

Be that a large number of deaf people might attend (several hundred). It is best if the congregation remains seated throughout the service, so that all can see.

Funeral Directors and Crematorium staff do need to be made aware in advance of the requirements of deaf people. With a large congregation of deaf people, TV type screens with the image of the person signing the service projected onto it are a great help.

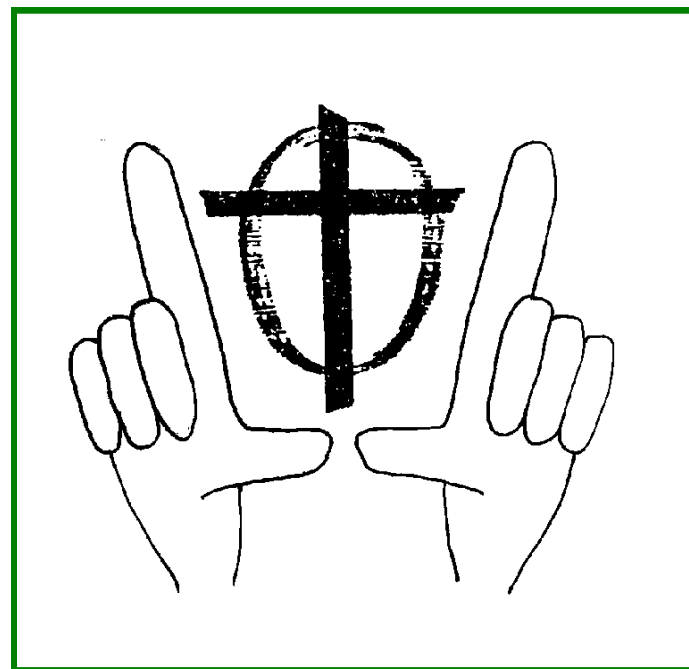
People need time to concentrate on one aspect of the service at an given moment. For example, at committals, it is best to separate the Prayer of Farewell and the closing of the cur-lowering of the coffin.

Our 2 chaplains are qualified to conduct services in sign language and are happy to be of any assistance.

Some families may wish to use an interpreter. This could mean additional expense for the family. It is important that this interpreter is familiar with church signing.

Hopefully by working together and ensuring proper communication support at a funeral service, we can in some way help deaf and hard of hearing people cope with the loss of a loved one.

## Funerals involving people who are deaf—information for Clergy and Lay Ministers



Oxford Diocesan Council for the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Registered Charity No. 203428

In the Diocese of Oxford we have 2 chaplains who specialise in Ministry with deaf and hard of hearing people. They are available to offer advice, support and help with funeral arrangements.

They can be contacted directly on;

Reverend Ben Whitaker  
Tel/Fax: 01865 736100  
Email: whitaker@tribeandclan.freemove.co.uk

Reverend Vera Hunt  
Fax/Minicom: 01628 623909  
For hearing people—use Text Direct by dialling 18002 before 01628 623909  
Email: vhcrowncentre@btconnect.com

People who are deaf have a wide range of special needs, often depending on how and when a person became deaf. It is obviously important that these needs are addressed at all time—but even more so at a funeral.

On occasions, families may not make it known that a member of the family or a friend is deaf and has special needs. This puts the initiative on us as Clergy and lay-Ministers.

If there is someone who is deaf, special arrangements may be needed, some of which are listed in this leaflet.

## **Consultation**

Naturally, we do wish to offer the best possible care to deaf people at the time of great need and it is obviously essential that the funeral director/ the Chaplain /and Parish Clergy work together in making the arrangements for the funeral. Consultation before the date and time of the funeral is confirmed is crucial as it understandably causes great distress to the deaf person if through other commitments we are not able to be present.

## **Is the Minister taking the service deaf?**

One of our Chaplains, Rev. Vera Hunt, is herself profoundly deaf, so special arrangements will need to be made especially if there hymns or music. It is important to liaise with clergy, sooner rather than later so that any issues can be addressed.

## **Hard of Hearing**

A close relative, or a member of the congregation may rely on a hearing aid and a loop system can be of enormous help. We need to check with the clergy or vergor whether there is such a system and crucially if it has been switched on! Those taking part in the service need to be encouraged to stand by the microphone. There will be some people for whom because of the nature of their deafness the loop will be of no help—they will rely on lip-reading and will need to sit near the front so that they can see the face of the Minister conducting the Service.

## **Sign Language**

If a member of the family or someone coming to the funeral is a sign language user, there are several issues that need to be considered. Signing a service takes longer than a spoken service. Ideally crematorium and cemetery Chapel services require twice the normal allotted time.

The Deaf Community is a close community and it could well