

SUSSEX
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OUR GUIDE TO:

DO IT YOURSELF FUNERAL CARE
ORDERING THE RIGHT SIZE COFFIN
FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT IDEAS
CREMATION & BURIAL OPTIONS
...AND MUCH MORE

UK DIY FUNERAL PLANNING

BY JAKE WHITECROFT
SUSSEX WILLOW COFFINS

SUSSEXWILLOWCOFFINS.CO.UK

Planning Your Own Do It Yourself Funeral In The UK + 6 DIY Funeral Arrangement Ideas

By Jake Whitcroft of Sussex Willow Coffins

Wondering if you can make your own DIY funeral arrangements without a funeral director? Yes you can. In the UK there is no legal requirement to use a funeral director. **You are the funeral director!** Although most funerals are arranged by using a funeral director; it is completely possible to arrange a funeral yourself.

Guide To Planning Your Own DIY Funeral in the UK

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Taking Care of a Loved One After Death

If a person dies in a hospital or hospice, then they will keep and take care of the body; for a reasonable amount of time. They will also usually help arrange a medical certificate with cause of death detailed.

DIY Funeral Care Using A Funeral Director

If a person dies at home, don't feel rushed to call a funeral director. Take time to review your options and choices.

You may decide that you want the funeral directors full services; or a good professional will be happy to simply transport and care for the deceased. Leaving you the space to make funeral arrangements and plans yourself.

DIY Funeral Care Without Funeral Directors

Alternatively you can care for a loved one's body at home, providing the death is not referred to the coroner. However **you must call a doctor or ambulance in order to get a medical certificate**.

A loved one can be kept at home for around a week providing you keep the body cool. Reusable gel ice packs are a common way to do this with minimal expense. Some procedures are required to 'lay out' the body; you may wish to get some professional help or advice.

Registering A Person's Death

Next you must register the death within 5 days. Besides arranging a coffin it is not possible to make further arrangements until you have the death certificate.

Once you have registered the death you will receive a certificate for burial or cremation; known as a "green form". You will need this to book a crematorium or cemetery.

Choosing The Perfect Coffin

The next thing to do is purchase a coffin. Using a coffin is not a legal requirement, in theory a basic (or fancy) shroud is sufficient; however this is uncommon in the UK.

Order The Right Size Coffin

In order to size the coffin correctly your maker/supplier will need the measurements of the deceased. If they are being cared for at a hospital or hospice mortuary; it is possible to ask the staff for measurements, as this is common practice. If a loved one is at home you can take the measurements yourself; while liaising with your coffin supplier to get the sizing right.

Ordering A Coffin Online

Online suppliers are usually a deal cheaper than a funeral director, though beware of sub-standard, imported products. English made natural willow coffins and wicker basket caskets are generally of excellent quality; and are highly recommended as a safe choice.

Organisations such as the Good Funeral Guild (Guide) and the Natural Death Centre; have lists or recommended suppliers (including Sussex Willow Coffins). Beware that some crematoriums will require any coffin to be certified; by either the FFMA or CCSA to conform with their cremation process.

DIY Funeral: Cremation Options

When it comes to cremation there are two options, to have a ceremony at the crematorium or a direct cremation.

How To Book A Cremation

To book a cremation you will need to fill in a form at the crematorium or send it remotely. The form is generally referred to as 'Authority for the disposal of cremated remains'. You will also likely be asked to fill in a 'funeral instructions form'. This will specify the details of the person who has died and your preferred timings.

What is Direct Cremation?

At a direct cremation no ceremony is held at the crematorium; the body is passed straight to the back of the crematorium. You may be able to witness the charging process by arrangement with the crematorium. After a direct cremation you may wish hold a ceremony with the ashes; at a time and location of your choice.

This would also be the option to choose if you wish to have a cremation without a funeral service. Incidentally this could be the cheapest funeral available in the UK.

DIY Funerals: Burial Options

If you wish to arrange a burial then the first thing to consider is where to be buried; would you prefer a churchyard, traditional cemetery or a [woodland burial](#). Each have their own merits and your choice will likely be influenced by your loved ones belief and lifestyle; and your own values. Read our post for some help in deciding over a [burial or cremation](#).

Regardless of your choice you will be required to give the burial ground some specifics about your funeral planning.

These are as follows:

- a copy of the death certificate
- a plot application form
- your preferences for time and date of the burial
- the external dimensions of the coffin

TOP TIP: *Arranging a memorial headstone can be done at a later date; and is not a prerequisite for arranging the burial.*

Planning A DIY Funeral Memorial Ceremony

Whether at the crematorium, [natural burial grounds](#) or at your own choice of location; you will need to plan the ceremony if you wish to have one. Of great help in these matters are Independent Funeral Celebrants.

These are professionals that are not tied into a particular funeral directors; whose job it is to help guide you through making a meaningful ceremony. An authoritative directory of celebrants can be found at the [Association of Independent Celebrants](#).

6 DIY Funeral Arrangement Ideas

Other aspects of your memorial service should also be thought about. Here are a few ideas of things you can do yourself for the funeral ceremony:

1. **DIY Funeral Flowers**
2. **Order of Service**
3. **DIY Prayer Cards**
4. **Flower Keepsakes**
5. **Handmade Guest Book**
6. **DIY Funeral Favours**

DIY Funeral Flower Arrangements

Take a look at our gallery page to get some ideas and inspiration; on your DIY flower arrangements for funerals.



Transporting The Body

You will need to arrange transport of the body to the crematorium or cemetery. You do not need a hearse to transport a body, any vehicle with sufficient space in it can be used.

Often an estate car is sufficient or a van. It is important that the coffin will fit easily in the vehicle; so do check the external measurements of the coffin with your supplier or maker.

Our Guide To Planning Do It Yourself Funerals

We hope this short guide has been helpful in outlining the process of planning a funeral. We can tell you, as coffin makers; that arranging the funeral for your loved one can be a hugely rewarding task.

We have supported many families through the process and been honoured to supply a [Natural Willow Coffin](#) or [Wicker Basket Casket](#); to add something special to the occasion.

More About Our Wicker Coffins

To find out more about our company ethos and our natural, biodegradable and sustainable Wicker Funeral Caskets; visit our website at sussexwillowcoffins.co.uk