

Topics to talk about



Below are a range of topics that you and your guests might want to think about when funeral planning. It is just a starting point and you may want to add to it. It would be helpful for people to write down their wishes and why they have made a particular wish, such as what they want to be buried in, in case it is queried after their death. Once completed everyone should make sure their wishes are kept in a safe place and have talked them through with people who are close to them (or at least told them where to find them).

Planning a ceremony

- Do you want a funeral service? If so what type of service do you want, a religious or non-religious ceremony?
- What would you like everyone to wear, your favourite colour, your football team's colours?
- Is there special music or a song you would like to be played at the ceremony?
- Would you like any particular photographs of you to be on display?
- Who would you like the service to be led by? Have you asked this person to conduct your service in advance, or told someone close who you'd like this to be?
- Who would you like to give the main address?
- What poetry or readings would you like to be read at the ceremony and who would you like to read them? Remember you can also leave these choices to those close to you as they may like to choose their own readings which reflect their relationship with you.
- Would you like close friends to speak about you or tell a favourite story, if so who?

Popular songs include My Way by Frank Sinatra, but you might prefer Dream the Impossible Dream by Andy Williams, Going Underground by The Jam or Who Wants to Live Forever by Queen.

Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep by Mary Frye, The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost and Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone by W.H. Auden are popular readings.

- Would you like everyone to be given a memento when they leave, such as a sprig of rosemary, the emblem of remembrance?
- Who would you like to attend? Just close family and friends or all comers?
- Do you want flowers, if so which ones?
- Would you also or instead want donations, if so to which charity?

Deciding on burial or cremation

- Are there particular clothes you would like to be buried or cremated in?
- Are there any mementos or personal jewellery that you would like to be buried with you?
- What type of coffin would you like to have?
- Who would you like to carry your coffin?
- Do you want to be buried, if so where?
- Do you want to be cremated, if so where?
- Would you like the service to be held at the crematorium or elsewhere?
- Where would you like your ashes to be scattered?
- Do you want a gravestone, a tree planted or another marker, if so what?
- Do you want to donate your body for medical research?

Planning a commemoration

- Do you want a party afterwards, if so what form would you like it to take – location, food, drinks, etc?
- Do you have any other wishes for your send off which you would like your loved ones to know?



Types of coffin include willow wicker, bamboo, coconut palms, sea grass, pine, water hyacinth, recycled paper, wood pulp or the cheapest – cardboard.

Options for burial grounds include a woodland, in your local churchyard or cemetery, in your garden or at sea. Newhaven, East Sussex or The Needles Spoil Ground, Isle of Wight are the two designated sites for burial at sea.



You can download this set of topics to think about from www.dyingmatters.org