

## **Funerals**

Sensitive conversations will need to take place with families and mourners ahead of funeral ceremonies. No funeral service can take place in the church building. These have been closed for all services.

Our advice is to arrange funerals over the phone wherever possible, to minimise contact. This is not as easy as meeting the chief mourners face to face but these are exceptional times.

In arranging a funeral during this pandemic, a minister or other worship leader must comply with government instructions and health advice.

These will inevitably mean restrictions on the numbers of those who can attend the service so these conversations will need to be sensitively handled but the law must be followed. The attendance at a funeral service wherever it is held must be limited to immediate close family e.g. parents, or the spouse and the couple's children (but not their partners) and perhaps the deceased's siblings (but not their partners) and not grandchildren or cousins or other relatives or close friends or colleagues. Even with the small number, there is a need to respect social distancing guidelines for those who are not of the same household – no closer than two metres.

Make your own travel arrangements to the graveside or crematorium – do not travel in the car with the bereaved family or the undertaker. After the service, as difficult as it is, you must not shake hands or offer a hug. Latest government instructions restricting social gatherings mean it is unlikely families will be able to socialise following a funeral and many hotels and restaurants are closed. Our advice to the person who has taken the funeral service is not to socialise at a purvey or wake, and to return home immediately.

Tributes can then be paid in other ways for larger numbers of people to engage with – either online, with a recorded tribute, or in a church newsletter – or given in a memorial service later in the year.

## **Weddings**

Following Government guidance from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, weddings are cancelled. It will be necessary to postpone weddings to a later date when a greater degree of normality applies.