



“Thank you for your kindness
and support. You have guided us
through, showing compassion,
care and professionalism”



Tester & Jones

Your local independent funeral service



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Part of the community

Established in 2004 by Stephen Tester and Glenys Jones, we are proud to be an independent funeral director and take pride in arranging every single funeral which is entrusted to our care.

We care for families not only in Crowborough but in the surrounding communities including Withyham, Rotherfield, Groombridge and Mayfield.





Tester & Jones: Here to help

When somebody dies

The death of a loved one can be a traumatic experience. Even when a death is expected, you will still feel a sense of shock and experience a mixture of emotions and questions. You may feel overwhelmed by what needs to be done, the many questions there are to answer and decisions to be made.

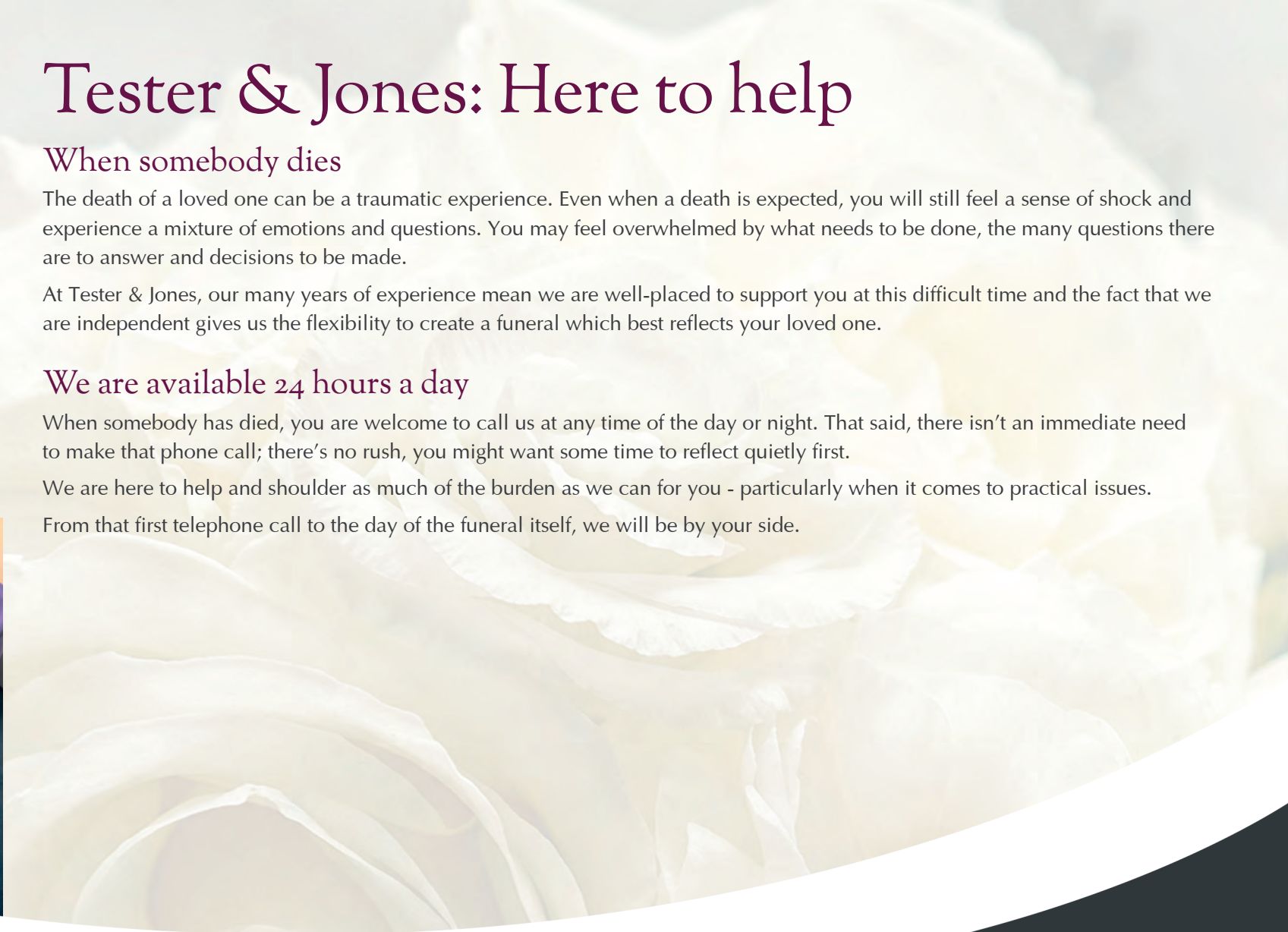
At Tester & Jones, our many years of experience mean we are well-placed to support you at this difficult time and the fact that we are independent gives us the flexibility to create a funeral which best reflects your loved one.

We are available 24 hours a day

When somebody has died, you are welcome to call us at any time of the day or night. That said, there isn't an immediate need to make that phone call; there's no rush, you might want some time to reflect quietly first.

We are here to help and shoulder as much of the burden as we can for you - particularly when it comes to practical issues.

From that first telephone call to the day of the funeral itself, we will be by your side.



Proud to be independent

Tester & Jones is an active member of SAIF (The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors) - established in 1989 - and we follow its strict code of conduct. SAIF is the only professional organisation in the UK exclusively dedicated to serving the local independent funeral director.

As a firm, we are very much part of the local community and you'll probably already know us or one of our team because we are neighbours, you see us at events in the town or you've known us since school days!

Caring for you

Stephen Tester

With more than 25 years of experience as a funeral director, Stephen - who was born and brought up in Crowborough - takes great pride in the personal care and attention he gives to each and every funeral.

He set up Tester & Jones with Glenys Jones in 2004.

"We wanted to offer a funeral service which was accessible to people, welcoming and not scary, modern but built on traditional values," says Stephen. "We are extremely grateful to the people of Crowborough for having faith in us and supporting us. We never fail to feel proud when a family asks us to look after a funeral for them."

Stephen is incredibly proud of Tester & Jones' independent status and, over the years, has got involved with SAIF (The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors), both on a local level and nationally too. He is also keen to support professional development in the industry and, to this end, helps to mark papers for the Independent Funeral Directors (IFD) College.

Glenys Jones

Glenys, who moved to Crowborough when she was 10 years old, has been a funeral director for more than 25 years and clients appreciate her caring and professional approach to organising funerals.

More than 15 years after launching Tester & Jones with Stephen Tester, she says: "We were and still are a team. Both Stephen and I really care about the community here in Crowborough - so we wanted to support the people here and we wanted to offer traditional care and attention to our families."

We were extremely honoured to have won the East Sussex Business Awards in 2019 helped by the innovative work with our bereavement group.

Glenys is particularly proud of the Tester & Jones Bereavement Group, which she helped to launch more than 10 years ago, and which now has over 100 members.

"We have an amazing group of people and it's evolved so that existing members are fantastic at welcoming and supporting newer members," she explains. "Some lovely friendships have developed; they comfort each other and offer support at times when it's needed."



"Tester & Jones manage to make one of the hardest tasks which we all dread into an easy one. Their skilful guidance through difficult decisions is carried off with sensitivity and patience."



Funeral costs

We appreciate that cost can be a factor when organising a funeral and we aim to be transparent, offering you different options depending on your budget and requirements. Please always feel you can approach us to talk about our costs.

Help with funeral costs

If you're responsible for arranging the funeral and on a low income, you may be eligible for a Funeral Payment to cover various aspects of the costs. These payments are made through the Social Fund, a government fund to help people with one-off payments and emergency expenses.

To qualify for a payment, you and your partner must receive certain means-tested benefits, such as Pension Credit. You should also be the person who would usually be expected to pay for the funeral, for example if you are the partner of the deceased.

A funeral plan

A funeral plan can provide peace of mind for you and your family and could save you money. You choose the funeral you want and pay for our services included in the plan at today's prices, relieving your family of worries and uncertainty at a distressing time.

Taking out a funeral plan is a sensible and thoughtful way to help protect yourself against these increases. More than a million people in the UK have taken out a funeral plan. We can advise you on the various plans we offer.

For up-to-date prices

Please see our website www.testerlandjones.co.uk

On the day

We will be at your side to support and guide you.

The order of service

An order of service is so much more than a guide to proceedings, with families using it as an opportunity to pay tribute to their loved one, with photographs from different times in their life. It is also something which people will keep and return to over the years.

We can offer a variety of design options to reflect your loved one. For instance, you could include a flower they liked, a photo of a place they particularly loved or a hobby they enjoyed. Of course, you might prefer a simple design and we can support you with that as well.

In addition to organising the printing of any announcement cards and, of course, the order of service, we are able to offer a range of funeral stationery. Some families like to order thank you cards which might mirror the order of service in design, perhaps with a photo on the front. These can then be used as thank you cards afterwards to acknowledge the fact that somebody attended the service or sent flowers etc.

We've also had families who have ordered stationery items as a keepsake to take away from a service, such as a card with a treasured poem on it or a bookmark which includes a photograph. Other personalised items we can provide include books of condolence, attendance cards, memory boxes, personalised memory boards and memorial cards.

Making a donation

Many of our families ask for donations in lieu of flowers at the time of arranging the funeral. The donations might be directed to a charity close to their heart or one that offered support during a time of need.

In addition to providing a special donations box on the day of the service, we have made it possible for people to donate directly online. A personal tribute can be set up on our website using the Much Loved platform, which is quick, safe and secure.

Every donation is accounted for and in due course, any cash or cheques received will be forwarded to the charity. We request an acknowledgement to be sent to the family from the charity and they will receive a letter and donations schedule from ourselves.



"Tester & Jones arranged the event brilliantly. Everyone said it was the best funeral they had ever attended - my mother would have been so sorry not to have been able to enjoy it herself. A job well done!"



Remembering the day

Who was there?

Due to the emotional nature of a funeral, we find that our families are not always aware of who has attended the service. This can be more difficult if someone is not able to follow on to a reception or gathering afterwards and therefore request that we gather a list of attendees. Some families like to write a thank you note afterwards and this is where the list proves helpful.

We can also provide a memorial book which people can sign at the reception afterwards. This is an opportunity for them to mention a special memory of your loved one and what they meant to them. A book like this will be kept and read time and again on 'special days' and often passed on down the generations.


Live steaming the service

If loved ones and friends are not able to attend the funeral service for any reason, such as living overseas, then it is possible to live stream a service from our local crematoriums.

The funeral service can be viewed either 'live' on the day by logging in at the correct time or 'on demand' up to seven days after the service – which might be useful if it's the middle of the night in another country or somebody is having to work.

You'll be given a unique username and password that you can pass onto friends and relatives of your choosing.

We can also arrange for a recording of the service to be provided via a download link or copied onto a disk.



"Thank you Tester & Jones for the kind, thoughtful and highly professional way in which you conducted proceedings for me and my family at such a difficult time."



"Tester & Jones could not have done more to make the passing of our dear Dad easier. Everything was handled in a sympathetic but also personal way."

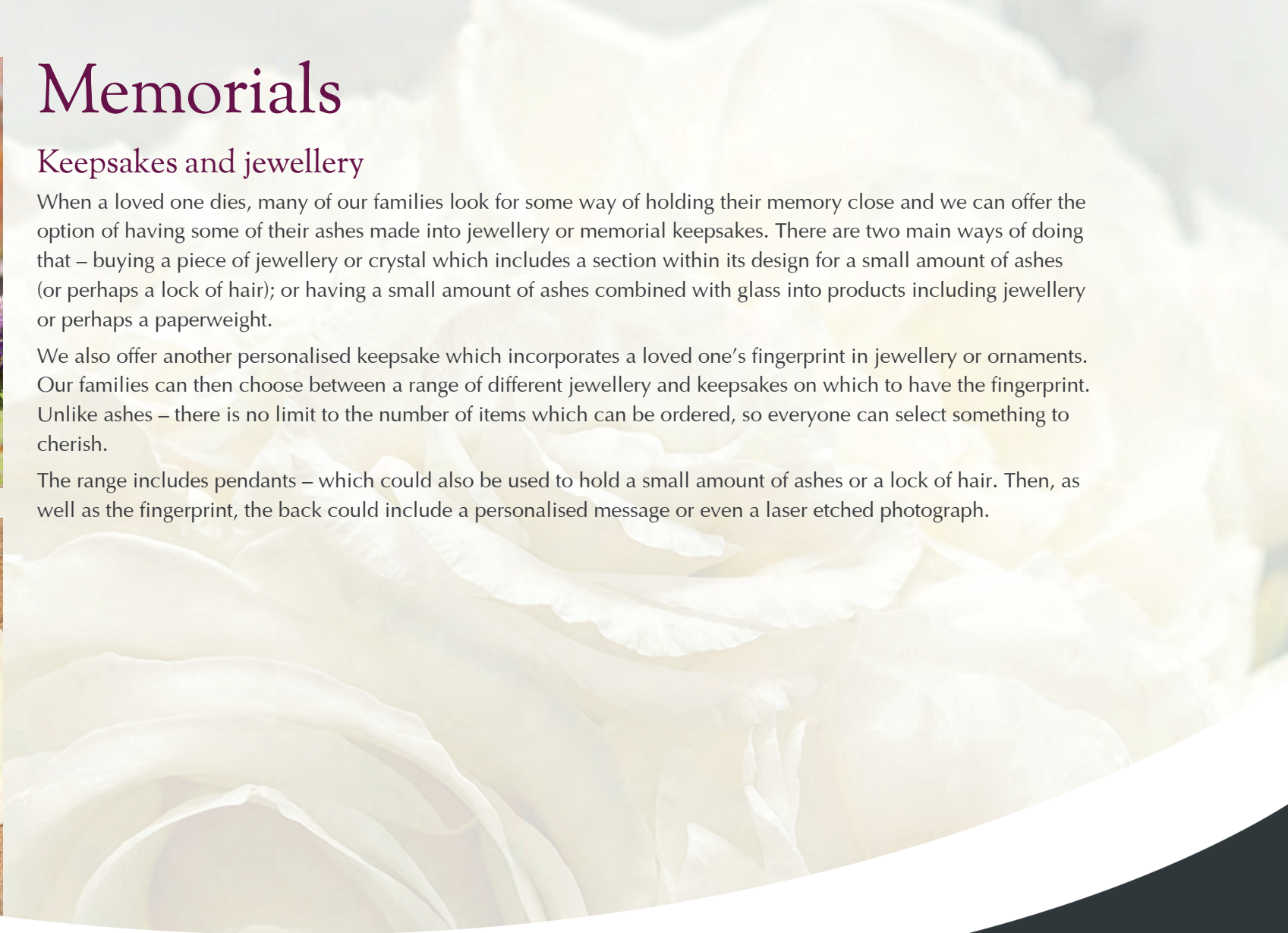
Memorials

Keepsakes and jewellery

When a loved one dies, many of our families look for some way of holding their memory close and we can offer the option of having some of their ashes made into jewellery or memorial keepsakes. There are two main ways of doing that – buying a piece of jewellery or crystal which includes a section within its design for a small amount of ashes (or perhaps a lock of hair); or having a small amount of ashes combined with glass into products including jewellery or perhaps a paperweight.

We also offer another personalised keepsake which incorporates a loved one's fingerprint in jewellery or ornaments. Our families can then choose between a range of different jewellery and keepsakes on which to have the fingerprint. Unlike ashes – there is no limit to the number of items which can be ordered, so everyone can select something to cherish.

The range includes pendants – which could also be used to hold a small amount of ashes or a lock of hair. Then, as well as the fingerprint, the back could include a personalised message or even a laser etched photograph.



"Thank you for giving our father such a touching and sensitive send off. He would have loved the service, which your team carried out with great dignity and sympathy."

Urns and caskets

Many people choose to have their loved ones ashes placed into a special casket or urn. At Tester & Jones we have a wide selection of different styles from a basic wooden casket to a decorative urn.

For those who have made the decision to scatter their loved ones ashes, we can provide personalised or themed scatter tubes. Please see our website for the designs.

Memorial stones

Memorials are a way of remembering someone who has passed and offer comfort to people during their time of bereavement. From design to installation, Tester & Jones can assist with every step of creating a fitting memorial whether it is to be placed in a cemetery or churchyard. We are also able to offer expert advice on local authority and church regulations.

We offer a wide range of styles from decorative headstones to memorial plaques and can help with choosing the right wording for the inscription. Decorative carvings and photo plaques are also possible in certain places should you wish.

You can view our memorial brochure on our website or send us a picture of a design that you would like for a more bespoke memorial.



"Just to say a big 'thank you' for all your kindness, compassion and time you gave my sister and me; it's hard to put into words, but you all made a very sad time bearable."



"Your sympathetic help and strong presence made what I always dreaded would be a terrible ordeal into an event that showed a quiet efficiency and warmth and a dignified manner, which instilled great security in us all. It was a real celebration of her life."

Support after the funeral

Bereavement is about coping with loss and change and we all cope differently. For this reason, our support does not finish on the day of the funeral. We would encourage families to approach us if there's anything we can do to ease the burden for them in the days and weeks afterwards.

Losing somebody you love can be very difficult and we can recommend people who can help you if you need to talk through your feelings. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

SAIFCare

As members of SAIF, we are proud to have been one of the first companies to sign-up to SAIFCare - which offers free bereavement support to families we have looked after, who are struggling to come to terms with the loss of a loved one.

The service is delivered by a qualified bereavement counsellor, the sessions can take place at a location of the bereaved person's choosing or by telephone and even online chat and email.

SAIFCare enables us to go above and beyond for the families in our care, ensuring they get the help and advice they need at life's most difficult time.



"Your assistance, professionalism and sensitivity before during and after my father's funeral has been amazing and you have provided excellent support and advice throughout. I would not hesitate to recommend you and your company."



Our Bereavement Group

One area which sets us apart from other funeral directors is the continued support we give families after a funeral has taken place.

Just over 10 years ago, we launched our Bereavement Group, which has now grown to more than 100 people, who meet once a month (alongside a smaller group for the newly-bereaved). We are able to offer a walking group, outings, lunches together with theatre trips to London and to the coast.

Glenys runs the group along with Sue Carswell, who is a trained counsellor, and able to provide a valuable input in terms of starting the journey of dealing with grief.

The group receive newsletters with updates of forthcoming events and meetings, they also have a Facebook page for contact which is enjoyed by many.



“If it wasn’t for the Bereavement Group, there are some members who possibly might not go out socially. I think we’ve all become a little stronger, more independent and more confident as a result of the Bereavement Group.”

Tester & Jones



facebook.com/testerandjones @testerandjonesfuneralservices



London Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 2TT
Telephone 01892 611811 information@testerandjones.co.uk
www.testerlandjones.co.uk