

Guidance notes and instructions for own bearers

The following notes are our recommendations as part of W.S.Ingham & Son Ltd policy for family members wishing to assist in carrying a coffin. Although in most instances it is not necessary, we can invite those who wish to carry into the office, and have members of staff at hand to assist and advise with the removal of the coffin from the hearse, the raising of the coffin to shoulder height, and the lowering of the coffin onto trestles. We feel this would give confidence to people who have never been involved before. W.S.Ingham & Son Ltd staff will lower the coffin into a grave if an interment is required.

It is a requirement that you also read and understand the relative risk assessment for bearers. This form is available to download at www.wsingham.co.uk from the 'Useful Information' page. A hard copy can also be made available for those who request one. No own Bearers will be accepted without the risk assessment being read and understood and the relevant **Certificate of Indemnity for coffin bearer** Disclaimer being signed by each person wishing to carry the coffin of the deceased.

Please note: This Disclaimer must be returned to W S Ingham & Son Ltd, no later than 9.00am the day before the Funeral.

Please note: If a funeral service is on a Monday then this form must be handed in no later than 3.00pm on the previous Friday.

Those persons who do not wish to receive full instruction should make themselves known to the conductor of the funeral at the earliest opportunity and certainly at the place the service is to be held. The conductor will establish who is to be in what position at the coffin i.e. heights of opposing bearers should be as closely matched as possible. They will be told to face their opposing bearer as they assist the coffin from being withdrawn from the hearse.

Please note: A member of W.S.Ingham & Son Ltd staff will run through the necessary procedure one final time before the coffin is withdrawn from the hearse.

Once the coffin is clear of the tailgate of the hearse and upon instruction from the conductor, the bearers will raise the coffin together to shoulder height and move themselves into position by putting their shoulders under the coffin facing the way they will walk. The conductor will assist the raising of the coffin to shoulder height. They will be advised to take short steps starting with the left foot after the conductor has bowed at the coffin and said the words "thank you gentlemen".

Once at the trestles or catafalque, they will be told to halt. At the command of the conductor they should reposition themselves to take the coffin off their shoulders and support all the weight in their hands lowering onto the trestles or catafalque, but not releasing the coffin until the conductor gives the command. The conductor will support the head end of the coffin during this time.

Bearers will now face to the congregation and take the lead from the conductor. The conductor will seat the congregation whilst the bearers remain facing toward them. The conductor will the turn and face the bearers at the trestles/catafalque to which the conductor will bow their head. Bearers will then bow their heads and walk away from the coffin in an orderly fashion, taking their seats in the pews.

