

life



Funeral Partners

in the community
with Funeral Partners

Issue 18 – September 2025

BACK TO DEVON FOR JAMES

Read how a career has
come full circle

10,000 YEARS OF HERITAGE

Meet the new members
of our network

£63,000
FOR
COMMUNITY
SCHEMES

Funeral Partners
launches new funds

AWARD FOR FOOTBALL FUNDRAISER

Hospital charity hails
funeral professional

HOW FUNERAL DIRECTORS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH BEREAVEMENT

Discover how our team can help before, and after, the final goodbye

Sam Kershaw

Chief Executive Officer



The UK's fastest
growing funeral
service provider

funeralpartners.co.uk



I'd like to welcome you to the latest edition of Life magazine, which will give you an insight into the first half of the year at Funeral Partners.

As ever, we have stories from across our growing network of high-quality, caring and compassionate funeral homes.

The last calendar year was as busy as we have ever been in terms of acquisitions, and we now have an incredible 10,000 years of heritage across our group.

It truly is an honour when another business joins us. I will never take it for granted and I'd like to thank every former owner who has trusted Funeral Partners to continue the legacy of their business and place it at the heart of the local community.

The continued support of the former owners – some who decided

to stay on to run the day-to-day business and others who have taken a step back and are ambassadors, keeping in touch and helping to keep the reputation and traditions of the business intact – is so vital.

One of the most crucial benefits that we bring as a group is the central support office, the regulatory framework and care of the deceased policies and procedures, which are there to protect our teams and clients. We take this part of our operational commitment very seriously and continue to invest in these areas to ensure we remain compliant, whilst providing exemplary care to all our families.

We've recently updated some of our working practices to ensure we are compliant with new regulations from the Scottish Government. Regulation is so important in the industry so families put their trust in us to continue their legacy and place in the heart of their local community. They need to know that one of the most difficult things they will ever do in their lives is going to be handled with the utmost care and the highest of standards, which you can read about on page 13.

I am so proud of the community work our funeral homes do across the country, and we are delighted to have extended

our Community Assistance Programmes and Community Funds. These funding initiatives do so much to build relationships between our great teams and the projects in their areas.

We are a people business – our reputation is built by the amazing dedicated team of professionals we have working for us. It is great to be able to highlight two success stories in this issue at different stages of their careers.

While **James Ray** has now extended his area of responsibility as West Division Operations Director to include Devon, back where he started in the funeral industry, **Jyden Asher** has become the first person in the business to pass our Funeral Director apprenticeship programme. I know Jyden will have a bright future with us, and I can't wait to see how his career develops. You can read their stories on pages 8 and 9.

Finally, I'd like to commend Jamie Groves on his richly deserved award from GOSH Charity, which you can read about on page 10.

For several years, Jamie has worked tirelessly to raise an incredible amount of money for what is a brilliant charity, and we are always delighted to provide support as the principal sponsor for the Goals 4 GOSH charity matches and events.

FUNERAL PARTNERS TO DONATE MORE THAN £63,000 TO GOOD CAUSES THIS YEAR WITH LAUNCH OF SEVEN NEW FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Funeral Partners have continued to show commitment to the communities they serve by launching nine new funding initiatives designed to support local good causes.



AN Abraham Funeral Director Chris Whitehouse and Administrator Bev Bishop



Eaves Business Principal Mike Jolly and Funeral Director Laura Gatenby



John G Hogg Funeral Director Claire Ward and Business Principal John Hogg

We are pleased to launch our brand-new Community Assistance Programmes for a number of our Funeral Directors, which will see grants given to organisations based close to the participating funeral homes.

The Funeral Directors set to launch their own community funds this year are:

John G Hogg Funeral Directors in Sunderland

Eaves Funeral Service in Cumbria

M L Williams Funeral Directors in Ayr

Melia Powell Funeral Service in West Yorkshire

AN Abraham Funeral Directors in Pontefract

Mulhollands Funeral Directors in Carrickfergus and Larne, Northern Ireland

Bairds of Antrim Funeral Directors in Antrim, Northern Ireland

Kavanagh and Coates Funeral Directors in Heywood

Howard's Funeral Directors in Southport

A panel from each of the funeral brands, alongside local independent representatives who understand the needs of the local community, will decide on the successful applicants.

Additionally, **Miles & Daughters Funeral Directors** in Berkshire, **John**

Blenkiron & Sons Funeral Directors in North Yorkshire and Durham, **Elizabeth Way & Company Funeral Directors** in Mossley plus **James Brown and Sons Funeral Directors** and **John Gray Funeral Directors** in Northern Ireland will be launching another round of their own funds, continuing their impressive track record supporting some amazing causes, allowing them to deliver projects and initiatives benefiting local families and the wider community.

In total, the funds will provide grants of £63,000 in 2025.

Gemma Taylor, Community and Communications Manager at Funeral Partners said she was excited about expanding their community funding programmes.

"We know the impact these funding initiatives can have for the organisations who successfully apply for them," she said.

"The money goes a long way to help these organisations, plus the recognition and promotion of the initiatives helps build awareness and attract more funding and local volunteers for these good causes.

"Our dedicated teams can take the opportunity to build relationships with these charities and causes who carry out amazing work on their doorstep, support with other events and become even more embedded into their

communities, so people know who we are and that we are there for them when they need us.

"So far, we have helped support so many good causes from youth sports teams, museums, mental health initiatives and many more."

Grants are available to fund local activities that improve the quality of life of residents and the wider community. Projects must align with one of more of the four fund categories: Health, Education, Employment opportunities, Poverty and Social Deprivation.

Kelly Hailou, Marketing Director at Funeral Partners added: "I am so pleased we have been able to commit to launching an incredible seven new funds, whilst being able to continue with more funding opportunities to those which are already established in their areas.

"I am proud to say in total, Funeral Partners Community Funds and Assistance Programmes will donate more than £63,000 in 2025.

"I can't wait to see the impact the funds have for these worthwhile causes, who desperately need the support of businesses like ours. A big thanks to our funeral home teams who also put a lot of their personal time and energy into supporting the programme."

RECORD-BREAKING ACQUISITIONS PERIOD ADDS TO FUNERAL PARTNERS' 10,000+ YEARS OF HERITAGE AND IS STILL GROWING

Our Acquisitions Team has been busier than ever welcoming a host of businesses into our Funeral Partners family over the last few months. We are proud to now have more than 10,000 years of heritage and experience in our network. Here is a little about the recent businesses to join us.



M. Rushton Funeral Directors

www.rushtonfuneraldirectors.co.uk

Based in Southport, Merseyside, **M. Rushton Funeral Directors** was founded by husband-and-wife Michael and Michelle in 2016 and quickly became a pillar of the community.

They've joined Funeral Partners to allow them to spend more time with their children and improve their work-life balance.

Michael said: "Frankly, Funeral Partners have exceeded all our expectations – everything that was talked about when we were discussing the acquisition has come to fruition and more."

Nicholas O'Hara Funeral Directors

www.oharafunerals.co.uk

Boasting five funeral homes in Dorset – plus another opening very soon - Nicholas O'Hara Funeral Directors has been serving clients for more than 50 years.

Anthony and Natalie O'Hara – the children of founder Nicholas – are continuing to run the business after their father's recent retirement.

Anthony said: "It was the right time to give security to the business for the future."



George Brooke Funeral Directors Helen and Judith Brooke

George Brooke Funeral Directors

www.georgebrooke.co.uk

Founded in 1952, **George Brooke Funeral Directors**, based in West Yorkshire, was run by George until he passed away in 2008.

His daughters Helen and Judith are determined to continue his legacy and have close to 80 years of experience in the industry combined.

"I am confident the support of Funeral Partners and the investment in our teams, new processes and procedures will stand us in good stead for the future success of our business," Helen said.



Funeral Partners CEO Sam Kershaw with Neil and Brooke Sherry

W Sherry & Sons

www.wsherryandsons.co.uk

Formed way back in 1850, **W Sherry & Sons** is run by the sixth and seventh generation of the Sherry family and marked their 175th year of celebrated history by joining Funeral Partners.

They now have an impressive nine branches across Middlesex and London.

Business Principal Neil Sherry said: "Funeral Partners were the only people we seriously considered, given the work they have done with similar businesses to ours."



Funeral Partners CEO Sam Kershaw with Business Principals Lesley and Joseph

Joseph O'Connell Funeral Service

www.josephoconnell.co.uk

Proud to go the extra mile for their clients, **Joseph O'Connell Funeral Service** supports families in Crewe and Nantwich.

The business was set up by Joseph and his father-in-law Ted in 2011, and wife Lesley is also now an integral of the operation.

"We appreciate that Funeral Partners will have a light touch approach and allow the business to continue to run much as it has before," Joseph said.

Howard Chadwick Funeral Service

www.chadwickfuneralservice.com

A true family business, **Howard Chadwick Funeral Service** was founded in 1991.

Nine members of the family have worked at the funeral home in Oxfordshire to date, with Mr Chadwick's nephew, Alistair Cox, now the Business Principal.

"Funeral Partners has also already made investments into the funeral home – both in the front client facing facilities and the back of house. I have been so impressed," he said.



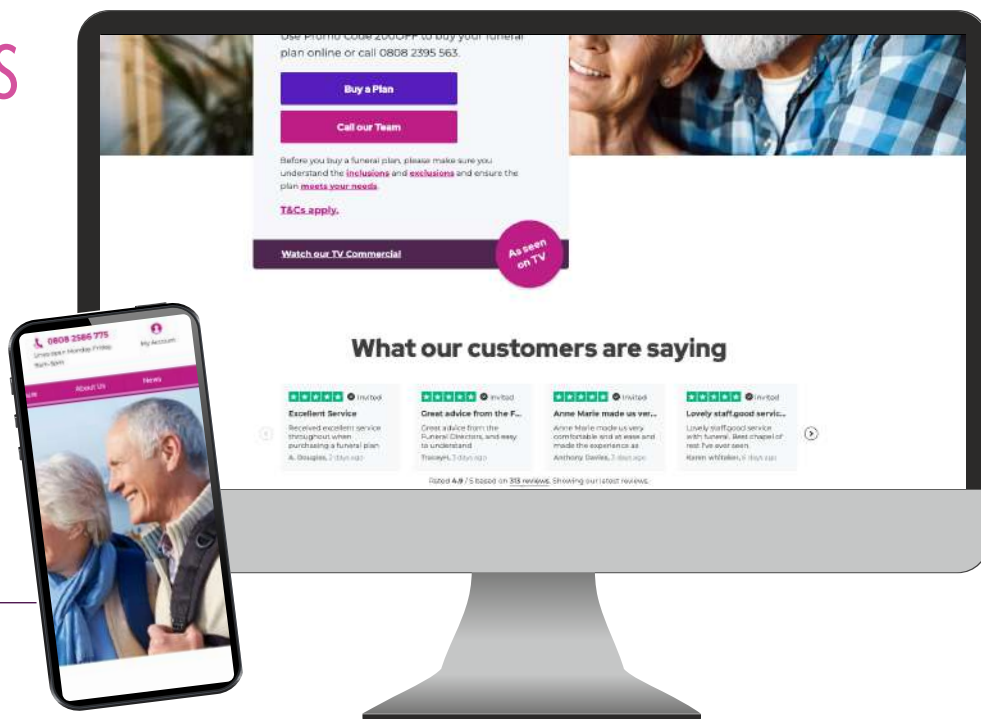
The team at Howard Chadwick Funeral Directors

To read more acquisition partner stories or to find your nearest Funeral Partners Funeral Director visit corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk/partners-stories/



NEW CHOICE WEBSITE BRINGS PURCHASING A FUNERAL PLAN INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Funeral Partners' funeral plan company Choice recently celebrated their ten-year anniversary with the launch of a new website.



Since industry regulation, Choice has launched an Unattended (Direct) Cremation Plan product, realigned plan prices with a national price point across all funeral homes and relaunched the optimised website with the ability to purchase a plan online.

The new website supports the company's digital growth ambitions, with research showing that more and more people are now comfortable with purchasing financial products like funeral plans online, particularly the simpler Unattended Cremation Plan. The website has a more modern visual design, with an improved customer purchase process for web and mobile devices, and now includes the ability to pay for plans by instalments.

Customers can choose from three plans which best suits their requirements – Choice Plus or Choice Essentials as well as the Unattended Cremation – and can nominate from over 290 Funeral Partners funeral homes from across the UK, to arrange and conduct the funeral at the time of need.

Kelly Hailou, Marketing Director said, "The new website looks absolutely fantastic with a fresh, modern design and a smoother customer experience. It is already proving hugely popular with both our funeral home clients and new customers looking into the market for a funeral plan provider, to put plans in place for the future.

"Having a fully online service means that people now have a choice for where and how to make their purchase. They can speak to our brilliant, dedicated funeral professionals in

one of our branches up and down the country, or one of our funeral plan specialists at the Choice office in Torquay. Or, if they prefer, with ease from the comfort of their own home online through the website, where they can access all the information they need to determine if a Choice funeral plan may be right for them."

Sam Kershaw, Funeral Partners CEO, said funeral plans sales were important to the future success of all funeral homes.

He said: "Our Choice Funeral Plans are a significant part of the value that we can bring to an acquisition partnership, ensuring that families are able to record their wishes, buy a plan and choose a Funeral Director they know and trust to arrange and conduct their funeral ahead of time.

HAVING A FULLY ONLINE SERVICE MEANS THAT PEOPLE NOW HAVE A CHOICE FOR WHERE AND HOW TO MAKE THEIR PURCHASE.

"This secures business for the years ahead. I'm pleased to see our plan sales going from strength to strength.

"We are proud of our reputation and every business that is part of the Funeral Partners family, if you'd like to hear more about joining Funeral Partners, please don't hesitate to get in touch for a confidential, no obligation discussion."

For more information about Choice Funeral Plans, visit www.choiceplan.co.uk or call 0808 2586 775.

Choice Funeral Plans are provided by Alternative Planning Company Limited (APCL). APCL is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority with firm reference number 965282. APCL is part of the Funeral Partners Group.

For more information about Choice Funeral Plans, visit www.choiceplan.co.uk or call 0808 2586 775

choice
from Funeral Partners

NORTH EAST FUNERAL DIRECTORS LATEST TO OFFER ELECTRIC CARS FOR FAMILIES

Walker & Morrell Funeral Directors now proudly offer two electric limousines and an electric hearse from the Ford Etive range as part of their fleet, as part of Funeral Partners' drive to give families more environmentally conscious options.

Families who arrange funerals at their funeral homes in Washington and Gateshead in the North East of England now have access to the vehicles, which have been supplied by funeral vehicle experts Coleman Milne.

Funeral Partners now has 13 fully electric or hybrid vehicles in the fleet across the country.

The new cars at **Walker & Morrell** are tastefully coloured in Georgian silver to complement their existing Jaguar vehicles.

The all-electric vehicles are based on a Ford Mustang and, as well as being carbon neutral, feature a smooth, comfortable ride, boast all the modern benefits and innovations found in modern electric cars and are quiet, which is crucial for use in funerals.

Martin Morrell, Operations Manager, at **Walker & Morrell** said: "It is a big milestone for us to have these cars as part of our fleet.

"The world is changing, and it is important we offer an environmentally conscious option to meet the needs of our clients.

"It is also important for us to contribute to a more sustainable future and we are committed to reducing our own carbon footprint wherever possible, which is why the vehicle will be charged with 99 per cent renewable electricity."

Funeral Partners have committed to working on a decarbonisation plan, as part of a long-term path to net zero emissions by 2050.



Area Development Manager for Tyne & Wear Martin Morrell with Tony Kerr from Coleman Milne.

More than 99 per cent of the electricity used by Funeral Partners is generated from renewable sources. Other immediate commitments include the introduction of smart meters across the funeral homes to better measure gas usage and even more electric vehicles being added to the fleet.



The new electric fleet available at Walker & Morrell Funeral Directors.jpg

RESPECTED FUNERAL DIRECTOR HAS GONE BACK TO HIS DEVON ROOTS WITH NEW EXPANDED ROLE

An experienced funeral professional has found himself back where it all began for him in the industry following a recent promotion.

James Ray, 45, began his career at a local Funeral Directors in Teignmouth back in 2000, before joining Drakes of Torbay – owned by Funeral Partners – three years later, helping families in the local area and becoming a well-known and respected Funeral Director.

He was then asked to take up a wide-ranging role based in Surrey for Funeral Partners, where he successfully built a portfolio of businesses serving communities of all faiths, specialising in Muslim, Italian and Nepalese funerals before his remit expanded into Berkshire and North London.

But now, James has been promoted to West Division Operations Director for Funeral Partners bringing him back to his roots.

Our outstanding network in the region includes **Drakes, Torbay & District Funeral Directors** and **JH Way Funeral Services**.

James said: “It is wonderful to see so many familiar faces within the teams in Torbay and from Teignmouth, like Funeral Director Caz Denning who also brings 23 years of service and dedication to the industry.



James Ray is delighted to be returning to Devon

A LOT HAS CHANGED SINCE I STARTED, BUT WHAT REMAINS IS THE CARE WE ALL MUST GIVE TO OUR CLIENTS AT WHAT IS AN INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT TIME.

“I originally got into the industry after seeing a role advertised, but someone told me the job wouldn’t suit me. I’ve always had a desire to prove people wrong and have since found that helping people when they are at a low ebb is the most rewarding experience you can have.

“A lot has changed since I started, but what remains is the care we all must give to our clients at what is an incredibly difficult time.

“I am excited to return to Devon and continue my journey with Funeral Partners. I look forward to working with our dedicated team to support families during their most challenging times.

“The care and presentation of every single person’s loved one is of the utmost importance to me.

“I play a pivotal role in ensuring the high standards that I expect with my team are passed down to the next generation of funeral professionals within our team of dedicated service providers.”

The funeral business runs in James’s family, with his wife Paula working as a Regional Support Manager and eldest son Callum enjoying his role as a Funeral Manager in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. His youngest son Ben is studying at university in Dundee.

Matthew Barber, Chief Operating Officer at Funeral Partners said: “We are thrilled to welcome James back to Devon, and are excited that he agreed to lead the way in our largest region.

“His extensive experience and dedication to providing compassionate and personalised funeral services makes him an invaluable addition to our team.”

HUDDERSFIELD FUNERAL DIRECTOR SAYS MORE YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD CONSIDER CAREER AFTER COMPLETING HIS APPRENTICESHIP

A newly qualified Funeral Director has shown age is no barrier for progression after becoming the first person in his company to pass an exciting career development scheme.



PEOPLE ARE PLEASED TO SEE A YOUNG PERSON TAKING ON A BIG RESPONSIBILITY IN SUCH A SENSITIVE ROLE.

Keith Clegg and Jyden Asher celebrate the completion of this apprenticeship

Jyden Asher, 24, who works with families at **Huddersfield Funeral Home**, is the first person to pass the Funeral Director apprenticeship provided by Funeral Partners.

After initially joining as a casual bearer and driver in 2021, Jyden worked his way up to a full-time Funeral Service Operative position and then onto a Trainee Funeral Director.

He was offered the chance to join the apprenticeship scheme, which marries on-the-job training with classroom-based learning about the industry.

Jyden said he was happy to be working within his local community, making a difference to the bereaved families during their time of need.

"Sometimes I get a mixed reaction, but usually people end up understanding the positives of having someone younger assisting with a funeral," he said.

"When I am making funeral arrangements, people often openly ask me how old I am.

"Generally, people are pleased to see a young person taking on a big responsibility in such a sensitive role. They understand how it can help young adults who are grieving to speak with someone their own age.

"I am of Caribbean descent, and we conduct a lot of funerals for the local Caribbean community. I have found that clients, families and local businesses appreciate having someone they can connect and relate to whilst arranging and directing a funeral for their loved ones.

"It can be a real comfort.

"Initially, my family were shocked when I told them it was something I wanted to pursue but they've given me their full backing.

Jyden said he would recommend the funeral industry to other young people and especially working at Funeral Partners.

"I love the job, and you never know who is going to walk through the door. Every client and their needs are different," he said.

"I know my career choice isn't for everybody. Some days are difficult, and you come across a lot of things which can be challenging, mentally and emotionally.

"But if you've got the mindset of wanting to help and support people and want to be able to work in a close-knit community, I would definitely recommend it."

Keith Clegg, who is Area Development Manager for Funeral Partners, said: "When I first interviewed Jyden, I could see his potential and had no doubts about giving him the position.

"He is extremely likeable and receives lots of praise and admiration from our clients and colleagues alike.

"He always goes the extra mile to support his clients and is more than willing to step in where needed to ensure a first-class client service."

For more information about careers at Funeral Partners, visit www.corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk/careers/

FUNDRAISER FROM FUNERAL PARTNERS IS PROUD WINNER OF CHARITY'S FIRST-EVER TOGETHER FOR CHILDHOOD AWARDS

Tireless fundraisers have been honoured in a children's charity's inaugural fundraising awards after helping to support children at one of the world's leading children's hospitals.

Jamie Groves, Regional Development Director at Funeral Partners, and his friend Charlotte Styles are the driving force behind Goals 4 GOSH – an annual football match featuring former Premier League players and stars of social media, television and music for Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity (GOSH Charity).

The pair have now been recognised in the charity's first ever Together For Childhood Awards, which celebrates members of the GOSH Charity community for their efforts.

Speaking after winning The Care Award, Jamie said: "To be honest, I didn't realise there were even awards going on.

"Getting chosen as the winner was a bit mind-blowing.

"Every single penny makes such a difference when it comes to the hospital's equipment, beds and everything else.

"They rely so much on the funding that the charity provides.

"So, it is a massive thanks to every single player, volunteer, supporter and everybody involved."

Jamie and Charlotte both have personal connections to Great Ormond Street. Charlotte said she thought Jamie was 'bonkers' when he suggested the first Goals 4 GOSH match

in 2021, with just six weeks to prepare.

She added: "It's incredible to have won the awards, and it's such a lovely thing to receive."

As well as the annual match – which is supported by Funeral Partners and our funeral plan company Choice – Goals 4 GOSH regularly sends teams to support other fundraisers and run other smaller events to support the charity. Jamie himself also completed several physical challenges to raise sponsorship money.

Nominations for the first-ever Together For Childhood Awards were shortlisted by a diverse panel of judges made up of charity volunteers and committee members.

Comedian and former GOSH patient Alex Brooker then had the privilege of selecting the winners.

He said: "Having been a GOSH patient myself, I know first-hand the impact your support has on the patients, families and staff at the hospital, making it the remarkable place it is today."

So, it is a massive thanks to every single player, volunteer, supporter and everybody involved. Special thanks to our principal sponsor Funeral Partners who help make this charity event happen.



For more information about Goals 4 GOSH, search for them on Instagram or TikTok at @Goals4Gosh.



THE ROLE OF FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS IN SUPPORTING BEREAVEMENT: BEFORE, DURING AND BEYOND

Emma Moore is an Area Development Manager at Funeral Partners. Here she discusses how her team and others like them across our high-quality network can support bereaved people during what is inevitably a difficult time.

As funeral professionals, we work hard to support families through one of the most stressful and emotionally draining time of their lives. The importance of bereavement support before, during and after the funeral cannot be underestimated.

A funeral is far more than just saying goodbye to a loved one — it plays a vital role in the grieving process.

Organising or attending a funeral can help support the early grief reactions of shock, disbelief and denial. From helping to organise a personalised funeral service to then witnessing their final journey, these rituals bring the reality of loss to the forefront. Even when the pain can seem overwhelming, taking part in this process can help.

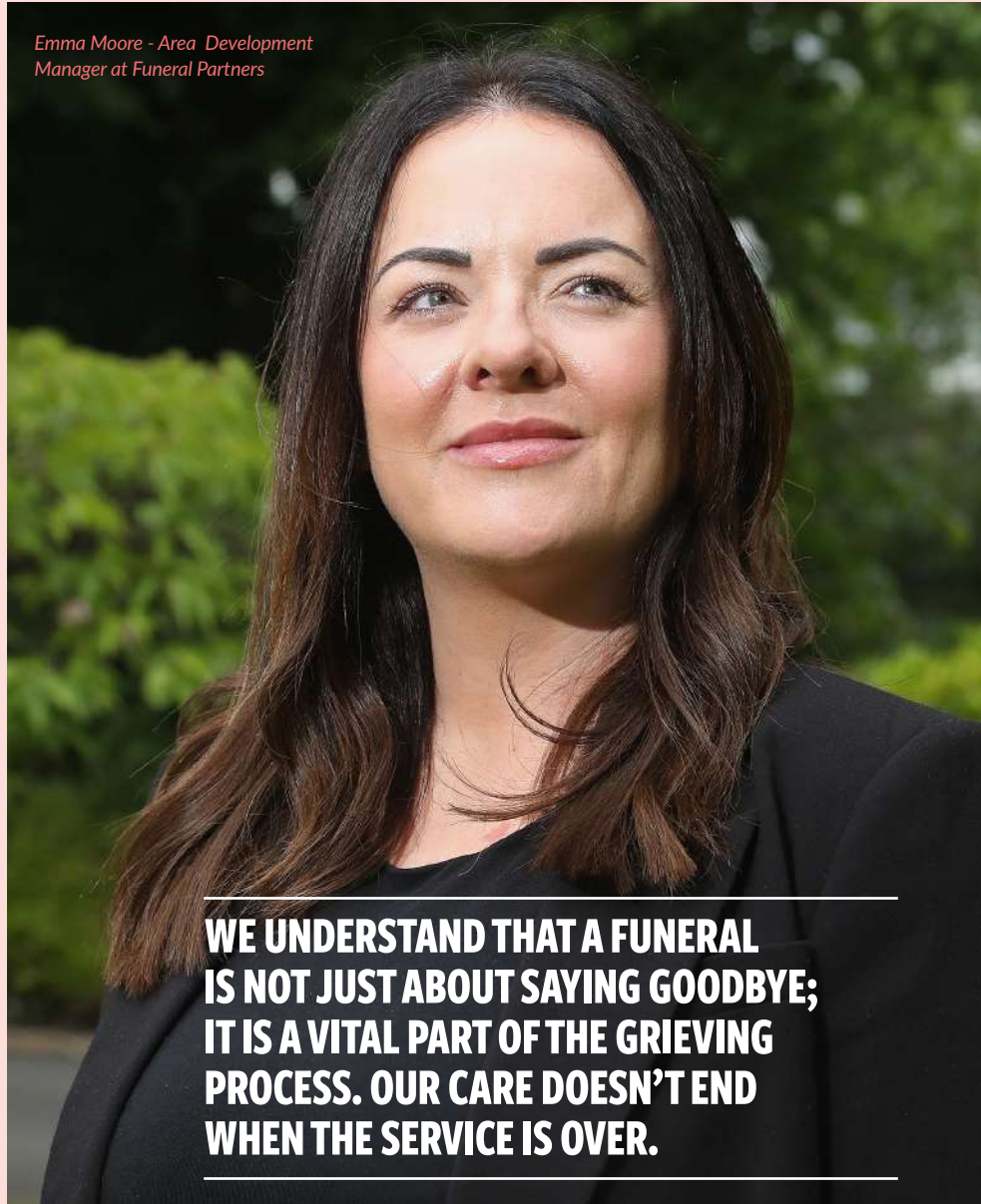
Similarly, spending time visiting with your loved one can offer a deeply personal and healing opportunity to say goodbye. Whether it is leaving a personal memento or simply sitting in quiet reflection, this time allows people to make the loss feel real – a critical step in processing grief.

We understand that a funeral is not just about saying goodbye; it is a vital part of the grieving process. Our care doesn't end when the service is over – we walk alongside families on their journey of healing, offering resources and compassion at every step, in whatever way we can.

At Funeral Partners, this ethos is at the heart of everything we do. We provide bereavement support resources tailored to different needs. For young people, we have developed Promise of Hope: The Teenage Youth Bereavement Project, which includes films featuring peer testimonials on coping with grief. These videos address everything from anniversaries to the challenge of returning to school after a loss, offering young people understanding and support in their darkest moments.

We also offer online memorials through MuchLoved, a platform where families can share memories, photos and condolences. This resource becomes a lasting tribute that offers comfort long after the funeral is over.

Emma Moore - Area Development Manager at Funeral Partners



WE UNDERSTAND THAT A FUNERAL IS NOT JUST ABOUT SAYING GOODBYE; IT IS A VITAL PART OF THE GRIEVING PROCESS. OUR CARE DOESN'T END WHEN THE SERVICE IS OVER.

Finally, initiatives like Bereavement Support Cafés and our candlelit memorial service, Light Up The Night, provide spaces for connection, reflection and remembrance. These events create a sense of community, allowing families to come together to honour their loved ones while finding support from others who share their journey.

Grieving is deeply personal, but no one should have to go through it alone. Funeral professionals play a unique role in guiding families through loss with care and compassion – helping them find their path to healing.

You can access support from the National Bereavement Service at any time by calling 0800 0246 121.

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT, AN OCCASION TO REMEMBER

Funeral Partners Northern Ireland has hosted the second candlelit service 'Light Up The Night, An Occasion to Remember' in Belfast Cathedral, the Cathedral Church of St Anne.

Dedicated to bereaved people throughout Northern Ireland, the service celebrated loved ones, friends and family members who are no longer with us.

The event, in conjunction with Cruse Bereavement Support, was attended by 650 people including the then High Sheriff of Belfast Cllr Sammy Douglas.

Everyone was encouraged to write a personal message about the person being remembered on a remembrance token. These tokens were then lovingly and carefully placed on remembrance trees.

The event offered a blend of inspirational music, reflection and shared compassion. Harpist Les Magee performed during the dimming of the cathedral lights for the Act of Remembering and guests joined in the singing of traditional hymns including 'Praise my soul the King of Heaven', 'Amazing Grace' and 'How Great Thou Art'.

James Brown, of **James Brown & Sons Funeral Directors**, said: "We meet families who are grieving every day of the year. Myself and the teams are acutely aware that this time of year can be extremely poignant for some.

"Hosting a candlelit service in memory of those who are no longer with us is a fitting tribute and an opportunity for those who have been bereaved to join with others for support and remember their loved ones.

"Our commitment to supporting individuals in our local communities is especially focused on those experiencing the journey of grief and loss.

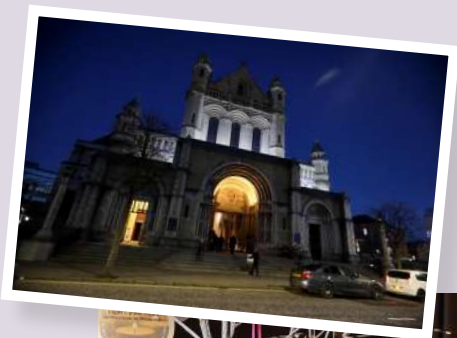
"We hope that this service provided a sense of comfort and peace while connecting people who share a similar path.

"A life well remembered lives on, and we truly believe it is important that we all pause and take a moment in remembrance at a service like this."



Thelma Abernethy of Cruse Bereavement Support Northern Ireland said: "We hope that the music, words, poems and prayers offered at the service 'Light Up The Night' brought some comfort to the families who attended in remembrance of their loved ones. Our Bereavement Volunteers were at the service to offer an empathetic ear and support to those attending."

Teams from Funeral Partners Northern Ireland businesses **Bairds of Antrim, Houston and Williamson, James Brown & Sons, John Gray & Co, Mulhollands Funeral Directors and Shields of Donaghadee** all assisted at the service.



SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS REGULATION OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS OPERATING IN SCOTLAND

Funeral Partners have made some changes to their ways of working to comply with the Scottish Government's new legislation as regulation of the funeral profession increases.



Funeral Partners have adapted their ways of working



Richard Van Nes, Director of Central Operations

The new Scottish Government's "Funeral Director Code of Practice" has recently become a legal requirement, with the act applying to all funeral business operating in Scotland.

As well as introducing regulations that ensure appropriate care of the deceased, funeral homes in Scotland will now be subject to unannounced inspections by Scottish Government inspectors to make certain standards are high and compliant with the new code of practice.

The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) has indicated that, in due course, they intend to look to implement a number of the practices and standards introduced in Scotland into their own code, which each Funeral Partners funeral home adheres to.

Over the past several months, Funeral Partners have reviewed all their working practices to ensure they are fully compliant with the new Scottish Code.

Richard Van Nes, Director of Central Operations at Funeral Partners, said: "As we were already meeting most of the standards that have been introduced by the new Code, we didn't need to change many of our policies, procedures and ways of working.

"There were some small changes to our ways of working that needed to be made along with a few new forms and documents that needed to be introduced, and I am proud of the way our teams have adapted.

"In order to ensure that all of the required changes were embedded before the deadline, we phased in the updates gradually so that all the team were up to speed well in advance.

"We are very much in favour of regulation across the industry. Regulation can help to provide peace of mind for families who may, naturally, be concerned about the care of their loved ones. Adhering to these codes of practice are a sure-fire sign of high-quality standards which people can trust.

"People trust Funeral Directors because of their local reputation and the way they have been looked after in the past, but it is important to have officials assessing overall standards as well.

"We have no concerns about people looking around our funeral homes – we are completely open and will always allow families to do so, when requested."

Some of the changes we have made to our ways of working in order to fully comply with the new Scottish Code included: revising documentation relating to care of the deceased and daily checks of each deceased person in our care; updated procedures and documentation when returning jewellery and personal effects to families; additional training and competency requirements for colleagues along with formal assessments, and some updates to documentation regarding the care and control of ashes following a cremation.

GIVING LOCAL CLUBS A SPORTING CHANCE

We are proud that our Funeral Partners businesses across the country are able to support grassroots sports teams. Here are a few of the clubs we are delighted to have sponsored over the last few months.



HUMPHRIS FUNERALS CELEBRATES 90 YEARS OF SPONSORSHIP WITH BANBURY UNITED FC

Humphris Funerals, a trusted name in the community for nearly 150 years, is marking a remarkable milestone: 90 years of continuous sponsorship of Banbury United Football Club.

Humphris Funerals have sponsored Banbury United since 1935, making them the club's oldest continuous sponsor.

Funeral Partners' Area Development Manager Emma Hollis said: "Banbury United is more than just a semi-professional football club; it's a cornerstone of our community. We feel everyone involved shares our commitment to friendship, wellbeing and bringing people together. The club is owned by its members and relies on a network of volunteers and community support, and it's why this sponsorship continues to mean so much to us, even 90 years on.

"Every season brings excitement for supporters of The Puritans. We believe the players will really go the extra mile to mark our 90-year sponsorship milestone with the Club's best season yet! As the Club's oldest continuous sponsor, we have increased our sponsorship, taking a pitch-side advertising board at the ground and an advert in the official matchday online programme."

FUNERAL DIRECTOR CONTINUES DEDICATED SUPPORT FOR HOMETOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Daren Persson Funeral Directors has continued supporting a local football club their founder has followed since he was a child.

The business remains the primary sponsor for North Shields Football Club – with Daren's name featuring on the stadium and the business prominent on the club's home strip.

The company has now supported the club for more than a decade.

"One of my rare memories of being a very young boy was my father taking me to Appelby Park – the old ground – but sadly a year later he passed," Daren said.

"The ground has been named after me for nine years but is affectionately nicknamed 'The Morgue' by some.

"The club and their supporters reflect the passion of our community and I am so proud to be associated with them."

Dennis Scarth, Chairman of North Shields FC added: "We really appreciate Daren's support and know he has been involved with the club for many years.

"Not only is it a considerable investment financially, we also know how important a figure Daren is in the community – and community is so crucial to us."



Daren Persson presents a cheque to Club Chairman Dennis Scarth with Senior Funeral Director Bill Bremner

A youth team at Tudhoe Cricket Club



CRICKET CLUB HIT FOR SIX BY LOYAL SUPPORT OF GORDON FLETCHER AND SONS

Gordon Fletcher and Sons have agreed to remain as the matchday sponsor for Tudhoe Cricket Club, which is more than a century old and just a mile from their funeral home in Spennymoor, County Durham.

Colin Fletcher, Business Principal, said backing the club was a great tribute to his father, Gordon, who was an avid cricketer.

"He was heavily involved in playing and running nearby Spennymoor Cricket Club for most of his life. However, he had a lot of friends who played for Tudhoe and had strong links with the club.

"Although Tudhoe were in a higher league, I can fondly remember many friendly charity matches regularly played between the two clubs over the years, especially the socialising afterwards."

BURTON FUNERAL DIRECTORS CONTINUE RELATIONSHIP WITH LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Murray's Funeral Directors have continued their support of the English Football League stalwarts Burton Albion.

Murray's have a long history of supporting the club and the Burton Albion Community Trust. They were also proudly the first company to hold a funeral service at the club's Pirelli Stadium back in 2019, with the ground's facilities still regularly used for wakes.

Sue Barke, Business Principal, said: "We are so happy to support the club – it is an integral part of Burton.

"We are regularly asked to add Albion themed touches to funerals, such as using the club's famous yellow and black colours, or people requesting for their loved ones to be dressed in a suit with a club tie.

"It's a real point of pride for us to give our clients their exact wishes."



Murray's Funeral Director's Business Principals
Sue Barke and David Barke with Burton Albion
Honorary Chairman Ben Robinson



Arthur Cambrey Funeral Directors, Llanelli

The funeral was carried out with dignity and class. All staff from beginning to end are professional and a huge help and support in sad times. They go above and beyond to make a difficult time manageable. Fantastic company to deal with.

CM

Thank you messages

Our team regularly receive messages of thanks and testimonials from families they have helped. Here is a recent selection of five-star ratings they have received for their service via Google Reviews.

Howard's Funeral Directors, Southport

So professional, thoughtful and helpful. The office is so calm, and we were always made to feel cared for and that our loved ones were also given the same care and respect.

They took care of our Dad and then our Mum just over a year later. I visited my Mum a couple of times and was given all the time I wanted there with her.

The funerals went so smoothly and we were proud of the send-off they had from Howard's.

We will be forever grateful that they made this traumatic experience as easy as possible.

JG

Toby Hunt Funeral Service, Earls Barton

I was impressed and gratified at their professionalism and grace.

When making arrangements for a close friend, Justina was swift yet thorough in ensuring all of the details were right, while doing so in a compassionate and understanding way.

The ceremony itself was dignified and conducted with a great deal of respect and attention to detail, and the follow-ups required were handled in a very personal way.

NW

Edwin Pounds & Sons Funeral Directors, Bradford

From start to finish, Michael and the team made everything so easy for us, which is what you need when you are going through such an awful time.

They were fabulous and our Mum got the send-off she truly deserved. We cannot thank you all enough.

JG

Banfield & Pomphrey Funeral Directors, Hastings

Tony, Molly and the team made a difficult time much easier from our first meeting after losing Dad.

They helped us through the whole process and nothing was too much trouble. Tony and Molly were our main contacts and were always available and happy to help us with any issue and advice. Very professional throughout and a lovely service.

AP

E Peart Funeral Director, Ryton

The staff were all very professional and caring and I was very pleased with how the funeral went. Darren was very reassuring at a very difficult and emotional time.

AP