



AN EPIDEMIC OF CHANGE: HOW BOTH LIFE AND DEATH WILL BE DIFFERENT AFTER CORONAVIRUS

We are eating better, exercising more, seeing more wildlife and have rejoiced in the cleaner air.

Many of us are spending more time talking to friends and family and enjoying the freedom that comes with working from home.

Of course, the COVID-19 lockdown has been hard, and we have missed many simple pleasures, from hugging loved ones to a relaxed pub lunch with friends.

Yet something fundamental has changed about British people's frame of mind – a YouGov survey found only 9% of Britons want life to return to 'normal' after the coronavirus outbreak is over.

This shift in attitude has also become apparent in the way the British public has been prompted to confront mortality and funeral arrangements, according to a funeral industry pioneer.

As part of the lockdown measures the UK Government limited the number of people at funerals to immediate family members to limit social contact and so reduce the spread of the deadly virus, with some councils banning any mourners from entering their crematoria.

Whilst measures are being significantly reduced from the 4th July, there will still be restrictions on numbers, meaning mourners still have to decide whether to hold a smaller funeral without the comfort of being surrounded by friends and family, or to separate the two elements of a funeral so that the practicalities can be taken care of without delay but the 'proper' send-off is postponed until everyone can be together.

Pure Cremation founder Catherine Powell says direct cremations, where the deceased is collected, cared for and then cremated without a service or mourners present, have given grieving families solace during these difficult times, ensuring respectful care of the deceased while families plan a personalised send-off at a later date.

And Catherine predicts they will continue to grow in popularity even now the end of the Covid-19 crisis is in sight.

She said: "Direct cremations allow families to focus entirely on marking the passing of loved ones in a tailored and heartfelt way, holding meaningful memorial events in their own time and at a place to suit them.

“People who had never even heard of direct cremation before coronavirus have had positive experiences. Our staff have given them the emotional comfort of laying a loved one respectfully to rest, plus the confidence to embrace the freedom to create a personalised event – so we believe that, post-epidemic, these families will spread the word about the quality of our care and the benefits of doing things “their way”.

“Sadly, we have also seen a small number of families having to arrange more than one funeral in quick succession, and direct cremation has helped make this both straightforward and more affordable.”

Pure Cremation is however acutely aware of the emotional trauma faced by families where a direct cremation hasn't been their first choice and the new online memorial service, Pure Memories, will give every family additional support.

Available totally free of charge, Pure Memories allows clients to create and share very personal memorials with family and friends, who can add their own special memories, photos and readings too. It's even possible to light personalised virtual candles.

Catherine added: “Pure Cremation has been at the forefront of reshaping the market, both before and after COVID-19. More and more people are opting for a simple cremation followed by a celebration of life. It is a privilege to help them care for their loved ones in a sensitive and professional way, both during the immediate aftermath of loss and in the years to come.”

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