

23 MARCH 2020



FUNERAL SERVICES - COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES

As you will know, the Government has advised that, in order to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), people should – among other things – limit social contact and avoid non-essential travel where possible. There is currently no ban on gatherings, so funerals can still take place.

Where funeral ceremonies are to take place in a chapel, families should be advised to consider restricting attendance to close family and friends only so as to minimise the number of people in a relatively small space. Families should also be advised to follow the Government's advice to stay at home if they show symptoms for 7 days if they live alone, or 14 days if they live with somebody who is showing symptoms. Those over 70, with an underlying health problem, or pregnant women are particularly encouraged to heed this advice. This may mean that they may have to miss the funeral, or attend a memorial service to be held at a later date. Alternatively, people could watch the funeral online via webcasting, either at the time of the funeral or at a later date.

With effect from **Wednesday 25th March** BCP Council together with Dorset Council will be putting in place the following measures in order to help minimise the transmission of the virus and to ensure that families continue to be provided with the option of holding their service. This will of course be subject to future Government guidance and advice.

What is changing

- No more than 10 people to be in attendance at each service, excluding the officiant and funeral director.
- At Poole and Weymouth, the coffin is to be carried into the chapel with the bearers exiting the chapel prior to the mourners being ushered into the chapel. Due to the two chapel layout design at Bournemouth and the shared egress route, the coffin is to be conveyed into the chapel followed directly by the mourners.
- Seating within the chapels should be co-ordinated to allow no more than 4 people on each row to adhere to the 2 metre distancing guidance.
- Service slot times will continue to be offered as per the current daily schedule however in order to assist the Chapel Team in cleansing the chapel before and after each service, we would ask that services in chapels are limited to:
 - ❖ Bournemouth – 20 minutes (for 30-minute slot time)
 - ❖ Poole – 20 minutes (for 30-minute slot times)
 - ❖ Poole – 45 minutes (for 60-minute slot times)
 - ❖ Weymouth – 30 minutes (for 45-minute slot times)
- Extended service slot times will not be offered.
- The waiting rooms at each crematorium will be closed to the public, officiants and funeral directors. Access to the toilets at Bournemouth and Weymouth will be unhindered by this closure. Access to the toilets at Poole will be provided via the chapel waiting room – doors will be unlocked but will be closed with a sign on the doors asking mourners to remain outside. Doors to be opened at Poole once the funeral director is ready to commence ushering mourners into the chapel via the waiting room.
- Bournemouth's waiting room on a Saturday and Sunday will be closed.
- All Books of Remembrance to remain on static display on each date – no option of viewing other dates will be granted.

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- Live webcasting of services together with a 'watch again' option will be offered to families free of charge. Wherever possible funeral directors are asked to encourage families to take this option when reducing the numbers on attending.
- Visual and musical tributes will continue wherever practicably possible.
- Live organ music requests will not be accommodated. Families are to be encouraged to book their musical requirements via the existing media services provided at each crematorium.
- The floral tribute court at Poole is to be closed with floral tributes to be displayed on the grass embankment directly opposite the cloisters exit. Funeral directors are asked to locate the family limousine (if in use) further along the kerbside to allow the viewing of the tributes and free movement of the mourners as they exit the cloisters. Floral tributes will remain on display prior to removal as per the standard protocol at each crematorium.
- Poole's bearers' waiting area will be closed.
- All witness scatterings and interments will be suspended.
- All witness charging of the coffin will be suspended. The only exception to this will be for religious reasons with a limitation set to two witnesses.
- All hymn books and funeral service books to be removed from the seated rows and placed at the rear of the chapel. Families are to be encouraged to refer to their Order or Service (if in place) and to take this with them following the service. Books can be used at the funeral director's discretion.
- The statutory and non-statutory paperwork is to continue to be submitted in paper format at Bournemouth and Poole. Weymouth are currently pursuing a separate electronic transfer arrangement with further information to be sent out by them directly. For Bournemouth and Poole, this will be subject to change following emergency changes to legislation and will be notified to you in due course.
- The bereavement support offices will be closed to members of the public but open to funeral directors as necessary. Access to the support service will remain in place by telephone or email with information provided on the website.

What's not changing (at the moment)

- Musical and visual tributes.
- Access to the Book of Remembrance room will remain in place as normal in view of the limited numbers that attend and the limitation on space.
- Collection of cremated remains.
- Access to the vestry by officiants.
- Access to car parking.
- Access to grounds.
- Later viewing of floral tributes.
- Access to bereavement support service by telephone and/or email.
- Access to cemeteries.

All funeral directors and celebrants are encouraged to heed advice provided by their associate organisations and avoid any unnecessary risks by following the guidance provided.

Any questions or further clarification needed on the advice and restrictions in place, please contact:

Bournemouth Crematorium (Steve Goad / Nicola Lynch – 01202 526238)

Poole Crematorium (Liz Hall – 01202 261382)

Weymouth Crematorium (Emma Parry – 01305 786984)

Websites: www.bpcouncil.gov.uk
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk