



## The Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation **FUNERAL GUIDE**

This leaflet has been prepared to explain our customary arrangements to our members and to encourage them to ensure their families have clear directions to follow when a loved one's life has ended. Everyone is strongly advised to make clear their wishes in both their will and with their next of kin.

**The Bristol and West Progressive  
Jewish Congregation**  
43 - 47 Bannerman Road  
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[www.bwpjc.org](http://www.bwpjc.org)

### **BEFORE THE FUNERAL**

#### **Instructions in a will**

Decisions around funerals can be very difficult for families during their time of grief, even more so if they have not been made aware of their loved one's wishes. The best way to make your wishes clear is to include such instructions in your will.

#### **Organising a funeral**

The funeral is organised by a funeral director, appointed and paid for by the family, in liaison with our Rabbi. You can find local funeral directors on yell.com or other internet search, or by looking in the yellow pages. Our congregation does not have a preferred director.

The Rabbi and funeral director will liaise to arrange a convenient date and time. The Rabbi will organise the service, working together with the family to reconcile Jewish tradition and teaching and the congregational *minhag* with all of the family's needs, compose the eulogy and support the bereaved. Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation can organise burial and cremation.

#### **Cemeteries**

The Synagogue conducts funerals in several cemeteries in the region. There are a few designated spaces in North Bristol at Canford and

many more in South Bristol at Bedminster Down. Each of these includes a crematorium. In addition, there is the new Woodlands cemetery in the beautiful Gloucestershire countryside. We can also conduct funerals in other cemeteries anywhere in the region. It is possible to buy a plot before your death.

### **Partners**

A grave in any burial ground is consecrated as Jewish by the funeral service held there. Subject to available space, all partners whether Jewish or not can be buried either together or as near as possible to each other. It is important to make this clear before your death.

### **Timing**

It is traditional in Judaism for funerals to take place immediately after death. There is no requirement for this and it has become customary for there to be a gap of a few days. A small interval may make it much easier for arrangements to be made, and for mourners who live some distance away to attend.

### **Costs**

Fortunately burial plots are considerably less expensive than in the South East but the costs can mount up, so it is wise to make some provision in advance. Buying a plot is one option. In addition there are funeral directors' fees, and charges made by the cemetery or crematorium and later a memorial stone. All our members will receive the full services of the Rabbi without additional charge. This will include leading the funeral service, delivering a eulogy, home visits and prayers on the same evening at home. For non-members, the costs are approximately the equivalent of two years' membership fees in the appropriate category and a quotation can be provided on request.

## **AT THE FUNERAL**

### **Service**

There is a standard, fairly short funeral service provided by Liberal Judaism. It is not traditional to have music at Jewish funerals but, again, that is not fixed and you should feel free to ask for whatever is going to make the funeral feel right for you and the other mourners. The rabbi (or whoever else is leading the service) will be happy to help you decide the form of service.

You can ask the person leading the service or someone else to give a eulogy and suggest the kind of things that the family would like remembered in this.

## **AFTER THE FUNERAL**

### **Prayers/Shivah**

The seven-day period of mourning, known as *shivah*, begins on the day of the funeral and ends on the morning of the seventh day. It is unusual for members of our community to hold a formal *shivah* for seven days, but that can be arranged if requested. If requested, a service can be held at the home of the bereaved in the evening of the day of the funeral, or later in the week. Some of our members also choose to have prayers at the Synagogue.

### **Stone setting or memorial**

Some ten or eleven months after the funeral, a *matzeivah*, or memorial stone, is erected and a service of consecration held. The Rabbi can assist with traditional Hebrew wording to add to the English inscription.

### **Remembrance Prayers**

These can be read if family members wish in the Synagogue on the *Shabbat* before the anniversary of death (*yahrzeit*) and also during the *Yom Kippur yizkor*, or memorial service. It is up to members whether they would prefer this linked to the Jewish or secular calendar date. Please ensure that the Chair of the Rites & Practices Committee knows what you want so that you can attend and recite the *kaddish* (memorial prayer). Both the secular and the corresponding Jewish date will be listed in *Elonim*, the Synagogue electronic newsletter.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

For further information please refer to the Synagogue website from which emails can be sent to different members of the Synagogue [www.bwpjc.org](http://www.bwpjc.org)

To organise a funeral: Rabbi M Mayer on 0117 403 3458  
[rabbi.mmayer@gmail.com](mailto:rabbi.mmayer@gmail.com)

NB If the Rabbi is unavailable, there are members of the Synagogue with considerable experience who can officiate in her stead. Please contact our funeral secretary, David Jewell on +44 7884 430854 or email [bwpjc@bwpjc.org](mailto:bwpjc@bwpjc.org).

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