

ITV REPORT INTO TRUE COST OF FUNERALS HIGHLIGHTS NOW IS THE TIME FOR CHANGE

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Alternative Options Becoming Increasingly Popular

An investigation conducted by ITV's Tonight programme into the True Cost of Funerals has questioned whether the era of the traditional funeral is over.

The programme, aired last night (Thursday 1st October), was prompted by the ever-rising cost of funerals and the inconsistent and excessive pricing for funeral and cremation services across the UK with funeral poverty being at an all-time high.

It is not a new situation and indeed has long been a subject of debate, more recently triggering a move to alternative options, which the ITV Tonight team revealed are becoming increasingly popular.

One such option is direct cremation where the deceased is collected, cared for, and then cremated without a service or mourners present – offering grieving families an affordable and liberating alternative.

It hit the headlines when the singer and musician David Bowie famously opted for a direct cremation over a traditional funeral, after which a celebration of his life was held on a beach in Bali where his ashes were scattered.

Pure Cremation [<https://purecremation.co.uk>], the UK's leading direct cremation provider has been reshaping the funeral landscape since it was established in 2015.

In an interview with the ITV Tonight team, the company's co-founder and Customer Experience Director Catherine Powell said: "We are seeing more and more people coming to us saying they want to spend as little as possible, to celebrate a loved one's life but not waste money on the frills.

"Times are changing. Weddings have changed beyond all recognition and I think we are going to see that with funerals too where people are more willing to separate the cremation from the farewell."

Catherine was also keen to stress that it is not just a question of cost, but believes that the growth in demand for this style of service is down to more profound and human factors - a desire to truly celebrate what made someone special, and this will change the funeral landscape forever.

David Bowie's choice, she said, put to bed the misconception that direct cremation was a 'poor man's choice'.

Cost transparency too was found to be a key point of contention. A Parliamentary enquiry led by former MP Lord Frank Field in 2016 revealed that only eight per cent people shopped around when selecting a funeral director and were seldom asked what they could afford. Further as part of its current investigation into the funeral industry the Competition & Markets Authority has included a recommendation in its interim report which demands transparency from all funeral directors and crematoria on pricing and ownership.

Pure Cremation takes the view that every funeral provider serves vulnerable customers, with a higher duty of care than other businesses when it comes to clear pricing and service information, and as such have been displaying prices on its website and literature since it first opened its doors.

Catherine said: "The provision of quality of care and the utmost dignity to our clients is embedded in Pure Cremation's DNA.

"A direct cremation allows families to mark the passing of their loved ones in their own time and in

their own way, often in a place that holds very dear memories.

“It also helps avoid the financial stress by tailoring the whole farewell to their budget. Too many people get into debt when they arrange a traditional funeral because they don’t anticipate how much all the extras will cost.

“Our lives, beliefs and personalities are hugely diverse, yet traditional funeral services so often don’t reflect this. Thankfully this is now beginning to change, and we are proud to be at the forefront of this transformation.”

Catherine co-founded Pure Cremation with funeral director husband Bryan in response to demand for simple services with transparent pricing. Pure Cremation offers the same affordable package, from £1,195 across the UK including Northern Ireland.

The company takes care of the deceased, arranges a respectful cremation, and hand-delivers the ashes afterwards or, alternatively, families can choose to scatter the ashes at Pure Cremation’s Charlton Park Crematorium near Andover, Hampshire.

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