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# Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar 2026



**Thursday 30 April 2026**

DoubleTree by Hilton Stoke on Trent

Etruria Hall Festival Way, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5BQ

# Programme

9:30 Registration and Exhibition Viewing

10:30 Session one - What's on the horizon

## Welcome by the chair

**Councillor Mark Wilson, Vale of Glamorgan Council**

## The present and future of local authority bereavement services

- The current context
- Key findings of the State of the Market Survey 2026
- What's on the horizon

**Vickie Hacking, Principal Advisor, APSE**

## Direct Cremation: What it is, what it isn't, and why it matters'

- Direct cremation - The current challenges facing the sector
- Can local authorities exist alongside 'direct cremation'?
- Is it time to change approach?

**Mathew Crawley, Chief Executive, Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management**

## Implementing changes to improve future service delivery.

Clear Skies Software (part of IEG Group) – The seminars overall Sponsor.

### Audience question and answer session

11:30 Coffee, exhibition viewing and networking

12:00 Session two - Ask the Expert

## Andrew Bazeley, Lawyer, The Law Commission

This interactive session will provide the opportunity for delegates to hear from, ask questions, and discuss the outcome of the consultation on *reforming burial laws in England and Wales, addressing outdated legislation and proposing solutions for the growing challenges of burial space*

The session will also include an overview of the upcoming work of the commission on **Rights and Obligations Relating to Funerals, Funerary Methods and Remains**

13:00 Lunch, exhibition viewing and networking

14:00 Session three - Investing and improving for future generations

## £18m Regeneration of Highgate Cemetery

- The plan to restore and build
- Landscape improvements and mitigating the impact of climate change
- Enhancing the infrastructure and addressing the shortage of burial space

**Dr Ian Dungavell, Chief Executive at the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust**

## One step closer to replacing an existing 70-year-old facility

- Refurbishment or New Build?
- Securing the long-term future of the service
- Turning plans into reality

**Sheena Ratcliffe, Bereavement Services Manager, Derby City Council**

## Impacts of long grasslands at burial sites

- The importance of grassland.
- Implementing a strategy?
- Does it improve biodiversity – What the research says!

**Tom Guilbert-Newell, Sustainable Environment Officer, Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council**

### Audience question and answer session

15:00 Coffee, exhibition viewing and networking

15:30 Session four - Award winning!

## APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Innovation Awards 2026

This session focuses on **innovation in Bereavement Services.**

Featuring presentations from the shortlisted finalist, the announcement of the overall winner and presentation of the trophy.

16:30 Closing Remarks and seminar close

# Seminar Objectives

## About the Seminar

Bereavement Services are under increasing pressures to become self-sustaining commercial ventures, be adaptable to meet changing ethnic and lifestyle requirements and able to meet new legislative demands. Whilst these challenges must be met, ensuring customer service and empathy remains at the heart of service delivery is paramount.

Service managers are facing new and additional challenges including: dealing with increasing public health funerals, protecting and enhancing the local environment, preserving monuments and important historical graves, increased funeral poverty and reductions in budgets.

This seminar brings together a range of expert speakers who will showcase how they are meeting the challenges and creating bereavement services that are sustainable for the future, alongside maintaining excellence and empathy. There will also be the opportunity to network with colleagues and meet exhibitors of products and services which will help Bereavement Managers in delivering higher quality services..

## Who should attend?

- Service Directors
- Managers and officers (bereavement services, funeral services, cemeteries and crematoria,
- Grounds maintenance, greenspace, climate change and environmental services)
- Policy advisors, accountants and lawyers
- Performance Management officers
- Health and Safety Managers
- Sustainability and environmental officers
- Trade Union representatives
- Contractors and suppliers
- Voluntary organisation

## Venue

**DoubleTree by Hilton Stoke on Trent**  
**Etruria Hall Festival Way**  
**Stoke-on-Trent**  
**ST1 5BQ**



# Booking Information

## Delegate Packages Exclusive of VAT

### What's included?

*The delegate fee covers attendance, delegates' documentation, lunches and light refreshments.*

**APSE member delegate fee:** £199 + VAT

**Non member delegates fee:** £295 + VAT

**Commercial delegates:** £428 + VAT

Click [here](#) to reserve your place on this event

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