# Key challenges from the Funerals research
Understanding attitudes to funerals in England

Research consisted of a mixture of interviews with experts and with those who had recently organised a funeral for someone over 70.
NB 76% of all deaths are over 70 [2012]

These are the 10 opportunities that the research identified and which have informed the values of the project and the resources developed
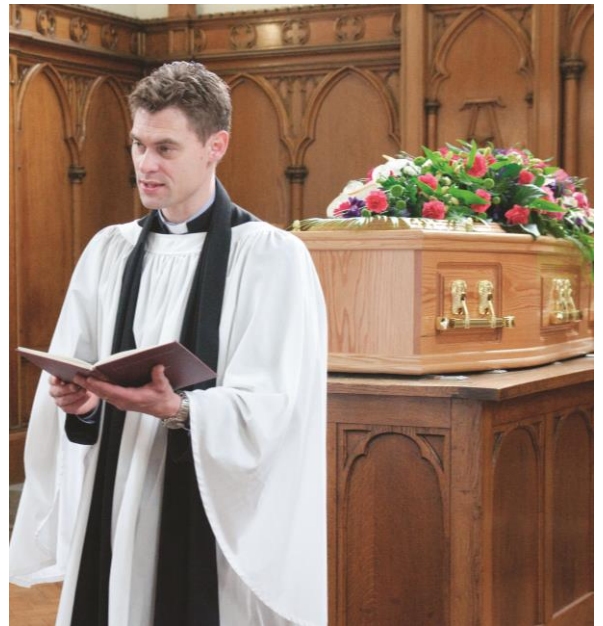
• **Own the meaning of funerals-** A funeral service is perceived to be of fundamental importance, but the purpose and meaning of the ceremony is currently unclear. This means the nature of Church involvement is also not well understood.

• **Help people reflect on their own funeral wishes-** The Church of England has unique permission to start this conversation and support people in reflecting on their wishes.

• **Be easy to work with-** Find ways of showing reliably high standards of customer service to help restore and build confidence in the clergy with funeral directors.

• **Personalise funerals-** The celebration of life is generally regarded as the most important part of the modern funeral service and the church is not perceived as being reflected enough in the Church of England.

• **Help the bereaved demonstrate love and care-** Help the bereaved to contribute to the ceremony and support them at this difficult time

• **Move from 'celebrant' to spiritual counsel-** Find ways to develop a less functional more meaningful relationship with the bereaved.

• **Be clear on the practicalities-** Many people simply don't know what the Church of England has to offer when it comes to funerals.

• **Be inclusive and accessible-** Balance tradition and formality with warmth and accessibility, helping to anchor the relevance of the church into people's everyday lives.

• **Be brilliant every time-** Funerals matter to people and if it is perceived as not meeting needs, it is hard to forget.

• **Enable people to stay in touch-** Need to follow up on funerals to offer support or friendship to those involved

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND