

# Shaping the Future

Setting the Standard since 1924



**FBCA**  
Federation of Burial  
& Cremation Authorities

2025  
ANNUAL REPORT

# 02 UK's Principal representative of Burial, Cremation, and Other Funerary method providers

Supporting the sector for over 100 years

**Codes of Practice**

Membership Support

**Technical Guidance**

Inspection, Audit and Compliance Services

**Advocacy at Local & Central Government Level**

Recruitment Services

**Training & Consultancy Services**

Quarterly Industry Publication – Resurgam

**CBCE – Annual Conference**

Regional networking & training events



# The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities

## Executive Committee

### President

Kate Bate MBE – Dignity plc

### Deputy President

David Clay – Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

## Members of the National Executive Committee

Stuart Connelly	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Alan José	Westerleigh Group Ltd
Cllr Ted Latham	Margam Joint Crematorium Committee
John Proffitt	Edinburgh Crematorium Ltd
Steve Gant	London Cremation Company
Guy Revans	Redditch Borough Council
Katrina Hartnett	Perth & Kinross Council
Emma Connors	Southern Coop
Andrew Jordan	Manchester Crematorium Ltd

## Chief Executive Officer and Secretary

Mike Birkinshaw

## Training & Development Manager

Liam Bennett – Appointed Nov 2024

Kate Waller – Retired Dec 2024

## Resurgam Editor

Kate Waller



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# Message from the Chairman of the National Executive Committee and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA), it gives us great pleasure to present the Annual Report covering 2024/25, the Federation's 100<sup>th</sup> year.

Reflecting on the history of our organisation was a humbling experience over the course of this centenary year. Seeing the tireless work carried out by so many in the early years campaigning for better regulation and recognition of the cremation movement reminds us that this work never ceases. In our 100<sup>th</sup> year we see again changes affecting our members and are committed to representing your interests at the very highest levels.

The FBCA is the UK's only Trade Association representing Burial, Cremation, and Other Funerary Method providers. These three key categories are now listed within our constitution and means that our organisation is set ready for the next 100 years. We continue to be the only provider of independent, on site, inspections of crematoria in the UK which focusses not only on the legal requirements but the ethical & moral ones too.

The challenges facing our sector remain constant and 2024 saw the first significant update to the death certification process in more than 20 years. These changes have implemented scrutiny of all deaths in England & Wales, a relatively new situation and one that is taking time to bed in. The FBCA continues to collate data and represent member interests to Government to ensure they understand the complexity of these changes.

The NEC recently commissioned a review of the strategic objectives of the FBCA to ensure that the purpose and mission values are clear and in line with the constitutional aims of the organisation. This review is not to change the fundamental direction of the FBCA but to ensure its aligned with the modern needs of our members.

The work of the FBCA can still be traced back to the founding principles which are to raise standards through training & production of literature, exert strategic influence over policy makers and legislators, and lead innovation & development within our sector.

**Kate Bate MBE**  
President

**Mike Birkinshaw**  
Chief Executive Officer & Secretary



# Presidential Review

## Kate Bate MBE

### President of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities



Being elected to serve as the President of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) in its 100<sup>th</sup> year was an honour and privilege. The history of our organisation and its achievements are well documented and the opportunity to help steer us through our centenary was exciting but also a little daunting.

My presidential year started with CBCE which was held in Blackpool. A change from our normal event but one that lives long in the memory for the quality of the program both educationally and socially. Even now nearly a year later I still hear comments about the trip to the Tower Ballroom and the banquet dinner. A round of dedication ceremonies followed with trips to several new sites across the country.

Leading the National Executive Committee (NEC) throughout the year has been a unique opportunity to help shape the future of the FBCA. We have debated strategic direction, considered national policies to support best practice, and continued to develop our training to meet the ever-changing needs of our members. Without the support of my colleagues on the NEC my Presidential year would have been almost impossible to make a success, and I am deeply thankful to each and every one of you.

December 2024 saw us all meet in Birmingham at the stunning Library for our formal Centenary Banquet.

This was an event attended by over 200 people and all were there to celebrate both our centenary and the fantastic work that all of you produce each and every day for the bereaved of the UK. It was an iconic event that was a fitting celebration of our 100 years of history but also to set us up for our next 100 years.

Recruitment was again a focus of the Presidential year as we received Kate Waller's resignation from her training manager role. Kate decided that now was the time to partially retire as she still remains as our Resurgam Editor. Thank you, Kate, for all you achieved in the training role and welcome to Liam Bennett who has already hit the ground running with the development of our new Online Training Academy as well as several other new initiatives.

As my presidential year draws to a close you naturally being to reflect on what has been achieved. Over the last 12 months I have been fortunate enough to attend many events celebrating the hard work and dedication of all who are involved in delivering bereavement services to all corners of the UK. One thing that is common about all these many thousands of people is their care and empathy for families at such distressing times.

**Kate Bate MBE**  
**President FBCA.**

## 06 Key Events

### A Century of Service

The FBCA's 100<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held at Blackpool's Winter Gardens Conference and Exhibition Centre on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. This was ahead of the opening of our annual CBCE conference

which saw a varied programme of events including international speakers discussing relevant topics from around the globe.



### Death Certification Reforms

September the 9<sup>th</sup> 2024 saw the introduction of the new Death Certification Process including the use of Medical Examiners to scrutinise all deaths in England & Wales not referred to the Coroner. The changes were as a direct result of the Shipman Inquiry and the need for better independent scrutiny of all deaths.





## Centenary Banquet Celebrations

A Centenary Banquet to bring together colleagues from across the sector to celebrate the history of the FBCA was held in December 2024. The Library of Birmingham was the iconic venue where we hosted over 200 people for a fantastic 1920's themed dinner.



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Shaping the Future - Setting the Standard since 1924

## Law Commissions vital reforms started

The Law Commission reform of burial law in England and Wales was a major focus in 2024 and early into 2025 as their first round of public consultation completed. Focusing on regulation of burial grounds, grave reuse, and cremation law amongst other areas this is the first time since the 1850's that changes have been suggested. The FBCA continues to work closely with the Law Commission on all aspects of their work.

**Law  
Commission**  
Reforming the law

## 08 COVID – 19 Inquiry Representation

Early in 2025 the FBCA was requested to give evidence to both the UK COVID- 19 Inquiry in Westminster and the Scottish Inquiry based in Edinburgh. The UK evidence consisted of a round table with sector colleagues providing firsthand accounts of the challenges faced by the workforce during the pandemic, the lasting impact, and the lessons learned. The Scottish

Inquiry was different as the FBCA provided evidence directly to the inquiry within the formal setting of the court. Again, the focus was on the impact on workers during the pandemic. In both settings the ability to provide firsthand accounts was deeply moving and will hopefully see changes in the way in which our sector is viewed in times of national crisis.



## Member Engagement and Feedback

Regional Meetings were held in Scotland in March & September and as usual these were well supported by our members. May 2025 saw the first ever regional event held in Wales with 30 delegates attending to discuss the challenges unique to the Welsh region. By attending these regional events members are able to help shape the future of the FBCA's training & representation at national level. Our thanks go to all who attend, and we look forward to seeing you at a future meeting in your area.





## Advancement in Technology to support choice 09

The UK's first fully experiential crematorium opened and the FBCA are proud to have been at the launch event. A match between a private crematorium provider and one of the UK's leading audio-visual companies has seen the boundaries of what is possible for families extended again. The ability for families to design a bespoke funeral even down to the look and feel of the venue is groundbreaking and shows that we must continually challenge the perceived norms.



## Environmental Awareness

The environmental impact of funerals and bereavement continues to be a major focus of the FBCA demonstrated by our commitment to projects tackling the issue head on. The Sustainable Flowers Research Project is a collaboration between Coventry & Sussex Universities and is focused on "what is sustainable floristry". The FBCA is proud to have attended the Tackling Plastics, Packing, and Waste Workshop and continues to support the work of this research group.



# 10 TEST Scheme

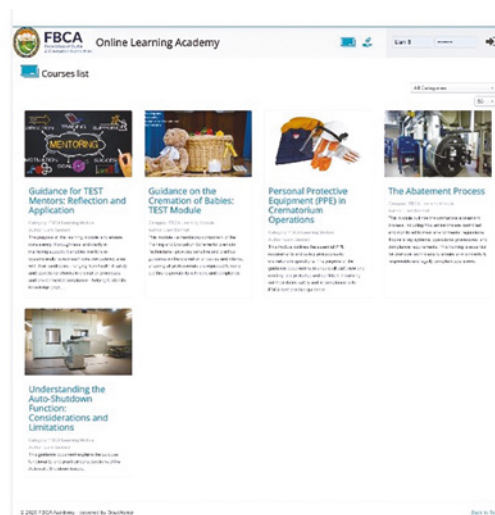
2024 saw the trend of high numbers of registrations within the scheme maintained with 158 new candidates registered. This has led to 82 practical assessments were carried out and only 10 candidates withdrawn. All newly qualified technicians have joined the Register of Certified Cremated Technicians, and it now stands at 238. Entry to the register is available to all technicians carrying a certificate of proficiency recognised under the PG 5-2 guidance notes.

The Plagiarism and Copying Software has identified several candidates whose coursework is similar to that of other candidates from the same site or their mentor. Many questions have limited possible responses and show signs of paraphrasing. These candidates have been contacted and remedial actions taken to ensure the submissions are in their own words and not paraphrased from other works.

The FBCA's refresher training has again seen increased interest throughout the year. Several authorities' have requested bespoke training over a number of days. Our experience team of assessors and training and development manager have continued to provide this essential professional development for teams of cremator technicians, administrative assistants, and wider employees within the cremation movement. This has also provided an opportunity for newly enrolled candidates on the TEST scheme to ensure that they ready and confident prior to their practical assessment.

Further developments throughout the year have seen the newly launched Online Academy which has short practical learning on items such as Maintenance & Record keeping within the crematory, cremation administration, electric cremators, abatement equipment, and cemetery groundwater permits.

This academy is free to use for all full members and will continue to grow with additional modules being added monthly.



As referenced by our President earlier in this report Kate Waller retired in December 2024 and with this came the appointment of Liam Bennett as our new Training and Development Manager. With over 50 applicants and a shortlist of four taken to interview Liam proved a very strong candidate and started his role early in November 2024. Quickly making his mark by building on the extensive foundations left by Kate he has already supported several candidates through their TEST assessments. Being instrumental in the introduction of the online learning academy Liam has had a considerable impact in his first seven months.

# Training Opportunities

## Training & Evaluation Scheme (TEST)

### Learning Pathway

- 50 cremations under mentor supervision
- Dedicated online module for the Cremation of Babies
- Theory coursework
- Practical assessment
- Certificate of proficiency

## Refresher Training & Consultancy

- Refresher training, delivered every 3-5 years by our experienced FBCA mentor ensures that cremator technicians are fully up to date with safety protocols, operational practices, and maintenance responsibilities in accordance with PG5/2
- Development and implementation of standard operating procedures aimed at enhancing efficiency, ensuring consistency, and supporting the highest level of care for the deceased

## Online Learning Academy

- Enrolment open to all member authority colleagues, included within your annual membership fee
- Tiered learning structure, allowing users to engage with quick, focused content or progress through comprehensive, in-depth modules as needed.
- Developed by and alongside experienced industry professionals



**FBCA**  
Federation of Burial  
& Cremation Authorities



**For more information, please contact**

**Training & Development Manager | Liam Bennett**

**Mail | [training@fbca.org.uk](mailto:training@fbca.org.uk) Telephone | 07305358839**



# 12 Membership



**334**

Members



**277**

Crematoria



**26**

Affiliate Members



**31**

Burial Authorities



# Crematorium Compliance Scheme

During 2024 the FBCA's Crematorium Compliance Scheme conducted 109 inspections of UK facilities. This is an increase from the 2023 level of 83 and is a combination of the increased numbers of inspectors and better administrative processes. Key findings are listed below but we again see strong performance in Ceremony Facilities and increases in compliance in Cremation Facilities and Grounds and Memorialisation.

A full revision of the questions is underway and will further enhance the value of our independent, in person inspection which remains the only regulatory & ethical benchmark in the UK. 2024 also saw a significant benchmark set by Maldon Fields as the first new built crematorium to receive 100% compliance on their initial inspection.

Section No. 1	Section Title	Compliance Percentage
1	Cremation Administration	93
2	Ceremony Facilities	98
3	Cremation Facilities	92
4	Premises and Facilities	93
5	Grounds and Memorialisation	96
6	Service and Staff	97
7.1	Environmental - Cremator Operation	75
7.2	Environmental - Grounds related environmental initiatives	81
7.3	Environmental - Organisational Culture	48
7.4	Environmental - Energy Usage	71



# 14 FINANCIAL REPORT

Over the following three pages detail the 2024 accounts as presented and accepted at the National Executive Committee meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. Work to audit both our 2023 & 2024 accounts

remains on going at the time of going to print and the outcome will be reported directly to members once completed.

THE FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES  
BALANCE SHEET at 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS (Note 2)	3,383	369
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	38,911	58,392
Cash at bank	378,709	362,622
	417,620	421,014
LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	47,458	49,677
NET CURRENT ASSETS	370,162	370,968
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	£ 373,545	£ 371,337
	=====	=====
ACCUMULATED FUND		
Balance brought forward	371,337	356,597
Add: Surplus for the year after taxation	2,208	14,740
	£ 373,545	£ 371,337
	=====	=====

Approved by the Executive Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and signed on its behalf

Kate Bate MBE, President

M P Birkinshaw, Chief Executive Officer & Secretary



## THE FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
INCOME		
Membership subscriptions	179,355	180,646
Other income	121,421	100,921
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	300,776	281,567
EXPENSES:		
Administration	140,110	143,303
Printing, stationery, postage and telephone	2,766	5,157
Insurance	2,880	2,805
General expenses	8,048	6,144
Travel and committee expenses	12,778	17,547
Crematoria inspections	37,951	25,000
Journal expenses <small>see note 6</small>	53,993	50,562
DMAG expenses	1,666	2,618
Audit & Accountancy Fees	3,500	5,500
Depreciation of equipment	289	521
Member Event & Seminars	32,567	5,728
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	296,548	264,885
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	4,228	16,682
Corporation tax (Note 3)	2,020	1,942
	<hr/>	<hr/>
SURPLUS AFTER TAXATION	£ 2,208	£ 14,740
	=====	=====



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## THE FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES

### NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024

#### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

**Basis of accounting:** The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention and applicable accounting standards.

**Depreciation:** Depreciation has been provided on Equipment at the rate of 20% per annum in order to write off the cost over a period of five years.

The Presidential Regalia has been written down to a nominal value in previous years.

**Subscriptions:** Subscriptions taken to the credit of the Income and Expenditure Account comprise amounts due in respect of the year under review and are stated net of value added tax.

#### 2. FIXED ASSETS

##### COST

At 1<sup>st</sup> January

Additions in year

Additions in year

##### DEPRECIATION

At 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024

Charge for the year

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

##### NET BOOK VALUE

At 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Total	Equipt	Regalia
£ 5,614	£ 5,503	£ 111
£ 3,382	£ 3,382	-
=====	=====	=====
£ 8,830	£ 8,830	£ 111
=====	=====	=====
5,245	5,135	110
289	289	-
=====	=====	=====
£ 5,534	£ 5,534	£ 110
=====	=====	=====
£ 369	£ 368	£ 1
=====	=====	=====
£ 3,383	£ 3,382	£ 1
=====	=====	=====

#### 3. TAXATION

UK Corporation Tax

2024	2023
£ 2,020	£ 1,942
=====	=====

## THE FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES

### CODE OF CREMATION PRACTICE

#### 1. CONDUCT

The cremation of a human body is a highly emotional occasion for those taking part in the service. This must never be forgotten by the staff of the Crematorium who must work together to create and maintain a dignified atmosphere of reverence and respect throughout the entire proceedings.

#### 2. STAFF

The greatest care must be taken to appoint members of the Crematorium staff who act with respect and do not detract from the atmosphere of reverence which the crematorium has endeavoured to create. All staff employed in the operation of cremators must be suitably trained in the technical and ethical procedures and certified as specified in Process Guidance Note 5/2 (12) or any subsequent Guidance that may be issued by the relevant Government Department.

#### 3. PRIOR TO COMMITTAL

A coffin and its contents brought to the Crematorium, whether for a service prior to cremation, a planned cremation without a service or for a service prior to burial, shall be brought into the Crematorium building through an appropriate\* entrance. If the coffin and its contents are to be cremated, the coffin shall be transferred directly to the crematory in the normal way. If the service is not to take place immediately, the coffin and its contents shall be placed on the catafalque, transferred to the crematory and then placed in secure and sanitary storage within the building. If the coffin is to be removed from the building following a service prior to burial, it may be placed on trestles to allow easy removal at the end of the service.

#### 4. AFTER COMMITTAL

(a) A body shall not be removed from the Crematorium after the Service of Committal except for a lawful purpose.

(b) Subject to receiving the necessary Authority to Cremate, the coffin and its contents shall be put into the cremator exactly as they have been received and as soon as practicable. A body not cremated on the same day as the coffin is received at the Crematorium may only be retained on the written consent of the Applicant for cremation and in circumstances deemed necessary by the Cremation Authority, including impacts on the environment. All bodies retained at the crematorium will be accommodated in secure and sanitary conditions within the building.

(c) Once a coffin with its contents has been placed in the cremator, it shall not be touched or interfered with until the process of cremation is completed. On completion, the whole of the Cremated Remains/Ashes, which is all the material left in the cremator following cremation less any metals, shall be collected and shall be disposed of in accordance with the instruction received.

#### 5. CORRECT IDENTITY

(a) No coffin shall be accepted at any Crematorium unless it bears adequate particulars of the identity of the deceased person contained therein. If a coffin is encased, the cover and the coffin must bear adequate identity of the deceased person.

(b) Every care must be taken to ensure correct identification throughout the whole proceedings from the moment the coffin is received onto the catafalque until the final disposal of the Cremated Remains/Ashes.

#### 6. SEPARATELY CREMATED

Each deceased person given to the care of the Cremation Authority shall be cremated separately. Exceptions may be made for instance in the case of mother and baby or twin children providing that the next of kin has made a specific request in this regard.

#### 7. COFFIN COVERS

When a re-useable cover is used to encase a coffin, signed authority must be given by the Applicant for the cremation authorising its use and consenting to its subsequent removal from the Crematorium.

#### 8. METAL RESIDUES

Any metal found amongst the Cremated Remains/Ashes shall be disposed of in accordance with the directions of the Cremation Authority or Higher Authority.

#### 9. CREMATED REMAINS/ASHES

The utmost care shall be taken to ensure that the Cremated Remains/Ashes, following their removal from the cremator, shall be kept separate and suitably identified. The Cremated Remains/Ashes shall be placed in a separate container awaiting final disposal. If the Cremated Remains/Ashes are to be disposed of in a Garden of Remembrance, this shall be conducted with reverence and respect. Cremated Remains/Ashes to be conveyed by a carrier service should be placed in a suitably labelled robust container and dealt with according to recommendations laid down by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities.

#### 10. CREMATORS AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT

Cremators and all other ancillary equipment used in the Crematorium shall be kept in good repair and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, and the requirements of the current guidance notes issued under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 or subsequent legislation.

#### 11. STATUTORY REGULATIONS

All cremations shall be carried out according to the provisions of the Cremations Acts and the Regulations made thereunder and any subsequent legislation.

\*Note: Where the crematorium offers more than one entrance for receiving the deceased, they must be designed for the required purpose and be suitable for the dignified reception of coffins. The entrance should be visible to the public, should be sufficiently wide enough for clear access, e.g. double doors, and where it enters the crematory directly, it should pass through two sets of double doors. The Cremation Authority must obtain the prior, informed, written consent of the Applicant for Cremation for the use of whichever entrance is required.



# 18 Acknowledgements

***“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”***

The unmistakeable words of Charles Darwin which are reflective of the year of evolution that the FBCA has seen. Our business is stronger and better set thanks to the changes we have seen over 2024. The National Executive Committee should like to put on record its thanks and recognition to the FBCA team for their continued hard work in supporting members through another year of significant change. Also, thanks go to the following key people.

## Secretary

Mike Birkinshaw

## Training and Development Manager

Liam Bennett

## Resurgam Editor

Kate Waller

## Admin Team

Annie Browne

Jessica Day

Hayley Shelly

## Accountancy Services

Alexis Charkiw

## Training Crematorium Manager

Angus Beacom – Aberdeen

Ellen Millar – South Lanarkshire

## Crematorium Inspector and Assessors

Michael Day

Gordon Hull (retired Dec 2024)

Paul Rayson

Dave Clay

Ian Rudkin

Stuart Connelly

Danny Corr

Tony Davidson

Clive Phillips

David McNaughton

## Expert Technical Advisors

Professor Douglas J Davis FBA Professor in the Study of Religion, Director of The Centre for Death and Life Studies, Durham University

Martin Street, Rose Project Management Ltd

Lee Snashfold, Lee Snashfold Crematoria Management & Consultancy

# UK's Principal representative of Burial, Cremation, and Other Funerary method providers

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