

CPG for Funerals and Bereavement
Wednesday 2nd March 2016
Room TG20/21

MINUTES

In attendance:

Stuart McMillan MSP (Co-convener)	Ann McMurray
Nanette Milne MSP (Co-convener)	Dom Maguire
John Birrell	Gerard Boyle
Paul Cuthell	Nigel Lymn Rose
Stewart Wilson	William Millar
James Blackburn	John Williamson
Andrew Brown	David Beamer (Secretary)

Item 1: Apologies

Willie Coffey MSP	Mark Hazelwood
Bob Doris MSP	

Item 2: Approval of Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes of our last meeting were approved.

Item 3: Update

None.

Item 4: Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Bill

The Group discussed the Bill and its current progress.

On timing, Nanette Milne confirmed that the Bill is expected to complete its stages by dissolution. She stated that she would be happy to receive comments from Group members. The Committee Clerk was also a good person to contact.

James Blackburn stated that there was no evidence that there was a problem with funeral directors in Scotland. There were also references made to funeral directors based on UK data of one company in the sector rather than Scotland only figures for the entire sector.

John Birrell stated that the Bill should take into account the rising Local Authority charges for cremation and burial.

Item 5: Funeral Poverty / Social Fund Support

John Birrell outlined the report he co-authored with Citizens Advice on the Social Fund. It made 25 recommendations and 24 have been accepted by the Scottish Government.

Mr Birrell stated that funeral poverty has four varying factors and that the Social Fund Working Group met on 29th February to discuss the social fund funeral payment and funeral plans. A discussion was then held on organisations that exist in the sector and the regulation of funeral plans.

Item 6: Death Certification

A discussion was held on the recent death certification changes in Scotland. Nigel Lymn Rose provided an update on death certification changes due in England and Wales.

Item 7: Date of future meeting

Stuart McMillan stated that the Group will cease on 23rd March and will need to be reformed after the Scottish Parliament elections on 5th May. A meeting of the Group will need to be scheduled before the summer recess, around the end of June.

Item 8: AOB

The Group warmly thanked Nanette Milne for her years of service on the Group and wished her a very happy retirement.