not accept telephone bookings and they may require you to call at their offices to make the bookings, supplying evidence of the death or they will check where the death was registered or with your funeral director.

Service - you may wish to devise your own funeral service with someone either family or friends who will deliver it at the funeral.

Memorial Services

We hold an annual All Souls Service each November to remember loved ones.

Our facilities are available for any religious or non-religious group to hold a Memorial Service. Please contact the office for further details.

Conclusion

For those who wish to consider in more detail the subject of funerals or making the right choices for a personalised funeral, the Natural Death Center offer a range of information that will be useful to you. They are located at 6 Blackstock Mews, Blackstock Road, London N4 2BT tel no 020 7359 8391 or visit www.naturaldeath.org.uk. We have a loan book available entitled 'The Natural Death Handbook' please contact the office if you wish to borrow the book.

Charter For The Bereaved

The Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration, now known as the ICCM, launched the Charter for the Bereaved, on 2nd September 1996 in London. St Helen's Council have adopted the Charter which gives the bereaved more choice and rights, a simple leaflet is available to provide information or alternatively copies of the full Charter are also available upon your request to help and to be informative.

This leaflet is intended to offer guidance and is updated when new information is sourced. No responsibility can be accepted for the fact that these details cannot be correct in every case but we will try to give you accurate and up to date information whenever possible.

List Of Useful Contact Numbers

Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Central Street, St Helens
Tel: 01744 677539

Bereavement Office: Whiston Hospital
Tel: 0151 430 1238