

13 December 2019

Welcome to your latest round-up of news from the Good to Great programme.
Head on over to www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk to see the news first.
Why not join the conversation today?



A TIME TO REFLECT



As the year ends, Transformation Director Paul Turner looks back at the milestones we've reached on our Good to Great journey and looks ahead to what 2020 will bring.

December is traditionally a time to reflect and to plan for the coming year, and who am I to break with tradition?

However, it's also a very busy time, which I'm sure is the case for most of you too. For the business colleagues and professional project

teams working on transformation, 2019 has steadily become more and more busy.

We have rebranded over a hundred branches, completed or commissioned nearly 50 property projects so far, continued pricing trials across the country, built and

implemented new IT and finance solutions, and of course started the first pilot networks and there's more besides that.

Lots happening and the business is starting to transform which is both exciting and challenging.

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And my reflections so far?

Although there is little experience in Dignity of major business change, I don't think that will be a problem. We have seen such openness from everyone that we have worked with - real honesty, a preparedness to try new things, and all underpinned by a real passion for ensuring that client service is perfect. This combination has meant that the key decisions on new ways of working and new IT tools have been very practical and always had the client front and centre.

I've also worked on change projects in a lot of different businesses, but Dignity has the best communication skills I've seen. I guess this is no surprise, as being able to communicate sensitively with clients at some of the most difficult times is so important, but you are really good!

These skills are going to be critical for us all next year which is a much bigger year for change in the business.

There will be many more property projects, hopefully rebranding of the rest of the estate, new pricing changes, more new technology, new central payment solutions and the rollout of the new network model once the pilot is completed.

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I know many of us will be working over the Christmas period, taking care of families and their loved ones, but I hope that you all get the opportunity to spend some time with those you love. For me Christmas is family time, nothing fancy, just time at home, or visiting the family, normally eating more than we really should.

“

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”

Whatever your festive season involves, I hope you get the chance to do what you enjoy doing, and here's to an exciting and successful 2020.

Festive regards,
Paul Turner
Transformation Director



PILOT NETWORKS: A CLOSER VIEW

The pilot networks have been live for two weeks, but what's new and how's it going so far? We take a look at these burning questions...

We're already a fortnight into our pilot in Dinnington, Sutton-in-Ashfield and Lincoln, and initial feedback shows that the new processes we're testing are working well.

Coinciding with a particularly busy period of families needing our care, we're seeing over half of arrangements take place outside our branches, and 23% taking place at evenings and weekends - which means our clients are already benefitting from the extended availability of colleagues in the pilots.

This is fantastic news and a shows how a key element of the Good to Great vision to become more customer-focused is coming to life. Offering clients the convenience of making arrangements where they want - such as the comfort of their own home, and when they want - fitting in with their often busy lives, means we can be even more compassionate and understanding of individual circumstances as we take the greatest care of the families we look after.

Meanwhile, our new resource management system (RMS) has allowed us to plan our people and vehicles more efficiently, and has been a success so far



(more on that to come in a future article) and pre-need sales are also doing very well, ensuring families will continue to come to us in future.

A few teething problems

However, it's not all been plain sailing. At the time of go-live, we saw a high number of people come into our care which even without getting used to new ways of working, would have stretched us.

Plus, we had a number of challenges to figure out - from co-ordinating communications between teams, to telephony

and IT, to the challenge of efficient coverage on the geographical outskirts of the networks. Everyone has worked extremely hard to resolve these initial issues, supporting colleagues in their new roles and ensuring we continue to learn as we progress through the pilot.

In fact, these challenges are really useful in helping us understand the impacts of the new target operating model when it comes to wider rollout, as no two networks are the same.

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Testing, testing

The new pilot network operating model has been designed so we can better manage our clients' experience, and view and share resources across client service and service delivery. Every role and process we're testing is of course focussed around taking the greatest care of the deceased and their families.

We understand from the many requests we've had that you're keen to know exactly what the pilot structure and roles look like, but it's early days and we need to spend the next few weeks thoroughly testing how it's working and assessing any impacts on our service and how we operate.

This means the structure and roles remain very much subject to change, so it wouldn't be fair on those colleagues to share it more widely now. It's also important to know that as this is a pilot in a small area, and because we are testing whether the new processes work in practice, there have not been any decisions made in regard to the rest of the business.

However, did you know that twelve colleagues (over 20%) secured a promotion during consultation? That's great news for their career progression and development, giving colleagues plenty of opportunities to have better defined and more rewarding roles.

And finally...

Don't forget you can leave a comment here, or email goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk if you have any questions or concerns.



Better Call Paul Winner!

Congrats to Funeral Manager, Liz Barrett from Bristol, who bagged a £25 Amazon gift card after being the 100th person to email bettercallpaul@dignityuk.co.uk. Liz asked about sharing photos digitally. If you have an IT question that's bugging you, why not get in touch?



#YourStory monthly prize draw winner



A huge thank you to everyone who has shared with us their stories of going above and beyond for clients and colleagues. Keep them coming!

Each story you share with us via the Good to Great website www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk/yourstory is entered into our monthly prize draw to win a £100 Amazon Gift Card. We're pleased to announce our very first winner is Funeral Arranger Sam Painter from Horsham.

Over 40 years since her client's baby was stillborn, Sam reunited the baby's mother with her child's lost grave.

You'll have to wait until the next **Little Book of Dignity** is published in order to read the full story, but suffice to say, there was not a dry eye in the house here.



BRANCHING OUT

The Digital Marketing team have been drawing on our heritage and local insight to expand our local online pages.

In the two years since we rolled out our local branch pages online, we've been doing lots of work to make sure they remain relevant and informative – after all page two of Google is somewhere you never want to be!

And working with local colleagues to make sure content is up to date, the results have been impressive, with 59% more people visiting branch pages this year compared to 2017, and 23% more people calling us as a result of liking what they see online.

Our Digital Marketing teams monitor performance weekly to make sure we remain high up in search results, and have had a recent focus on expanding branch pages from just one page to multi-page mini websites in their own right.



These expanded pages are rich in content, with in-depth information about the history of the branch, funeral costs, plans and funeral notices. Check out the **J.H. Kenyon** pages to see how we've drawn upon its long history and the **J. Rymer** and **A. Bennett & Sons** pages which show the services we offer in detail.



With well over 800 branches in our portfolio, our digital gurus have their work cut out, but plan to make sure we continue to improve and expand the content on every one of our branch microsites next year, ensuring we take the greatest care of our clients as soon as they seek us out.

CHANGE THROUGH A LENS

With a new year almost upon us, it's time to reflect on the resolutions we didn't keep, the diet that went out of the window on day two and the bucket list that remains just as full as it ever was. Or, you can don some magical retro lenses and join us as we look back on a few things that thankfully have changed over time...

The rise of the camera phone is surely one of the modern technologies that has made such a difference to our lives and how we capture memories. But 'roll' back nearly 200 years and we'd be carrying around a large wooden box camera to take photographs! And let's not forget the anticipation of dropping off rolls of camera film and getting our holiday snaps back (and finding those double prints!).

From pounds and shillings, to notes, to debit cards, credit cards, contactless to apple pay, bank transfers to PayPal... the way we pay for goods and services has completely changed over the past 30 years. And yet we've all rolled with the times, with most of us using our debit or credit cards to pay for our weekly shop.



But what about attitudes?

We can't talk about change and ignore how education and scientific discoveries change our attitudes over time.

Take, for example, a 1950's advert by 7UP showing a baby drinking the popular fizzy drink with a helping hand from its mother. Alongside it the caption, "we have the youngest customers in the business... for 7UP is so pure, so wholesome that you can even give it to babies and feel good about it." Fast forward to 2019, and there would be a national outcry if

we even thought about ditching breastmilk or formula milk for fizzy pop as the drink of choice for our little ones. Thankfully our pearly whites are in much better shape as attitudes to healthy eating (and drinking!) have changed over time.

And so, in a few years, will we be looking back at our current business processes in disbelief? Will we question how we ever arranged a funeral without using a tablet? Will we wonder why clients thought they had to visit us in branch, rather than us visit them at home? And the big question, will we miss the beloved screeching sound of the branch fax machine?

Let us know your thoughts by leaving a comment or two on the **[Good to Great website.](#)**



COMING SOON: WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Taking the greatest care is what we're about here at Dignity and with that in mind, early next year we'll be launching an industry-leading interactive tool on our website that will help people with the daunting task of what to do when someone dies.

Often faced with conflicting information and experiences from family, friends and the web, it's hard to know which way to turn, and certainly where to start. But with our new 'what to do when someone dies' online tool, we'll be offering a helping hand by not only answering all those initial questions but also providing users with a unique downloadable checklist that can be printed and ticked off as they go through the motions.



The tool uses three questions in order to provide the user with the right information, including where the loved one died and whether it was sudden or expected. From then on, users are guided through five stages of what to do and who to contact - from obtaining a medical certificate to registering

the death, right up to contacting a Funeral Director to begin an arrangement.



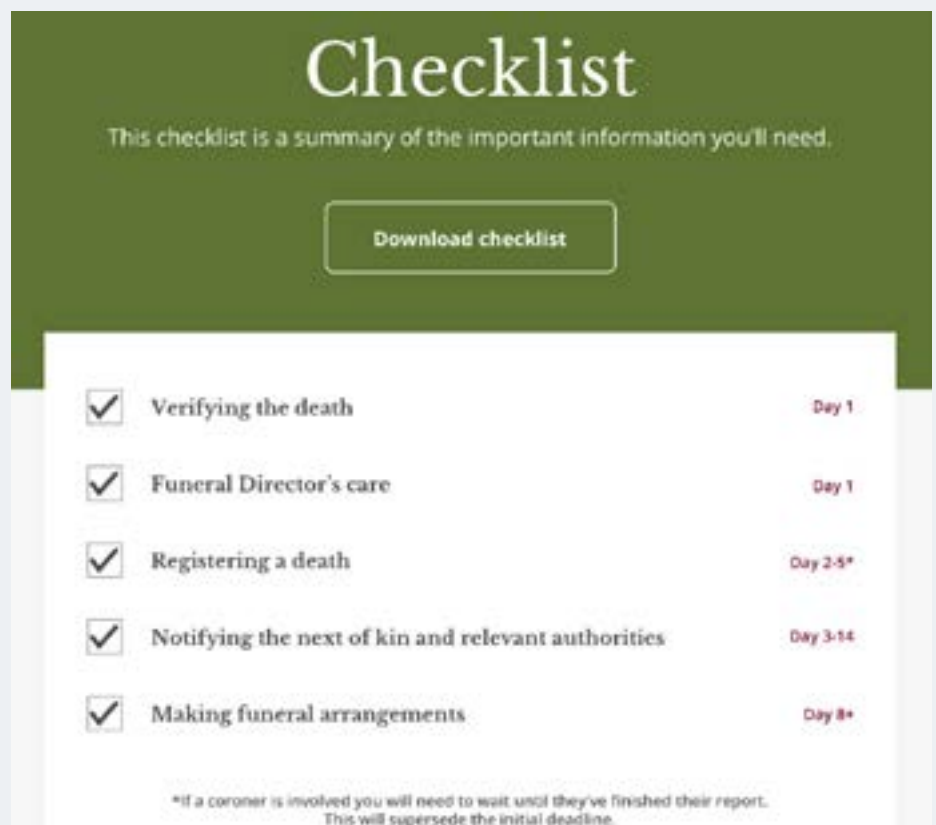
Gorav Bassi, Digital Marketing Manager, described the tool as a significant development for both the bereaved and our colleagues in branches. "Those first few days of having lost a loved one are often the most difficult. We know it's hard to think straight, and so we wanted to develop something that would give people a tangible list to

follow that was unique to their situation, as well as offering reliable information.



"As soon as we launch the tool, we're hoping that our colleagues in branches will signpost clients to our website to help them."

In January, keep an eye out on our website, www.dignityfunerals.co.uk, and on the www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk of course. We can't wait to hear what you think of the tool!



LOOK OUT FOR YOUR NEW LOG-IN!

We're gearing up to launch a whole new suite of tools to help us buy smarter and go from Good to Great, using our sheer size to grab the best deals. First-up, it's the all new Office Team office supply portal, SmartPad.

If you currently have an account with Lyreco, on Monday 16th December you will receive your brand spanking new log-in details to access Office Team's SmartPad ordering portal.



Here, you'll have access to thousands of top-notch products with super-fast delivery times, all available at the click of a button.

What if I don't receive my log-in information?

If you are a Lyreco user and don't receive your log-in details by Wednesday 18th December, please email Office Team's Customer Service Team: sales.liverpool@officeteam.co.uk or you can call 0151 236 8060 and speak to Angela Davies or Lewis Shoob. They will be able to get you up and shopping for those business essentials.



Can I still order from Lyreco?

Once you have your new log-in details, please place all office supply orders on SmartPad. On 23rd December 2019 Lyreco will no longer accept orders from Dignity.

Can I still use petty cash to buy stationery and consumables?

The selection of goods on SmartPad is much larger than on Lyreco, so we urge you to check what's available before using petty cash and claiming back through expenses. We're talking tea bags, loo roll, marker pens to letter trays... if you need it, it's probably on SmartPad!

What are the benefits of SmartPad?

Changing suppliers is a lot of hard work. But with a wider selection and better prices, switching from Lyreco to Office Team is a wise move for Dignity. Just ask Jamie Hawke, Funeral Operations Regional

Manager for the South West, who has supported a handful of colleagues in his region who had early access to SmartPad to test and make sure ordering office supplies was a doddle.

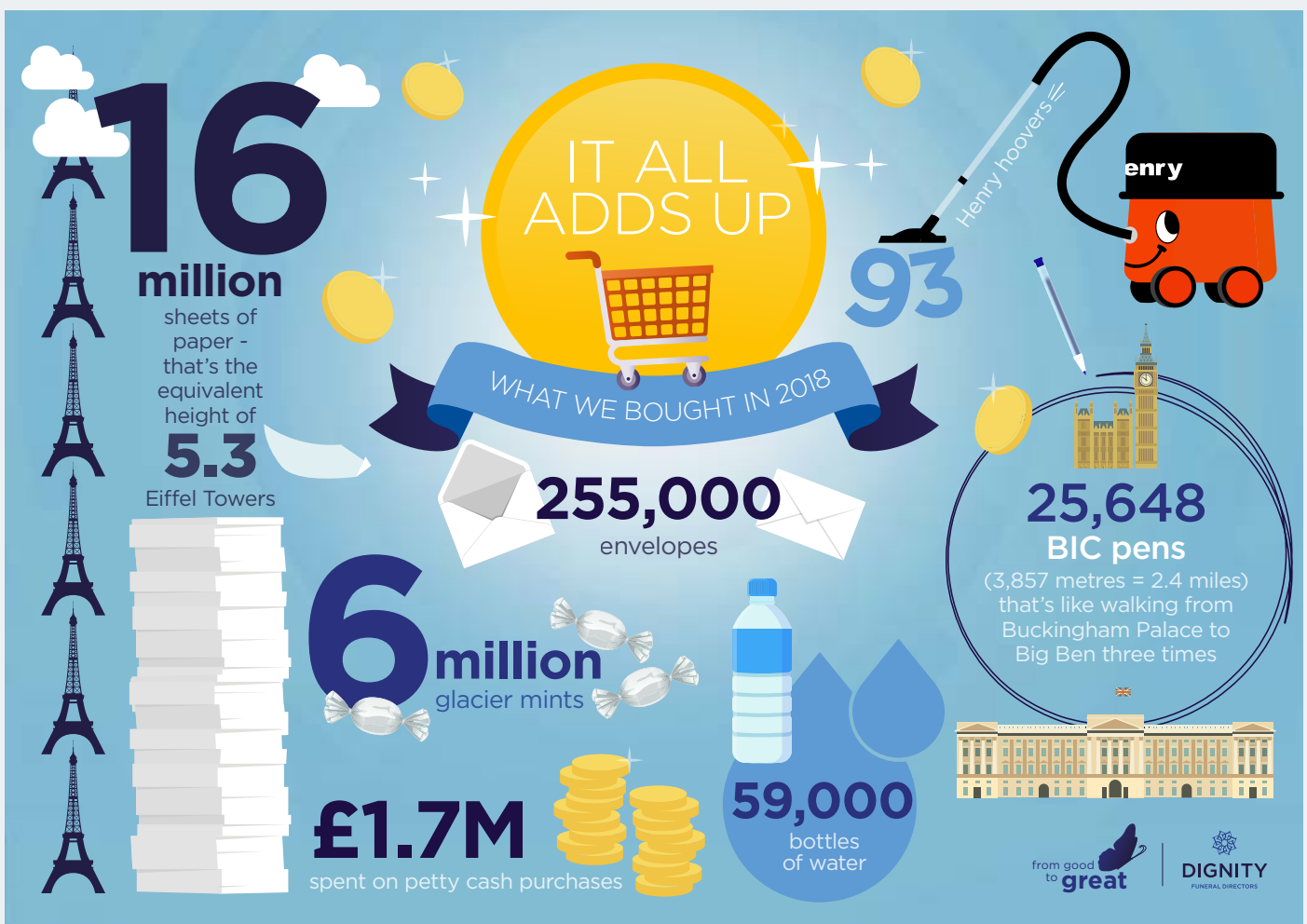


Jamie said: "The feedback I've received from a number of colleagues in my region has been really positive. From the outset, everyone has said that the log-in instructions were easy to follow, and that they found SmartPad much easier to use than Lyreco. The search function has also been popular, and overall it looks like SmartPad will make ordering office supplies much easier."



DIGNITY IN NUMBERS

We've all been there... lying awake at night trying to get to sleep and wondering how many sheets of paper Dignity has ordered in a given year. Or how many of those trusted Bic pens we've bought... haven't we? Well, either way, thanks to some top-notch detective work, we have the answers. Here's a snapshot of what we bought on Lyreco in 2018. Perhaps our new year's resolution as a business could be to think about our use of plastic, and use less paper – five Eiffel Towers is certainly very high!



HELPING PROVIDE THE ANSWERS

We're pioneering a new digital information tool in the UK to help us give more information to people in their time of need.

You may not think we have much in common with Ben & Jerrys, of yummy ice-cream fame but, as it turns out, we're both trailblazing a new digital solution to enhance our clients' experience with us.

In fact, we're just one of five companies in the world (and the first in the UK) to work with a company called Yext on their new 'Answers' platform.

With the death of a loved one and organising a funeral a bewildering time for most, we're here to help clients and potential clients navigate the many paths they need to explore.

And this is where Yext Answers comes in – enabling people to ask questions online and get their answers directly on our website.

This is on top of the work we've been doing in the last few weeks directing clients to share their experience and rate us on Google, building on the 6,500 reviews we already have for our branches.

So why is all this important?

With more and more people becoming digitally savvy and having the internet at their fingertips, we're making sure that our local funeral directors can provide information to people when they need it. And by working with new partners like Yext, we can make sure we're at the forefront of new technology when we take the greatest care of our clients, giving us an edge on the competition.



All you need to know about Funeral Notices

When choosing a Dignity Funeral Director like Thompsons Funeral Directors, you will be offered a complimentary Funeral Notice. This is a personalised message that you can easily share with your family and friends before the day of the funeral.

- You understand that there is still a lot to be done when arranging a loved one's funeral, and we want helping more than to make things a little easier for you. A Funeral Notice can save you time, and is a simple and effective way of letting your family and friends know about the arrangements.
 - A Funeral Notice helps you:
 - Inform your family and friends the details of the funeral
 - Help family and friends plan their journey
 - Save people confused if arrangements change
 - Customise the notice to you
 - Help anyone who's new to the industry
 - Share a memorial message with public attendees
 - Use a QR code and linking to your website
- You can see some of our local funeral notices in action on [www.dignity.co.uk](#) or have one created for you.



Funeral Notices

Here are some of the most recent funeral notices by Thompsons Funeral Directors in Farnham, Surrey.

Upcoming Events

 Albert Einstein 1879-1955 100th Birthday	 Eric Frydry 1930-2020 Funeral Service	 Winston Churchill 1874-1965 Funeral Service	 Michael Jackson 1958-2009 Funeral Service
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seconds with...
Annette MacDonal
BUSINESS MANAGER AND OPS
MANAGEMENT FORUM REP

This week we donned our woolly hat and scarf and had a chat with Annette MacDonal in Scotland. Here's what she had to say!

Where are you based?

Predominately in Aberdeen but I travel around and have a few desks at my disposal for working - thank you everyone who allows me to work alongside them.

What was your first ever job?

I was a full time Bookbinder/Print Finisher. Factory life is not for the faint hearted; it teaches self discipline and a sense of achievement.

Where did you go on your last holiday?

Camping in the Lake District (bugs 'n' beasties don't bother me!).

What does a typical day look like for you?

I get in to work usually at 7.30am, get the kettle on for a quick cuppa and have a chat to those who are in. If I have calendar appointments, I make sure I am prepared for them, I also go out and about

to visit branch staff finding out what they have on their list of 'to do's' and offering assistance. If I'm office-based for the day, I will be answering emails and making telephone calls, some are funeral operations-related and some are Forum-related.

How and why did you get into the funeral industry?

I got into the funeral industry was because I needed a change of direction. The printing industry was changing and I needed something different and more secure.

How? Sheer hard work, perseverance and a dogged determination - going up against the boys is not always easy!

“
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”

How would you explain your job to a three-year-old?

I get to speak to lots of people and help them do their job.

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Tea or coffee?

Tea – every time, especially if it comes with scones, strawberry jam and clotted cream.

What's the highlight of your day?

Celebrating with colleagues our successes and achievements and when I can get logged on to a computer and everything works!

What would your top tip be to take Dignity from Good to Great?

Don't leave us hanging on too long, we want the change, we want to make it work, we want to look after our clients and deceased and be the best we can be.

Are you excited about the future of Dignity?

I am excited about our future, I believe in moving with the times, I believe in investing in our people, I believe in celebrating our commitment to the communities in which we are privileged to work.

How will you be spending Christmas this year?

My Christmas will be a quiet one at home with my partner, not too much food, not too much drink, but enough to be happy, contented and relaxed.

“
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”



GOOD TO GREAT: HOW ARE WE DOING?

Are Good to Great communications working for you?
We want to know what you really think in our latest quarterly survey.

It's essential you all have the information you need to understand what's changing, why, and how you can support the changes happening as we move Dignity from Good to Great.

From the Good to Great website, to the newsletter, to the Team Brief, we'd love to know what you think of the Good to Great



communications you receive, what you'd like to hear more about and where you would like to see us do better.

Please take a minute or two to let us know how we're doing, so we can continue to improve the way we share Good to Great information with you:

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/dignity2019_Q4

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER

We know the importance of showing clients care and compassion at the time of their bereavement, but the need for support often extends far beyond the funeral service itself.

Christmas is a prime example – a time associated with celebrations and happiness can prove particularly difficult for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. With this in mind, many of our branches and crematoria have established a tradition of organising Memorial Services within their local communities.

Clients who have used us during the last 12 months are invited to attend, although the events themselves are open to anyone who might find them comforting. Some include the opportunity to light a candle of remembrance



and make a donation to a nominated charity.

Holding their first Memorial Services in Liverpool this year were Thompsons Funeral Directors, which started at St Mary's Church in Walton, near Bootle. Around 180 guests came along and the service was officiated by the Reverend Juliet Stephenson.

There were readings, carols, performances from the choir of St Mary the Virgin and a collection in aid of both the church and British Heart Foundation. Thompsons colleagues David Boyes and Sharon Baker read out the names of loved ones, before family members were called forward to light a candle.

Some had brought framed photographs with them to place around the church and Thompsons staff gave each guest a pin badge of a robin as a keepsake, which symbolises renewal, change and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Speaking at the service, Reverend Stephenson said: "Memorial Services are a chance to celebrate everything our loved ones meant to us. This will be the first Christmas people are spending without someone significant in their lives and we have been able to provide a special opportunity to come together in a communal place and remember them."

Dignity's Area Manager Paul Lambert added: "Caring for bereaved people goes to the heart of what it means to be a Dignity Funeral Director and it is a real privilege to arrange and attend these community events. It can provide a small amount of comfort for families to see a familiar face who will have helped them recently during a difficult and emotional time."

Dozens more Memorial Services have been taking place up and down the country and it's a huge credit to the colleagues involved who give up their time to ensure events run smoothly and attendees feel supported and valued.

And our involvement in the community at Christmas certainly doesn't stop there. Stories have been coming in thick and fast, everything from switching on the Christmas lights to charity coffee mornings and festive fun days.

You really do us proud at this time of year and we'll be highlighting more inspiring tales of community spirit in the next edition of our quarterly newsletter, Dignity Express. In the meantime, here are just a few seasonal samples that show the positive difference our people continually make.

Christmas all wrapped up

Mason's Funeral Directors in Hartlepool supports Operation Christmas Child, an initiative led by the international relief charity Samaritan's Purse UK to collect and distribute shoebox gifts. The branch acted as a drop off point,

receiving nearly 150 creatively decorated shoeboxes ready to share with children across the world.



Pictured: local schoolchildren Anthony Bartle and Layla Maw drop off their shoeboxes with teacher Joanne Campbell.

The show must go on

The team at T S Horlock & Son in Northfleet stepped in to continue a Christmas tradition started by a local family who experienced a bereavement this year. The husband had always played Santa for children



Pictured: (l-r) Gabby Ford, Ian Fletcher and Debbie King get ready to welcome visitors to the Christmas Market.

visiting the Christmas Market at Ellenor Hospice, but he sadly passed away during the summer. Horlocks arranged the funeral and, after hearing about his longstanding support for the hospice, colleagues offered to don their costumes and run Santa's grotto on the family's behalf.

Christmas tree

Gordon Barber Funeral Directors were among the local businesses sponsoring a glittering display at the annual Christmas Tree



Pictured: Gordon Barber's sponsored tree stands tall as part of the 2019 Christmas Tree Festival in Norwich.

Festival held at St Peter Mancroft Church in Norwich. Organised by the Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, there are more than 30 individually decorated trees on show, with all donations received being shared between local charities.



JARGONBUSTER

Don't know your BAU from your ROI? Then we're here to help!

Circle Back

Sometimes it can feel like we're running around in circles, especially at this time of year, but all this phrase means in business speak is to revisit an issue. For example, "I'm heading to lunch now, but let's circle-back Friday morning."

Go-live

Just like we went live with the pilot networks last month, this is a punchy way to refer to the public debut of a project. "Fifteen days till go-live, people. Get it done!"

Got a phrase that has you bamboozled? Let us know at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk.

THE RUMOUR MILL

I've heard that we're moving all branches to appointment only - I'm worried what this will mean for us and families.

We have no plans to move to appointment-only branches. We are trialling new concepts and



analysing clients' reactions to the changes we're making in the pilot networks but our intention is to ultimately support, give advice and prepare the families we look after, whether that's through service we provide at homes, over the phone, or when families come into branch.



Get in touch

If you have a question about transformation, heard something on the jungle drums, have some feedback or a suggestion for the next newsletter, then leave a comment on the website or drop us an email at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk.