

Marriages at Approved Venues

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Section 1: Information about your Ceremony

The number of people permitted to attend a ceremony is based on the legal capacity of the room. Please contact your venue directly to confirm the maximum number of people who can be safely accommodated at your ceremony.

Entrance

There are a number of ways a couple can choose to begin your ceremony. Please make your choice on the checklist.

You should be available 15 minutes before the ceremony to meet the registration officers. If one person is making a separate entrance, they need to be available to see the registration officer no later than ten minutes before the ceremony is scheduled to start. **If you would like photographs to be taken before the ceremony, please allow extra time for these.** Each venue will provide a suitable location near the ceremony room in which the parties can meet with the registration officers. Guests should assemble **in the ceremony room** no later than 10 minutes before the time of your ceremony.

Checking details

The registration officer will need to see you both first to check the details which will go on the marriage schedule and on your marriage certificates. This can be done either separately or together depending on whether one party is planning to make an entrance. In addition to checking the details contained in the marriage schedule, they will ask for the full names and occupations of your parents.

Time of Ceremony

The time booked is the time at which the ceremony will begin. It is **essential** that you keep to the time arranged for your marriage. If the start of your marriage is delayed for any reason the registration officer may have to curtail your ceremony, leaving out certain elements, such as readings, personal vows, and musical items. It is also possible that the marriage may have to be postponed, or at worst rescheduled for another day. This may require new notices of marriage to be given and the payment of all fees again.

To minimise the risk of delays, you should ensure that you and your guests have ample time to arrive at the venue. It is a good idea to check the local travel news on the day and make allowances for road works etc.

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Witnesses

You must provide two witnesses to your marriage, both of whom must speak and understand English. Ideally, they should be aged 18 or over. Both must also be able to understand what is taking place and be able to testify to what they have seen and heard should the need ever arise. They can be family or friends.

Seating

The venue has maximum numbers that can be accommodated in each room. These have to include **everyone** in the room, including two registration officers, live musicians, the photographer, babies and young children. All guests have to be seated. Please ensure you do not exceed these limits; they are set for safety reasons. The two witnesses should take seats at the front if possible. If an entrance is being made accompanied by attendants, the appropriate number of seats should also be kept free at the front.

Outside Structures

If your chosen venue has an “outside structure” in which you hope to have your ceremony, please note that the decision as to whether a ceremony can take place in an outside structure rests with the registration officers on the day, and whilst they will discuss the situation with you and the venue staff, **their decision is final**. When doing so they take into account various aspects (temperature, humidity, wind, rain etc) and have to consider you both, your guests, themselves and also the protection of the marriage paperwork. If the decision is that the ceremony will need to be in one of the licensed rooms indoors then the ceremony needs to still be able to start at the same time, as we usually have other couples to marry later on in the day elsewhere, hence the need for a suitable room to be ready.

Rings

If rings are to be exchanged during the ceremony then the person who has them will need to discuss the exchange with the registration officer on the day to ensure that social distancing rules are not breached. Otherwise the rings must be in possession of the couple at start of the ceremony.

Music

You must supply the music to the venue and make arrangements for them to play it during the ceremony. As this will be a civil marriage, only music with **no** religious content may be used. For example, pieces such as *Pie Jesu*, *Ave Maria* or *Amazing Grace* are not acceptable. Music is played during any formal entrance to the room; for about 10 minutes during the checking and signing of the schedule and photographs; and again as the couple and guests leave the room. If there is to be live music, the registration officer conducting the ceremony will liaise with the musicians on the day over cue words. Please let us know the titles of your music selection prior to your ceremony.

Words and Readings

Your ceremony will follow the script below. Civil ceremonies are not permitted to include any religious elements: if you would like to add any personal vows or readings, or words to accompany the exchange of wedding rings, these must not have any religious content or connotation. Personal vows must not be taken from any religious marriage ceremony; and examples of texts which would not be considered appropriate are passages from the Bible, the Koran, and the Torah. Moreover, the Registrar General considers that leaving out certain parts of a reading would not alter its religious character. You will need to provide us with a copy of any additional material with the checklist to be supplied before the ceremony, including the title and author of any reading and the name of the person who will be reading it during the ceremony. Please indicate on the online checklist where each reading will occur in the ceremony.

Photography & Video

Your guests will be welcome to take photographs during the ceremony but only from their seats, again to maintain social distancing. In their Covid-19 Risk Assessment your venue will have given consideration as to how your official photographer/videographer can take photographs safely. We are happy for the ceremony to be filmed or live streamed. Any film must be recorded from your seat. You will not be able to film the signing of the schedule. Please contact your venue to confirm the Wi-Fi connectivity in the ceremony room.

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Mobile Phones

Please remind all concerned that mobile phones should be set to silent before entering the building.

Confetti

Please check with the venue regarding the throwing of confetti or rice and inform your guests accordingly.

Re-Registration of Children's Births

If you have a child or children together, you will need to re-register the birth(s) again after your marriage. Guidance and the relevant forms to apply for a re-registration can be found on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk). You should complete the forms and telephone 0345 045 1363 for an appointment.

Animals at a ceremony

Only formally registered assistance animals are allowed at any ceremony. We must be made aware of the presence of any assistance animals at least two weeks in advance.

To ensure possible health and safety issues are avoided and to avoid disruption to the ceremony and surroundings no other animals are allowed.

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Section 2: Marriage Ceremony Script

(Registration Officer should remind guests about photos, video and mobile phones)

Entry to the room accompanied by choice of own music

Good morning/afternoon and welcome to the wedding of & here at which has been sanctioned according to law for the celebration of marriages.

May I introduce my colleague who will ensure the legal formalities are completed. My name is and I will conduct the ceremony, which will be in accordance with the civil law of this country.

This requires our couple to declare their freedom to marry each other, before making the contract of marriage when they take each other as partners for life.

From earliest times couples have sought to unify their individual lives through the security of marriage. Hopes, dreams and aspirations are brought together on a wedding day, to be shared and developed, in order that the lives of both partners may be best fulfilled.

Today we see and take what is a decisive and momentous step – a step that will bring its challenges and triumphs, its consolations and rewards

Ladies and Gentlemen & would like to thank you all for coming to celebrate the beginning of their new life together. I'm sure it means a great deal to them that you can be here to share their special day and witness their marriage vows. They have found in each other love and happiness and now wish to affirm their relationship.

You are here to witness the joining in matrimony of and

If any person knows of any lawful impediment to this marriage they should declare it now.

Optional reading 1 - by family member/friend. Please provide a copy when supplying your checklist

(to the couple, if seated) Would both please stand?

..... and before you are joined in matrimony, I have to remind you of the solemn and binding character of the vows you are about to make.

Marriage, according to the law of this country, is the union of two people, voluntarily entered into for life, to the exclusion of all others.

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It is also a solemn union to provide the love, friendship, help and comfort that each ought to have for the other, both in times of joy and in times of difficulty, not to be entered into lightly, nor lightly put to one side.

I am now going to ask each of you, in turn, to declare that you are free to marry. We start with ...(name)..., so will you please repeat after me:

I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I may not be joined in matrimony to

and now

I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I may not be joined in matrimony to

(to the guests) Ladies and gentlemen, our couple are now about to make their vows to each other so those of you that can, would you please stand.

(To party 1). As you make your vows, please take’s hand/s in yours and repeat after me: -

I call upon these persons here present to witness that I do take thee to be my lawful wedded wife/husband

(To party 2) As you make your vows please keep hold of’s hand/s and repeat after me: -

I call upon these persons here present to witness that I do take thee to be my lawful wedded husband/wife

..... and would now like to share with us their personal vows *(optional)*

Personal Vows - Please select from Section A

It is also part of a long tradition of marriage in this country, and in many other parts of the world, that the marriage contract is sealed by the giving and receiving of a ring. The wedding ring is an unbroken circle; it has no beginning and no end. It symbolises everlasting love and is an outward sign of the lifelong promises you are making to each other today.

..... (Best Man/Page Boy) Would you please come forward the rings?

....., please take’s ring, place it on his/her finger and repeat after me:

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Person 1 Ring Exchange - Please select from Section B

....., please take’s ring, place it on his/her finger and repeat after me:

Person 2 Ring Exchange - Please select from Section B

..... and you have both made the declarations required by law, and you have made solemn promises and a binding contract with each other in the presence of your witnesses, your family and your friends.

Today is the start of a new life for you together. We hope the love that you feel for each other will deepen and grow ever stronger throughout the years to come.

It gives me great pleasure to declare that you are now husband/wife and wife/husband.

Congratulations!

Optional reading 2 - by family member/friend. Please provide a copy when supplying your checklist

Signing of the schedule by couple, witnesses and registration officers with background music playing.

Photographs are taken by the professional photographer and/or guests. (No photographs to be taken of the Marriage Schedule).

The registration officer invites the couple to link arms and then requests the guests to stand while the newlyweds lead their guests from the ceremony room.

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Section 3: Additions to your Ceremony

A: Personal Vows

You are welcome to choose personal vows from the selection below. Alternatively, you are welcome to write your own but if doing so, please attach a copy of the wording to the checklist when returning it.

- 1 I take you to be my (wife/husband), my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our union and I will love you more each day than I did the day before. I will trust you, laugh with you and cry with you, loving you faithfully through good times and bad, regardless of the obstacles we may face together. I give you my hand, my heart and my love, from this day on, for the rest of our lives.
- 2, I pledge to share my life openly with you. I promise to cherish and care for you, to honour and support you. I will respect you as an individual and I will be true to you, through good times and bad. To these promises I give my word.

- 3 I love you. You are my best friend. Today I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you and to always hold you in highest regard. These things I give to you today, and all the days of our life.

- 4 **Person A:** I promise to give you the best of myself and ask of you no more than you can give.
Person B: I promise to respect you as your own person and to accept that your interests, desires and needs are no less important than my own.
Person A: I promise to share with you my time and my attention, and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.
Person B: I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the windows of my world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams.
Person A: I promise to grow old along with you, and to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.
Person B: I promise to love you in good times and in bad, with all I have to give and all that I feel inside, in the only way I know how - completely and forever.

- 5 I have my own vows and will supply them with my checklist.

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B: Words for the Ring Exchange

You are welcome to choose a ring exchange from the selection below. Alternatively, you are welcome to write your own ring exchange wording but if doing so, please attach a copy of the wording to the checklist when returning it.

- 1 I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage and a symbol of our friendship and everlasting love for each other. Everything I have, and everything I am is yours, from this day forward.
- 2 I give you this ring as a symbol of our friendship and of the commitment we have made here today, to love, respect and care for each other, through good times and bad, for the rest of our lives.
- 3 I give you this ring with my love, to wear from this day forward as a reminder of this special day and of the promises we have made to each other.
- 4 **Person A:** I give you this ring as a symbol of our marriage and as a token of my love, trust and commitment. I promise to care for you above all others, to give you my love, friendship and support, and to respect and cherish you throughout our lives together.
Person B: I give you this ring as a symbol of our marriage and as a token of my love. I promise that I will respect you as an individual, support you through difficult times, rejoice with you through happy times, be loyal always, and above all, love you as my husband/wife and friend.
- 5 I have my own ring exchange and will supply them with my checklist.