

The good, the bad and the green?

The green movement would do well to put more focus on good simple actions rather than highlighting the more difficult or unpleasant truths. Most of us want to help save the planet but are unsure how to do it. What does it mean to '*minimise the environmental impact*' of ordinary day-to-day activities? Experts seem to tell everyone where they are going wrong rather than what they are doing right. The disagreements about how to live a greener life can mean that some people will just give up trying.

Information about our industry has become more widely available and informed choice is leading to a growing demand for '*green funerals*'. This new and somewhat vague definition is used to describe occasions when arrangements are made for a funeral which is seen to be simple and, as far as possible, environmentally friendly. For some people a '*green funeral*' will be having a wicker coffin and a woodland burial - for others, it may be not allowing flowers at the funeral that have been grown in a glasshouse or come from overseas.

By engaging in the process of educating the bereaved about simple green actions and activities, the ignorance standing in the way of their desire to do the right thing can be overcome. Most people have already made changes to the way they shop and the way they deal with their domestic waste, and they realise the ways in which small green changes can be made to their daily life.

The National Association of Funeral Directors' Environmental Advisory Group aims to inform this debate by stripping away the confusing background noise and helping members to become greener funeral directors rather than deliverers of the occasional 'green funeral'. If you are looking for green solutions to everyday problems, or you want to share your experiences, please contact the Environmental Advisory Group through the NAFD and help spread the word about the good stuff rather than malign the bad.

FAQ: Do funeral directors need to register under the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme by the end of September to avoid a fine?

The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (previously known as the Carbon Reduction Commitment) is a new, mandatory, energy saving and carbon emissions reduction scheme for the UK. It will act as an incentive to improve energy efficiency and will help large private and public sector organisations generate cost savings through reduced energy bills. Qualification depends on the organisation's level of electricity consumption - if it was of more than 6,000Mwh of electricity per year and measured through half hourly meters during 2008 then the company must register. To put this in context - if a company were to use this much electricity in a year the bill would be somewhere over £500,000.

If a company qualifies it will need to monitor its emissions and purchase allowances to emit carbon dioxide (CO₂). The more CO₂ the organisation emits, the more allowances it will need to purchase, so there is a direct incentive to reduce emissions.

Under current regulations the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme does not apply to any organisation that did not have settled half hourly meters during 2008, and it is highly unlikely that any funeral director or supplier consumed sufficient electricity to require half hourly metering in 2008. In years to come, it is likely that the scheme will apply to more organisations as the ceiling is lowered in line with the EU low carbon directive.

More information is available on the Business and Industry section of the Environmental Agency website <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>.

