

# CPG for Funerals and Bereavement

13<sup>th</sup> March 2013

## Minutes

### Attendance:

Nanette Milne MSP (co-Convener)  
Stuart McMillan MSP (co-Convener)  
Fiona McLeod MSP  
Alan Fraser  
John Birrell  
James Blackburn  
Alan Slater  
Nigel Lymn Rose  
Gerry Boyle  
Gordon McGown  
David Beamer (Secretary)

### Item 1: Apologies

Bob Doris MSP  
Helen Eadie MSP  
Dominic Maguire  
Paul Cuthell  
Graeme Brown

### Item 2: Approval of Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

### Item 3: Mortonhall Crematorium / investigation by Dame Elish Angiolini

A discussion was held about Mortonhall Crematorium and confirmation by City of Edinburgh Council that it had commissioned The Right Honourable Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC to lead an investigation.

Nanette Milne MSP asked that, in due course, it would be good to invite Dame Elish to attend a future Group meeting. A discussion was held about the investigation and John Birrell offered to send to Group members, via the Secretary, a weblink to the Scottish Government guidance on the disposal of pregnancy tissue under 24 weeks gestation. John Birrell also agreed to contact the official in the Scottish Government regarding compliance of this guidance and find out when they intended to contact Health Boards to check their progress in implementing the guidance. Gerry Boyle outlined arrangements in Glasgow and dialogue with Glasgow City Council.

**Item 4: Bob Doris MSP constituent issue on repatriation**

Bob Doris MSP was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting but Stuart McMillan MSP hoped that he would be able to raise this issue at the next meeting of the Group.

Fiona McLeod discussed a repatriation case and issues with a death certificate. Gerry Boyle outlined how the problems experienced regarding the death certificate could be resolved.

Stuart McMillan asked about repatriation arrangements between different EU member states and Nigel Lynn Rose outlined the current arrangements and the anomalies that exist.

**Item 5: Non-MSP membership applications**

A discussion was held about the new Cross Party Group rules and membership requests from two organisations:

- The Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care (founder of the Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief alliance)
- Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity (SANDS)

The Group examined the current non-MSP members, how other Groups operated, and the two organisations that had requested to join. Nanette Milne stated that the Group had been successful to date and believed that having new non-MSP members could broaden the Group's appeal to other MSPs who weren't currently a member of the Group. Stuart McMillan said that the Group was one of the smaller Cross Party Groups but had been effective. Fiona McLeod stated that joint Group meetings were also very successful and outlined the new rules that applied to Groups.

Alan Fraser discussed the range of bereavement groups in Scotland, Cruse's remit and welcomed new bereavement organisations joining the Group.

Nanette Milne needed to attend another meeting and although Fiona McLeod was present along with Stuart McMillan, a decision could not be taken about the new membership requests as Fiona McLeod was not listed as a member of the Group. Fiona McLeod asked to be listed as a Group member and the Secretary agreed to liaise with co-conveners to ensure that she was added.

Stuart McMillan asked for the two membership requests to be discussed again at the next meeting and requested the Secretary to update both of applicants on the discussion that had taken place and the reason why a decision had not yet been taken.

**Item 6: Procurator Fiscal service**

James Blackburn outlined a recent meeting held between a Depute Procurator Fiscal and funeral directors in Edinburgh and the Lothians area. The meeting examined communication problems

that were being experienced and the impact this was having on the service they provided to the bereaved. Since the meeting, it was reported that there had been an improvement in communication and further administrative steps were to be introduced by the Procurator Fiscal.

**Item 7: Death Certification / Retained Ashes**

A discussion was held on the death certification pilots, the impact of the changes on delays to funerals, implications for particular faiths, and cross-border form anomalies. It was agreed to put this item on the agenda at the next meeting to review developments.

The Secretary confirmed that there was no date set for when the solution on retained ashes proposed by the Group would be adopted in Scotland.

**Item 8: Social Fund funeral payments / Budgeting Loans**

A discussion was held about research undertaken into funeral poverty. Nigel Lymn Rose stated that he was not aware of any successful awards of social fund budgeting loans to provide additional support for the bereaved needing support to pay for a funeral.

Alan Slater stated that the NAFD would be examining ways that the social fund could be reformed to help address funeral poverty concerns.

**Item 9: New Cross Party Group rules**

Item 9 was discussed with item 5.

**Item 10: Date of next meeting**

Stuart McMillan requested that meetings for the rest of 2013 were agreed in advance.

**Item 11: AOB**

Alan Fraser thanked Stuart McMillan on behalf of CBCS for his motion in November entitled "Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland Celebrates 10 Years".