

Personalisation

A funeral service is a very personal thing and there is no right or wrong way of mourning a passing.

For some people a simple funeral service is exactly what they want and would expect, following a traditional route with readings and a brief eulogy.

For others the ability to personalise a funeral is important. This can be easily accomplished and below are a few suggestions for how to do this:-

- A Letter – write a letter to the deceased expressing all of the feelings you have ever wanted to convey. The letter can be sealed and placed in the coffin ensuring that they go with your loved one to his/her final resting place.
- Place personal mementoes in the coffin with the deceased (it may be appropriate for burial but for cremation purposes there are strict guidelines on what can be placed in a coffin and your funeral director or local crematorium will be able to advise you accordingly).
- Incorporate favourite pieces of music into the service. At Mansfield & District Crematorium we have a very extensive music catalogue and can usually source pieces of music providing they are legally available in this country and not something that is only available as an mp3 download or via Youtube.
- Have live music in the chapel – whether that be through the services of our fully trained organist to play favourite hymns/tunes or by solo performers, brass bands, jazz bands, bagpipers etc.
- Use choirs or soloists to give an extra dimension to the service.
- If your loved one had a hobby that could be incorporated then bring that into the service...e.g. someone who liked quilting could have their quilt draped over the coffin, photography/art – bring a selection of photos/pictures they have produced for displaying, a guard of honour by a club they were in etc.
- Bring in photographs which span the life of the deceased so they can be displayed on our memory board for all to see at the funeral service (they will be returned directly to your funeral director before you leave the building).
- If you have a favourite reading then let the person taking the funeral service know and ask for it to be incorporated into the service.
- The use of floral tributes, will offer an ability to personalise whether in design, colour or simply by handing out individual flowers/petals/leaves for people to place on the coffin.

- In some instances (you would need to check with the place where the service was being held) it may be possible to release balloons, doves etc.
- The person who has passed away has likely touched the lives of many people. For those who knew the deceased well, it is often viewed as quite an honour to be asked to speak at the funeral. The speaker need not have a professionally written eulogy but may rather write something personal or select a piece of poetry or scripture that is relevant. Always remember though that to stand up and speak at a time of great emotion, for some people is very difficult and however much they may be honoured to be asked it may be too emotional a task for them to accomplish so having a back up plan is often necessary (this could be as simple as asking the person taking the funeral to step in if the emotion becomes too much for the speaker to carry on).
- Look at the mode of transport to be used for getting your loved one to their final resting place. It may be they had a love of buses or motorcycles – why not consider a bus for transportation or a motorcycle hearse. It may be they had a love of horses – why not look at using a horsedrawn hearse. It may be they had a love of classic cars etc All of these can be incorporated either by having a coffin decorated with pictures or the use of transport or even just getting a group of friends together to follow the hearse in the appropriate style of transport.
- If a husband always drove his wife everywhere or vice versa consider speaking to your funeral director and see if they would allow you to travel in the hearse to accompany the coffin on its final journey.
- Consider allowing family members or friends to help carry the coffin into the crematorium or chapel. Your funeral director will be able to give advice and guidance.
- Consider using a favourite place as a destination either for the funeral cortege to pass (their home, a favourite park, where they worked etc) or, if a restaurant then for a gathering after the service.
- Consider the use of 'Orders of Service' these are not only a nice way of detailing the service but can also be used to incorporate a photo of the deceased for people to take away and remember them by and also for additional information to be conveyed to the mourners present as you often don't get a chance to speak to everyone. This could be simply an invite back for a cup of tea following the service, to details of where any donations are going to, to a thank you from family for support shown.
- Hand people a memento as they leave – this could be something as simple as a sprig of rosemary which is a symbol of remembrance, to a small card with a photo of the deceased, date of birth and date of death together with a simple

verse, something they can take away and keep as often people will see each other frequently but it is surprising how often photos are not held by those other than immediate family.

It is important to remember, that however you wish to personalise a funeral service your funeral director and the crematorium/cemetery staff will do all they can to try and enable it to happen. However, it should also be noted that some elements of personalisation may extend the service time and this needs to be conveyed to your funeral director and the crematorium/cemetery as soon as possible to ensure that other services are not compromised. Additional time can be booked at relatively little extra cost.