Bereavement Services
An Introduction to Self-Help Funerals for Pregnancy Loss

As part of our commitment to improve bereavement services North East Lincolnshire Council has committed itself to developing and enhancing the Burial and Cremation services that it provides.

An essential part of this is the ‘Charter for the Bereaved’ and we are working towards this. This charter is intended to define the rights of every individual who experiences bereavement and will give families greater influence over the choices available for the funeral arrangements including environmental and cost issues.

The information provided here is intended to assist individuals and families regardless of whether or not a funeral director is used but we recognise that it will be of particular interest to those people who wish to arrange a funeral with minimum or no assistance from a funeral director. Whatever you decide, the staff in Bereavement Services based at the Crematorium will assist you with any queries that you may have.

These details are intended to assist you in obtaining a dignified, personal and meaningful funeral service. North East Lincolnshire Council does not wish to promote any particular type of arrangement; this information is intended to widen your choice when making the funeral arrangements.

You may not be aware that you can arrange both cremation and burial with limited or no assistance from a funeral director. This information should assist you.

Funeral Arrangements

All arrangements for cremation and any interment/burials within Scartho Road or Cleethorpes Cemeteries must be made with the Bereavement Services Office, Weelsby Avenue, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN32 0BA. Telephone 01472 324869.

The arrangements may be made over the telephone and via the postal service but you may find it easier to arrange to call and visit the office in person. We can arrange for a member of staff to sit and talk the arrangement through with you and assist you in establishing the individual requirements for the funeral. All fees and charges are payable in advance of the service; cheques should be made payable to North East Lincolnshire Council.

It is important to remember that an Independent Funeral will require the family to spend time making arrangements which include:
• Preparation and storage of the body
• Provision of a casket or coffin
• Arranging a vehicle to collect and transport the coffin
• Supplying people to act as bearers (people who carry the coffin into the chapel or to the graveside).

You may find it helpful to view the Crematorium or Cemetery chapels and the various facilities available. We can help you complete the necessary forms and advise you on the type of coffin or container acceptable within the legislation. More detailed information can be found towards the end of this leaflet.

The body of any person will not be accepted for interment/burial or cremation unless it is enclosed within a coffin, casket or container of a design acceptable to the Bereavement Service Manager. An identification plate or tag must also be secured on the container. Consideration must be given to ensuring that the proceedings are conducted in a dignified manner, without disturbance or wilful offence to other mourners or the Bereavement Service staff.

A time will be agreed for the funeral cortege to arrive and you will need to consider what means of transportation you will use. Once the body has been conveyed to the Crematorium or the Cemetery it is not acceptable for any items or parts to be removed from the coffin. Please ensure that any personal items that you do not wish to be cremated or buried have been removed prior to your arrival.

At the Crematorium, the Chapel attendant will greet you and will advise and, if necessary, guide you. You will need to provide ‘bearers, these are people responsible for conveying the coffin reverently from the vehicle to the catafalque. There is a coffin bier (a special trolley) available for you to use but the need to lift and lower the coffin from the vehicle and onto the catafalque still exists.

Within the cemeteries, the Cemetery Attendant will greet you by the graveside and will advise and guide you, but you will need to provide bearers to convey the coffin from the vehicle to the grave. The Cemetery Attendant will advise you when to lower the coffin and provide the necessary webbing to enable you to do this. Careful attention must be paid with regard to health and safety risks at the graveside and it may be wise for bearers to talk the procedure through with the Cemetery Attendant before the day of the funeral.

**Necessary Paperwork**

**Cremation or Burial**

At least 3 clear working days notice must be given to the Bereavement Service Office before a cremation or burial may take place, along with the associated relevant paperwork together with the appropriate fee must be delivered to the Bereavement Service Office based at the Crematorium.

**Form H - Instructions for Cremation or Preliminary Form and Forms J and K – Instruction and Authorisation for the disposal of the Cremated**
Remains will also need to be completed and delivered to the Bereavement Service Office.

Funeral Service

Traditional funeral patterns do not have to be followed irrespective of whether or not a funeral director is involved. You may wish to involve a Minister of Religion or other recognised religious person, a humanist or similar independent celebrant or you may prefer to devise your own service with or without any religious content. Whatever you decide, we would ask that you be aware of the length of time you may need. Cremation bookings are made at 40 minute intervals and allow for 30 minutes chapel time but additional time may be arranged prior to the day of the funeral (should you need it).

There is also the opportunity for families to personalise the service or ceremony with their favourite pieces of music or poetry. At the Crematorium there is an organ, a music and media system and a hearing loop has been installed. There is also a microphone on the lectern. Both of the Cemetery Chapels have an organ and whilst there is no music system provided you may bring along your own. All the chapels have hymn books.

Coffin Construction

The body of any person will not be accepted for interment/burial or cremation unless it is enclosed within a coffin, casket or container of a design acceptable to the Bereavement Manager. No container of any design will be accepted unless it bears adequate particulars of the identity of the deceased person therein. Consideration must be given to ensuring that the proceedings are conducted in a dignified manner, without disturbance or wilful offence to other mourners or the Bereavement Staff.

This container may be purchased from a coffin supplier or funeral director or it may be home-made, cardboard, wicker, bamboo or of a ‘shroud-style’ provided that it includes suitable rigid support along the base and the foot end.

Home made coffins must be made of wood or a wood by-product which when placed in the cremator and subjected to the cremation process, is easily combustible and which does not emit smoke, give off toxic gas or leave retardant residue after final combustion. With the exception of high ferrous screws used to ensure the safe construction of the coffin, no metal of any kind shall be used. Cross pieces must not be attached to the bottom of the coffin. If you wish to strengthen the bottom of the coffin, wooden strips may be placed lengthways. The coffin must not be painted or varnished but may be covered with a suitable cloth. Products containing any chloride or fluorides such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and melamine are prohibited. The use of polystyrene is restricted to the name plate only and must not exceed 90 grams in weight.

The use of sawdust or cotton wool as a lining inside the coffin must be avoided. If circumstances require, suitable sealing material may be used but
no metal, rubber or polyvinyl chloride (PVC) will be permitted and on no account must pitch or similar substance be used.

On the reverse of Form H you will find guidance on the size of the coffin and notes regarding the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

**Disposal of Cremated Remains**

Some thought should be given as to the disposal of the Cremated Remains once the service has taken place. **Forms J and K (Instruction and Authorisation of the disposal of the Cremated Remains)** should be completed before the service and delivered with all other paperwork to the Crematorium. There are various options available:

- To scatter the cremated remains within the Crematorium grounds unwitnessed.
- To scatter the cremated remains within the Crematorium grounds with witness, an appointment would be necessary for this option.
- To retain the cremated remains for disposal elsewhere.
- To inter the cremated remains within a grave in Scartho Road Cemetery or Beacon Avenue Cemetery, Cleethorpes.

If either of the last options are chosen it will be necessary to provide a container for the cremated remains. These can be obtained either from the Crematorium or of ones own choice. The container must be of suitable materials e.g. a wooden casket; polytainer or an environmental friendly tube.

**Reference Sources/Further Advice**

The following publications may prove to be useful when planning an independent funeral.
- ‘The Natural Death Handbook’
- ‘Green Burial – The DIY Guide to Law and Practice’
- ‘The Daily Telegraph Guide to Funerals and Bereavement’

These publications can be found in the local library.

Further advice may be sought from various organisations including:
The Natural Death Centre, 6 Blackstock Mews, Blackstock Road, London, N4 2BT.
Telephone: 020 7359 8391
Online: [www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)

Or please contact the staff at Bereavement Services, Grimsby Crematorium Weelsby Avenue, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN32 0BA
Tel: 01472 324869: email – [bereavementservices@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:bereavementservices@nelincs.gov.uk)