FREE GUIDE & WORKBOOK

Make things easier for **the people you love**

A practical guide to planning your funeral wishes, with a workbook to write them down in your own time and your own words.

Understand
Your choices, and what a funeral in Ireland really costs.

Record
Your wishes, step by step, as much or as little as you like.

Share
A starting point for the conversation with your family.

To help **my family** through
for I will always be loving you

This workbook belongs to _____

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A gift to your family

When someone dies, the people closest to them are asked to make dozens of decisions within a day or two, often while wondering, "Is this what they would have wanted?"

Writing your wishes down takes that question away. It is a practical, kind thing to do for the people you love, and most people find it easier than they expected.

How to use this workbook

Read Part 1 at your own pace. Then fill in Part 2 in pen or pencil, as much or as little as you like. There are no wrong answers, and "let my family decide" is a perfectly good answer too.

When you're done, keep it somewhere safe and **tell at least one person where it is.**

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Why plan ahead?

Nobody wakes up wanting to plan a funeral. When people ring us, it's rarely the funeral they want to talk about first. It's the people they'll leave behind. Planning ahead gives three things.

1

No bill left behind

The reason most people give us. As one mother put it, her family would be well able to pick the hymns and the songs. It's the money she didn't want to leave them. Even a bit put by each week makes a real difference.

2

Your say, in writing

Once it is written down, your family won't have to guess. That includes the things you **don't** want, which is often where people start.

3

A way to start the conversation

Instead of "I must tell you what I want some day", you can simply say "I've written it all down." That one sentence changes the conversation.

What families tell funeral directors

"We never talked about whether she wanted to be buried or cremated."

"We don't know where the grave papers are."

"Did he want the wake at home?"

"How are we going to pay for all this?"

Did you know?

More than half of people over 50 in Ireland say they would choose cremation, but fewer than 1 in 3 funerals currently is a cremation. Research shows the gap almost always comes down to one thing: wishes that were never written down. **If you know what you want, writing it here is the most important thing you can do.**

Burial, cremation and other choices

The choice between burial and cremation shapes most of the other decisions. It is often guided by family tradition, faith, cost or simply personal feeling.

Burial

Traditional: in an existing family grave or a new plot in a church or council cemetery.

Direct burial: no wake or ceremony beforehand.

Woodland or natural: an eco-friendly burial, available in a small number of locations.

Worth knowing: if there is a family grave, write down where it is and who holds the papers. It saves a lot of searching.

Cremation

With a ceremony: a church or other service first, then a short committal at the crematorium. Or the whole ceremony at the crematorium.

Direct cremation: no wake or ceremony beforehand.

Ashes: can be buried in a family grave, placed in a columbarium wall, or scattered somewhere meaningful.

Water cremation: a gentle, flame-free alternative using water and an alkaline solution, now available in Navan, Co. Meath.

A common myth: “cremation is always cheaper”

The real difference usually comes down to the grave. If your family already owns a plot, burial may cost about the same as cremation. If a new plot is needed, the price varies a great deal, from very little in some rural parishes to much more in cities and large towns. Grave plots are usually bought at the time of the funeral, so their cost can’t normally be fixed in advance.

Donating your body to medical science

Some people choose to help train future doctors. This must be arranged in advance, in writing, directly with a medical school, and a donation can sometimes be declined at the time. If it is, your family will need to arrange a funeral as normal, so it is still worth recording your burial or cremation wishes.

The wake and the funeral ceremony

The wake

A wake gives neighbours, friends and community a chance to pay their respects. In Ireland it might be at home, at a relative's house or in a funeral home, where people file past to sympathise with the family.

Where?
Home, funeral home, or both: public reposing in the funeral home, then family time at home.

Public or private?
Many families set public visiting hours, with private time for family only.

Open coffin?
If so, you can say what you'd like to wear. Your funeral director will advise on embalming.

If you feel strongly about any of this, for example "a wake at home, no matter what", it is especially important to write it down.

The funeral ceremony

A ceremony can be as formal or as relaxed as you wish. The main types are:

Religious	A funeral Mass or service led by a priest or minister. Some families have a removal to the church the evening before.
Civil / celebration of life	Led by a celebrant in a funeral home, crematorium or other venue. Can still include prayers if you wish.
Humanist	A personal, non-religious ceremony.
No ceremony	A direct burial or cremation. Family can still gather for a memorial later.

Things to think about: who you'd like to lead it, music and hymns, readings, whether you'd like a eulogy and who should give it, and flowers or donations to a charity. Note that some churches have rules on music and eulogies.

The main types of funeral in Ireland

Every funeral is personal. But when all the choices are put together, most Irish funerals fall into one of four broad types. Knowing which is closest to what you want makes everything else easier to decide.

1 Religious funeral with burial

STILL THE MOST COMMON · ~68% OF FUNERALS

A wake at home, in the funeral home or both, often with a removal to the church. A funeral Mass or service, then burial in a family grave or a new plot, usually followed by refreshments. Typically all within two to three days.

The traditional Irish funeral most families have in mind.

2 Religious funeral with cremation

A GROWING CHOICE · ~9% AND RISING

The same wake and church service, followed by a short committal at a crematorium. The ashes are returned to the family afterwards, to be buried in a family grave, placed in a columbarium wall or scattered.

Often chosen where there is no family grave, or for personal preference.

3 Simple attended cremation

GROWING QUICKLY · ~13% AND RISING

A shorter or private reposing, or none at all, and one simple ceremony at the crematorium or funeral home, led by a priest, minister or celebrant. Family and close friends attend, with few extras.

For people who want something simple, with no fuss.

4 Direct cremation or burial

LESS COMMON, BUT RISING · ~5%

No wake and no service beforehand. The funeral director looks after everything and the cremation or burial takes place without mourners. Many families gather later for a memorial, a Month's Mind or a quiet scattering of ashes.

The simplest and lowest-cost option.

You can mix and match within any of these. Figures based on My Farewell Wishes analysis of 35,000+ death notices in Ireland in 2025.

Understanding funeral costs

There is no set price for a funeral, but most families have a traditional funeral in mind: a wake or reposing, a funeral Mass or service, then burial or cremation. Here is what that usually involves.

1 · Funeral director services

- ✓ Professional services of your funeral director
- ✓ Coffin (simple oak veneer)
- ✓ Use of the funeral home
- ✓ Embalming and preparation

2 · Other essential costs

- ✓ Grave opening *or* cremation fee
- ✓ Parish or church fees
- ✓ Church music
- ✓ Online funeral notice

GUIDE PRICE 2026

€6,000 – €8,000

Typical cost of the essential items for a traditional religious funeral, as described above, with a simple oak veneer coffin. It also allows for the My Farewell Wishes administration fee.

Not usually included

- ✕ Buying a new grave plot
- ✕ Food and refreshments after the funeral
- ✕ Family cars or limousines
- ✕ Headstone or memorial
- ✕ Flowers
- ✕ Extras such as livestreaming, a soloist or newspaper notices

Guide prices for other funeral types

FUNERAL TYPE	APPROXIMATE GUIDE PRICE
Religious funeral with burial or cremation	**€6,000 – €8,000**
Simple attended cremation	**€3,000 – €5,000**
Direct cremation	**€1,500 – €2,500**

These are guide figures, not quotations. Prices vary by funeral director and location, and third-party fees can change. Ask us for a written estimate for the type you have in mind.

Paying for it: **your questions answered**

Do I need the full amount today? **No.** Writing your wishes down costs nothing, and you can put a bit aside, a bit at a time.

How much would I pay?

You decide. Start with a deposit, put a bit by each week or month (some people put by €30 a month), top up when it suits, or add a lump sum.

Is this insurance? What if I stop paying?

It's not insurance. You can stop or pause at any time and you don't lose what you've paid in. With some insurance policies, stopping can mean losing it all.

Who holds the money?

Not us, and not your funeral director. It's held in the independent My Farewell Wishes Trust until it's needed (see below).

What if I die before it's all paid?

Everything paid in comes off the funeral bill. Your family only covers the difference.

Am I too old?

No. There's no age limit, and every euro put by is a euro your family won't have to find.

Can I plan it for my mam or dad?

Yes. Many sons and daughters do, and brothers and sisters can each put a small amount by.

Do I keep my own undertaker?

You nominate the local funeral director you know and trust. Ask us whether yours is one of our partners.

Is the price fixed?

No. All payments are treated as deposits towards the future cost of your funeral, and are deducted from the final funeral bill. As funeral costs may rise over time, any balance at the time of the funeral is paid by your estate (or your family). You can top up at any time to help cover rising costs.

Where your money is held

The money you pay is held in an independent trust, the My Farewell Wishes Trust, not by us or by your funeral director. The trust is managed by Independent Trustee Limited, a corporate trustee authorised by the Minister for Justice as a Trust or Company Service Provider and a Trust Corporation under the Succession Act, 1965.

About me and the person I trust

Your representative is the person you expect to contact the funeral director and make the arrangements. It helps to name a second person too.

About me

Full name _____

Address _____

_____

Eircode _____ Date of birth _____

Phone _____ Email _____

My representative

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Second representative (optional)

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone _____ Email _____

My preferred funeral director

Name _____

Town _____ Phone _____

Date completed _____ Last reviewed _____

My resting place and my wake

Burial or cremation

☐ Burial ☐ Cremation ☐ Donation to medical science ☐ Let my family decide

If burial: is there a family grave?

☐ Yes ☐ No, a new plot will be needed ☐ Not sure

Cemetery and grave location _____

Who holds the grave papers? _____

If cremation: what would you like done with your ashes?

☐ Buried in a family grave ☐ Placed in a columbarium ☐ Scattered

☐ Kept by family ☐ Divided between family members

Where? _____

Other wishes _____

Preferred crematorium (if known) _____

My wake

Would you like a wake?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Let my family decide

Where?

☐ At home ☐ At a relative's house ☐ Funeral home ☐ Both ☐ Other

Public or private?

☐ Public ☐ Set public and private times ☐ Family only

Open coffin?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ For close family only ☐ Let my family decide

What I'd like to wear _____

Jewellery, rosary or keepsakes _____

Anything else about my wake _____

_____

My funeral ceremony

The kind of ceremony I'd like

☐ Religious (Mass or service) ☐ Civil / celebration of life ☐ Humanist
☐ No ceremony ☐ Let my family decide

Church or venue _____

If cremation with a church service: preferred crematorium _____

Who I'd like to lead it _____

Removal to the church the evening before?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Let my family decide

Music, readings and words

Hymns or songs _____

_____

Readings, prayers or poems _____

_____

People I'd like to do readings _____

Would you like a eulogy?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Let my family decide

Who should give it (and a second choice) _____

Anything I'd like said or remembered _____

Flowers and donations

☐ Flowers welcome ☐ Family flowers only ☐ Donations instead

Favourite flowers _____

Charity for donations _____

Personal touches and my funeral notice

The coffin

☐ Simple ☐ Traditional wood ☐ Eco-friendly ☐ Let my family decide

Style or price range in mind _____

Extras I'd like

☐ Livestream of the ceremony ☐ Family cars ☐ Mass or service booklet
☐ Piper or graveside music ☐ Keepsake (fingerprint, lock of hair)

A hobby, club or passion to include _____

Route I'd like the cortège to take _____

My funeral notice

☐ Online (e.g. RIP.ie) ☐ Local radio ☐ Newspaper ☐ Social media

A photo with my notice?

☐ Yes, I've chosen the photo ☐ Yes, let my family choose ☐ No photo

The photo I'd like used, and where to find it _____

People I'd like named in my notice, or anything I'd like it to say

_____

_____

People and groups to tell

Friends who live away, old colleagues, clubs, societies, a choir or parish group.

Name _____ Contact _____

Name _____ Contact _____

Name _____ Contact _____

What I **don't** want

It's often not about what you want. It's about what you don't want. Many people find this the easiest place to start, and it's the part families most need to know.

☐ Nothing in the newspaper ☐ No fuss, keep it small ☐ No open coffin

☐ No long wake

Someone I'd rather didn't lead or speak at my funeral _____

A place I don't want to be buried or scattered _____

Music or readings I don't want _____

Anything else I definitely don't want _____

My own **notes**

Anything else you'd like your family to know, in your own words.

Where to find important things

In the days after a death, families spend hours searching for papers. Note where things are kept and who to contact.

Please don't write account numbers, PINs or passwords in this workbook. Just note where they are kept.

ITEM	WHERE IT'S KEPT	WHO TO CONTACT
My will		
My solicitor		
Grave papers		
Funeral plan		
My Farewell Wishes account / registration		
Life assurance		
Pension		
Bank / credit union		
House or land deeds		
Birth / marriage certs		
Phone, email, online		
Pets: who will care		
Other		
Other		

Talking to your family

This is often the hardest part, and it is usually far easier than people fear. Many families say they were relieved someone finally raised it. A few ways to start:

> *"I've been filling in a little booklet about what I'd want. Can I show you where I've put it?"*

> *"After what happened with [name], I don't want you to have to guess. Can we have a quick chat?"*

> *"There's nothing wrong. I just want to get this sorted so it's one less thing for you."*

The most important part of a funeral plan isn't the plan itself. **It's your family knowing what you wanted.**

My next steps

- [ ] I've filled in the parts that matter to me.
- [ ] I've told my representative that this workbook exists and where it is kept.
- [ ] I've given a copy to my chosen funeral director, or registered my wishes.
- [ ] I've made sure a digital or secure copy is stored somewhere it won't be lost.
- [ ] I've asked for a no-obligation cost estimate, so I know what to plan for.
- [ ] I've decided whether to put a bit aside, and how much.
- [ ] I'll look at this again after any big life change, or every few years.

ABOUT MY FAREWELL WISHES

Started by funeral directors, **for Irish families**

My Farewell Wishes was set up in Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, by the team behind Kieran Bros. Funeral Directors. Our own work in funeral service showed us, again and again, how much easier things are for a family when someone's wishes have been written down and planned for. Today we work with trusted local funeral directors right across Ireland.



Colm Kieran
Co-founder & Funeral Director
Kieran Bros. Funeral Directors, Kingscourt



Áine
Customer Support
The friendly voice you'll speak to when you call

A national network
Partner funeral directors in 100 locations across Ireland.

Money held in trust
Plan payments are held in an independent trust until needed.

When you're ready, **let's have a chat**

No pressure and no obligation. We'll answer your questions, arrange a present-day cost estimate from a local funeral director, and explain your options.

CALL US
042 603 9990
Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm · Republic of Ireland

BOOK ONLINE
Scan to book a free call at a time that suits you

info@myfarewellwishes.ie
www.myfarewellwishes.ie

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General information only, not legal or financial advice. Recording your wishes here does not create a contract; your family or executor will arrange your funeral. Company reg. no. 700677.
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