

PRESS RELEASE

21 June 2011

New Mayor of Craigavon to open re-designed Memorial Garden which provides peaceful time for reflection as families gather to remember their babies.

On Sunday 26th June, the Sands Northern Ireland Garden is celebrating its redesign and is being officially opened by The Mayor of Craigavon, Alan Carson.

The Sands (stillbirth and neonatal death charity) memorial garden has been at the Kernan Cemetery in Portadown for fifteen years, but the garden has recently been redesigned and the garden's memorial stone is being rededicated by the hospital chaplains of Craigavon Area Hospital.

Steven Guy, Sands' regional co-ordinator for Northern Ireland says, 'This service is very special to us as it provides an opportunity for parents, family and friends to remember their much loved babies, who were stillborn or died shortly after birth. We hope the garden provides a place of peace and reflection for parents to remember their babies, or a place to come if their baby doesn't have a grave. .

'June is Sands Awareness Month and we would like to welcome everyone affected by the death of a baby to join us at the service. Incredibly seventeen babies are stillborn or die shortly after birth every day in the UK, which tragically means that a further 500 babies will die during our awareness month alone.'

Those attending the service will be able to personally acknowledge their baby in the Sands Garden as small, flat stones will be provided on which parents can hand paint their babies name, or names can be painted on behalf of parents.

The service will take place on Sunday 26th June at the Sands Garden, Kernan Cemetery, 37 Kernan Hill Road, Portadown, Craigavon BT63 5YB from 2pm onwards.

For further details please contact Steven Guy – telephone: 02838 392509

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For further information, please contact:

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Key Information about Sands:

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, was established by bereaved parents in 1978 and obtained charity status in 1981.

Sands core aims are to:

- Support anyone affected by the death of a baby;
- To work in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families; and
- To promote research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives

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