



A Guide to Funerals

At the London Buddhist Centre

Organising and running a funeral often involves a lot of people and planning, which of course needs to happen in a short space of time and under sensitive emotional conditions. This pack is designed to offer a guide and context for discussion, and will hopefully help all those involved to create a positive and memorable event.

Who is likely to be involved?

In addition to the friends and family who may attend a funeral at the LBC, the following people are likely to be involved in organising a funeral at the LBC:

LBC Funeral Manager

Currently either Maitreyaraja or Vidyadaka – responsible for organisation on behalf of the LBC, including liaison with the Sangha Friend and the Funeral Directors, notifying LBC communities and class leaders about arrangements and assisting on the day.

Sangha Friend

The Sangha Friend is the link person between the LBC and the deceased's family and friends. As well as being the liaison with the LBC Funeral Manager and the Funeral Directors, they will also play a part in making arrangements with the Funeral Leader and Shrine Maker.

Funeral Leader

Usually a good friend of the deceased and will take on leading the ceremony, puja and ritual(s) that form the main part of the funeral.

Funeral Hosts

Usually friends of the deceased and/or LBC team who will support the funeral act as hosts at the LBC on the day.

Shrine Maker

Responsible for making and clearing away the shrine.

Reception team

Responsible for covering LBC reception on the day.

LBC team

Responsible for audio and visual needs. If it is a very large funeral the team can also be available for security, hosting and clearing up.

Class Leaders

Anyone leading a regular class at the LBC that may be affected by a funeral.

Funeral Directors

A local company who will be involved in all pre and post funeral arrangements.

The first things that happen:

Once one of the LBC's Funeral Managers has been informed of a death in the Sangha:

LBC Funeral Manager contacts Mahamati (Order Register) informing of the death and begins liaising with the **Sangha Friend**, regarding details of death and other considerations, such as possible dates for the funeral.

Funerals can be held at the LBC for those who have a long-term, active involvement with Triratna Buddhist Order and the LBC. A usual assumption would be that funerals could take place at the LBC for those who have been ordained, although this may not always be the case. The **LBC Chairperson** may need to be involved at this stage.

The LBC cannot guarantee to be able to hold a funeral. Since all events will need to run as programmed, the funeral will need to take place at a time that is workable with the activities at the LBC.

Once it has been agreed that the funeral ceremony will be at the LBC: The manager and friend would identify a **Funeral Leader** (could be Amorasiddhi if no immediate leader is likely).

The manager will pass on information about **Funeral Directors** to the Sangha Friend, who will contact the funeral directors and then the crematorium. The friend will also find a shrine maker for and start finding hosts the funeral.

Final agreement of date, timings and overall arrangements for LBC funeral will then need to happen and an outline of the funeral programme, resource requirements (eg seating, IT etc) and expected numbers proposed.

Once this has been agreed, the manager will book rooms at the LBC, inform LBC communities, inform the reception team regarding cover and security expectations, liaise with class leaders (esp. lunch classes) and find class cover if needed. The manager will also organise the ordering of chairs (through the caretaker) if needed (the LBC has 70 chairs).

Local Funeral Directors

W. English and Son

464a Bethnal Green Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0EA

Telephone: 020 7739 8933

Co-operative

191a Mare Street, Hackney, London, Middlesex, E8 3QE

Telephone: 020 8985 5861

Email: hackney@letsco-operate.com

Other important considerations:

Organise people for readings, music, rejoicings etc.

Sangha Friend and Funeral Leader

Decide on arrangements for food and refreshments.

NB cutlery and plates for only 30 people, and no space for food preparation.

It may be possible to liaise with communities on food preparation.

Sangha Friend and LBC Funeral Manager

Finalise funeral programme and names for required reserved seats and decide (according to numbers) on the level of IT support required.

LBC Funeral Manager, Sangha Friend, Funeral Leader

Banner on LBC website front page with notification of funeral and send email notification of funeral. Print the funeral Order of Service.

LBC Funeral Manager

Prepare the coffin – it is recommended that the cheapest coffin is bought and decorated by friends at the Funeral Directors. The Sangha Friend will also choose clothes for the deceased to wear, including kesa for Order Members

Sangha Friend

Organise arrangements for post-funeral ceremony at the crematorium.

Sangha Friend and Funeral Leader



On the day of the funeral:

Between 7.00 and 8.00am

LBC Funeral Manager, Sangha Friend, Shrine Maker and Funeral Hosts arrive to begin preparations for the funeral. Including:

Prepare the shrine, with images of the deceased, some of their possessions etc.

Shrine cloth laid on mats in front of the shrine for coffin.

Set out flowers around the LBC.

Shrine Maker

If previously agreed: Set up video and sound link to reception.

Set up slide show of the deceased, displayed on bookshop computer and through projector in main reception area.

Set up long table in reception area for tea, refreshments and food (if required).

Set up chairs around the edge of the Shrine Room and cushions in rows.

Reservation cards placed on chairs and cushions.

Order of Service and other print-outs placed on reception.

Courtyard gate unlocked and ready for opening.

LBC Funeral Manager

9.45am Reception open and staffed and between 9 and 10am

someone is ready to open the courtyard gate for the arrival of the coffin.

10.00am

The coffin is taken into the Shrine Room and placed in-front of the shrine by the funeral directors.

NB: The coffin is usually open, but the Sangha Friend and others can decide on this.

10.00am onwards

Funeral Hosts in reception to welcome people as they begin to arrive to sit with the body.

Friend(s) on the door of the Shrine Room to help people find their seats.

Funeral guests begin to arrive during the morning.

12.00 noon

The funeral ceremony starts (midday is earliest start time).

The funeral usually lasts 2-3 hours; guests are free to come and go from the Shrine Room throughout that time. The funeral needs to be punctual and adhere to the Order of Service. This is the responsibility of the **Funeral Leader**.

12.45pm

The lunchtime class leader will need to be around to be on the front door to direct lunchtime class participants to the basement or small shrine room, as previously agreed.

14.30-15.00pm

Funeral ceremony ends and guests are welcome to stay for tea and refreshments. Tea and refreshments can be served, but will need to be hosted and decided upon in advance.

After the funeral.

Once the funeral directors have arrived and are ready to remove the coffin, we suggest there be a short ritual for closing the coffin in the Shrine Room (eg: two close friends to close the lid). The exit of the coffin from the LBC could also be marked with chanting the Vajrasattva mantra, for example, and a final bell. This could be led by the Funeral Leader. Then the hearse will be drive to the crematorium. (If the LBC programme allows, the body can stay overnight, giving more time for friends to sit with the body, so these closing rituals could be done the following day, but it would be the responsibility of the Funeral Leader and Sangha Friend to organise this in collaboration with the LBC Funeral Manager)

The funeral party to will leave to the crematorium. Maps may need to be provided. (NB The LBC cannot provide transport.)

Clear-up at the LBC. The LBC will need to be readied for use by the next class, and will need to be returned to a clean and usable state. This will mainly be done by the funeral hosts, but the LBC team can also be called upon to help. Please note that no food should be left at the LBC.

The Ceremony at the crematorium will be independent of the LBC and will need to be organised separately by the Sangha Friend.

Follow up.

The LBC will need to be reimbursed for costs, which will include chair hire, any IT costs and a small charge to cover running costs. This will need to be taken into account when planning the funeral.

Current possible Funeral Managers are **Maitreyaraja** (0208 709 9984) or **Vidyadaka** (0208 709 9988).

This is a check list for some of the important things that need to be remembered.

	Inform the Order Register
	Photos on LBC Shrine
	Book rooms at the LBC
	Re-arrange and inform Class Leaders
	Communities and Mandala informed
	Enough Chairs and Reserved Seating
	Prepare Coffin
	Choose Clothes and Kesa for Deceased
	Shrine maker and a few possessions
	Flowers for LBC
	Hosts, Funeral Leader, Friends
	Readings, Photos, Poems, Mantras
	Final Ritual and Mantras
	Tea and Cake Organisers
	Crematorium Directions
	Funeral Financial Costs covered
	Clear Up considered

