

Choosing a Funeral Tea Venue

The post funeral reception is as much a part of saying goodbye as is the funeral service itself, so hopefully the following will provide a few thoughts and ideas about what you can do when it comes to organising a post funeral reception for a loved one.

What is the purpose of a Funeral Tea?

There was a time not so very long ago when families would all live near to each other and see each other on a regular basis. However, these days it is quite common for people to leave the area that they were born or brought up in to go to university, or to move for work or family purposes. Families are often scattered across the country and sometimes across the world; despite modern technology providing new ways of keeping in touch, a funeral can sometimes, be one of those rare occasions when all the members of the family meet up.

Even if family members remain concentrated in one geographical area, it would be surprising if people did not have friends and acquaintances from different parts of the country, and therefore it is likely that at least some of the people attending a funeral will have travelled a considerable distance to be there. They will therefore benefit from having the chance to catch up with or meet people and to rest and refresh themselves before travelling back home.

What sort of Funeral Tea?

Like a funeral, a funeral reception can still be a traditional affair, or it can be more of a unique occasion. Just because other people are choosing to personalise receptions and make them celebrations does not mean that you have to. You should do what you think your loved one would have wanted, what you think is appropriate and what your family and friends will be comfortable with. You might choose to have a formal sit-down occasion or perhaps just a very casual get together afterwards with friends and family..

How many people will be attending?

Decide who you want to come to the funeral reception – is it for everyone attending the funeral, or just very close friends and family? It is important that you have at least a rough idea of how many people are likely to be attending the funeral tea so that you can judge how much food and drink and how big a venue you need to provide.

Make sure when you tell people about the funeral that you also tell them that there will be a reception afterwards and ask them if they are likely to come along so that you can have an idea of how many will be coming, to avoid over or under catering (if you choose to do so).

What venue to choose for a Funeral Tea?

Traditionally, post funeral receptions have taken place in church halls or parish rooms next to the church where the funeral has taken place. The choice of venue is a key way of personalising the Funeral Tea. If you are only expecting a small gathering, you could hold the event at the home.

Alternatively, you could choose to hold it in a venue that meant something to them – their local pub possibly, or a favourite restaurant, cafe, social club or hotel. The choice of venue potentially gives you the option to be imaginative. If they were a keen sports player then enquire to see if it could be held where they used to play – their local football, cricket, rugby or netball club for example. Jubilee Pavilion in Sway is the home of Sway Senior and Junior Football Clubs, Sway Tennis Club and Sway Cricket Club. If they were a keen musician or actor then maybe the concert hall or theatre where they used to perform would be available. There really are a wide variety of options.

Timings

When organising a venue, make sure you think about timings. What time is the funeral due to start, when will it finish, how long will it take people to travel from the location of the funeral to the reception venue and, therefore, what time will people start to arrive at the venue and what time are they likely to leave. You obviously want to make sure that everything is ready at the venue by the time people start to arrive and you also need to book it for long enough to cover the period that people will want to be there.

If some of the people there are family members who have travelled a long way and have not seen other family members for a long time then they are probably not going to be in a hurry to leave. They will probably want to stay and chat, to have a real good catch up and also talk about the person who has passed away. You do not want to be in a position where you have to ask people to leave because you have only booked the venue for an hour or two. Alternatively, if you want a specific venue but can only book it for an hour or two, make sure people know that and have a back up where people can go to after the main reception, such as a pub or someone's house, so that the event can continue informally.

What to do about catering for a Funeral Tea?

If you are providing a post funeral reception then your guests will expect food and drink of some kind. You have three broad options when it comes to catering: self-cater, get an outside catering company to do it and bring it to the venue, or hold the reception in a venue which also provides food and drink, such as a pub, hotel or restaurant.

At Jubilee Pavilion you can self-cater or get in whichever caterers you like (many people use some of the upmarket supermarketing entertaining / catering ranges for such events). Whatever option you choose, you will need to have at least a vague idea of numbers. You do not want to spend lots of money on food and drink only for there to be loads left over, but at the same time you want to have enough and for people who have travelled a long way to not go away feeling hungry.

If you are self-catering, think about the logistics. Are you going to have time to prepare food and drink on the day of the funeral as well as doing other things? Who will serve food and drink and will it be ready when people get to the venue, or will they have to wait for you to sort it out? Also, do not forget to cater for vegetarians and people with special dietary needs.

Catering is another opportunity for you to personalise the reception. You might want to serve your loved one's favourite food or drink.?

The same applies with drink. Maybe they were a real ale fan, or liked nothing more than a nice cup of tea? If you are getting help from an outside catering company, talk to them about your options.

It also might be nice (although poignant) to create a photo display of their life, provide a slide show and a talk about them, or decorate the venue (with permission) with some items that people would associate with that person and which meant something to them.

How big is the budget?

Make sure you budget for the occasion. It can be very easy when you are feeling upset to go ahead and organise things without thinking about the cost implications; feeling that no cost is too much for the person who has just passed away. Just remember that you need to be able to afford it, so work out what you can reasonably afford to pay out and try to stick to that. Factor in the hire of the venue and catering.

Notifying people of the event

If people are attending a funeral, they will not automatically expect there to be a post funeral reception, or at least one which they can attend. Who can attend tends

to vary – some people only want close friends and family to attend, other people are happy for as many people as possible to attend, so it is important to communicate that to people. Let people know about the reception when you are telling them about the funeral so that they can plan accordingly. Make sure other family members who might be speaking to people also know to tell them about the reception. People need to know who can come, where it will be and when it will be.

If you are putting a notice in the local paper about the funeral, then remember to include details about the reception as well and also include details as a reminder at the end of the funeral order of service, if you are having one. Also, remember to provide directions if the venue is hard to find, is a long way from the funeral location, or if people do not know the area very well, and a postcode which they can put into their SatNav.

If there are people who are walking to the funeral and the venue is a considerable distance away, you might think about transportation to make sure that everyone (particularly elderly friends and relatives) are able to attend.

Personal Choice

Choosing the right Funeral Tea venue is a personal choice. If you would like to know more about Jubilee Pavilion in Sway as a venue, then please: Email: info@sway-pc.gov.uk or e:07789 004944