

R.E. Tonkin & Son Ltd

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As you will be aware, we are currently facing the threat of a coronavirus epidemic. As a responsible business, we are thinking of possible impacts on funerals already organised and those yet to be planned in the coming weeks and months.

We would like to provide reassurance that our commitment to caring for bereaved people and their loved ones will remain steadfast throughout this period of uncertainty and disruption.

In our efforts to protect families and everyone involved in arranging funerals, we are considering a range of infection control options in line with the latest advice given by Public Health England. We are also working with partners, such as local crematoriums and burial grounds, to ensure we comply with their coronavirus procedures.

As such, if we find ourselves in a position of increased risk to health, and at risk of furthering the spread of coronavirus and on advice from **The National Society Of Allied And Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF)** it is possible that we may need to take the following actions:

- Funeral arrangements being made entirely over the phone, with a visit to a controlled area of our office for form signing with limited face-to-face contact. We would not be able to conduct arrangements at clients' homes or other venues.
- Services at places of worship could be cancelled. In such circumstances, we would be happy to arrange a memorial or thanksgiving service at a church or another venue at a later date, when the risk has passed.
- Services at any venue could be cancelled. This could result in funeral services at crematoriums being 'live-streamed' via the internet. We would provide advice aimed at ensuring everyone who needs to view the service is able to do so. Our staff may also be required to wait outside any chapel or building during services, whilst remaining on hand to offer assistance in line with official guidance.
- Service times at crematoriums could be adjusted and/or reduced to allow for increased demand for services.
- Limousine travel could be cancelled. This could result in the family of the deceased and mourners making their own way to the place of the funeral.
- Staff sharing. In the event of widespread staff illness, we have a contingency plan in place with other local family-run and well-respected funeral directors to share personnel if required. Rest assured you will still see the same high standards of care and professionalism from all of our partner organisations.
- Viewings. We would protect our clients and staff by restricting viewings. However, we would do our best to enable clients to sit with the coffin during this period.

- We would be unable to conduct any 'into church' provision or 'into house' during this period.
- The funeral director and staff would not remain in a chapel or other venue during the service. They will remain close by, outside, ready to assist you when required.
- Pre- and post-funeral gatherings may have to be cancelled.
- In the case of coronavirus related deaths, we may have to arrange a prompt funeral to prevent unnecessary storage and handling of the deceased.
- We may not be offering our hygienic treatment (embalming) during this period.
- Outside organisations will impose rules and restrictions – we will adapt our working practices to follow these.
- We will be insisting that the curtains are closed around the coffin at the point of committal at the crematorium. This will ensure that mourners and attendees are not encouraged to touch, kiss or come into contact with the coffin at any point. Contact with the coffin, kissing, touching etc will not be permitted at church or the burial sites.
- In order to limit human contact and proximity, and therefore to protect both Crematorium staff and our own staff, we will be encouraging for all services to make use of our wheeled biers to bring coffins into the Chapel or Church, rather than shouldering or carrying the coffin.

We ask that all visitors to our office are aware of the following:

- Our main reception door. We regularly clean the doorbell and keep an eye out for visitors approaching the door. We, therefore, ask visitors to protect themselves from infection by refraining from using the door handles.
- We currently DO NOT have hand sanitiser in our main reception, but we do have hand washing facilities and will ask you to use them. Our staff sometimes find that a client will want to give them a kiss or hug to say thank you for supporting them through a difficult time. We politely ask that you refrain from doing this during this period.

We will update this statement as and when we have more information available.

Thank you for your understanding.

Mark Tonkin.

Managing Director, R.E. Tonkin & Son Ltd.