

Your wedding is fast approaching and we are privileged to play a part in your special event. We want to make everything run as smoothly as possible for you and have created this guide to help you prepare for the big day.

You may wish for your ceremony to be a formal and traditional celebration or you may prefer a relaxed informal gathering. You might be dreaming of a big event or feel more comfortable with a quiet intimate ceremony. This is your day and the choice is yours.

You can personalise parts of your ceremony by adding your own words, music and readings. You will find further information about the options in the following pages and on the planner form.

Please read through this guide and then complete and return your ceremony planner which you can find on our website. We request that you return the completed planner at least 14 working days before your ceremony to allow us time to prepare.

If there is anything else you would like to know or are unsure about, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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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.

## Arrival

We kindly request that your guests assemble in the ceremony room no later than ten minutes before the time of your marriage.

## 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 certificate. This can be done either separately or together depending on whether one party is planning to make an entrance. 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.

## Entrance

How would you like to enter the ceremony room? Would you like to enter accompanied by bridesmaids and page boys? Do you want to be formally ‘given away’? Or would you like a more casual start to your ceremony where you enter with your guests? Just let us know what you would like to do and we will incorporate this into your ceremony.

## 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. We therefore respectfully request that you and your guests are ready to start the ceremony at the agreed time. If the start of your marriage is delayed for any reason the Registration Officer may have to curtail your ceremony, for instance by leaving out a reading. It is also possible that the marriage may have to be postponed until later that day, or at worst, rescheduled for another day. This may require new notices of marriage to be given and the payment of all fees again.

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 traffic and parking, etc.

## 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 Ceremonies

If your ceremony is being held in an outside structure or in an approved outside area, please note that the decision as to whether a ceremony can take place outside 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 and also the protection of the marriage paperwork. Your venue will ensure that a suitable room is ready if the decision is made that the ceremony will need to be held indoors. The ceremony will still need to start at the time booked.

## Rings

Please ensure that the person presenting the rings has them in their possession at the start of the ceremony.

## Music

You will need to 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 including religious lyrics. 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

You can choose to add additional words including personal vows, ring exchange words and additional readings of your choice to the ceremony. Further details of the options are detailed on the planner form which can be found on the plan your day section of our website (<https://www.cambridgeshireceremonies.co.uk/plan-your-day>)

You can find a document detailing some suggested readings on our website. Your choice of readings will need to be read by a friend or family member. Please provide us with a copy of any additional material when you return the ceremony planner. Our staff are not able to read your selected reading.

Civil ceremonies are not permitted to include any religious content or connotation. Please bear this is mind when personalising your ceremony. 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.

## Photography

You may wish to organise a professional photographer or nominate a guest (who is not a witness) to take non-flash photos during your ceremony. The Registration Officers will speak to them on the day and advise on timings and positioning for photographs.

We request that general photography during the ceremony is kept to a minimum as this can detract from your ceremony. As long as the ceremony has started on time, there will be plenty of time for guests to take photos after the legal paperwork is completed.

## Video

We are happy for the ceremony to be filmed or live streamed. Please contact your venue to confirm the Wi-Fi connectivity in the ceremony room. The only part of the ceremony that cannot be recorded is when the couple and the witnesses sign the legal paperwork.

## Mobile Phones

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

## 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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-re-register-a-childs-birth-following-marriage-of-natural-parents> . You should complete the forms and telephone 0345 045 1363 for an appointment.

## Animals at a ceremony

Animals may be able to be present at your ceremony with prior agreement by your venue. Please discuss this with your venue first and then contact us with the details by email.

An additional charge of £40.00 will be applied to your booking and is a non-refundable payment. A member of the Ceremonies Team will contact you to discuss this before the ceremony date, animals will not be permitted to attend a ceremony without this.

# Section 2: Marriage Ceremony Script

Good morning / afternoon everyone; please can I have your attention – would you please stand for the arrival of . . . the bride / the groom / bridal party / name(s) . . .

*Entrance of bridal party – Music to be advised*

*(Ask guests to be seated)*

Good morning / afternoon everyone, and welcome to the wedding of . . . (first name & first name) . . . , here at . . . . . . . (venue name) . . . . . which has been duly sanctioned according to the law for the celebration of marriages.

*Escort Words –* *These words are optional –* *Please see additions to the ceremony document for the available options.*

My name is . . . (DSR’s name). . .  and I have the pleasure and privilege of conducting today’s ceremony.  With me is my colleague, . . . (DR’s name) . . ., who will be creating the legal and historic record of this marriage.

The ceremony this morning / afternoon will be in accordance with the civil law of this country; this law requires . . . (first name & first name) . . . to declare their freedom to marry each other, before making their commitment of marriage.  The vows that they will exchange today are a formal and public pledge of their love and their promises to each other.

. . . (first name & first name) . . . have asked you to be here to witness their marriage vows, and to share with them their happiness as they begin married life together.  Being here today is an expression of the love, respect, and friendship that they have for each other.  Together, they will be stronger, to meet whatever life holds for them.

You are here to witness the joining in matrimony of . . . (full name). . .  and . . . (full name) . . .  If any person knows of any lawful impediment to this marriage, they should declare it now.

*Optional reading - by family member or friend – Please see additions to the ceremony document for the available options or select your own choice. If selecting your own please attach a copy.*

Traditionally, couples have sought to unify their individual lives through the security of marriage.  A marriage is a promise between two people who love each other and wish to spend their future together.  It is making a commitment to share their dreams and memories, their joy and laughter, and to help and support one another.

A strong marriage has a foundation of trust, understanding and encouragement, a willingness to accept each other as they are, and the courage to grow and change together.  . . . (first name & first name) . . . have found happiness, fulfilment, and love, and they now wish to affirm their relationship.

. . . (first name) . . . and . . . (first name) . . . 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.

I am going to ask each of you, in turn, to declare that you are free to marry. We start with . . . (first name) . .

*Declaration – You must choose an option for this part of the ceremony (this is a legal declaration that must be made during your ceremony however, you do not have to choose the same) - Please see additions to the ceremony document for the available options.*

We start with . . .(party A). . ., will you please repeat after me:

*Declaration - Party A – You will repeat these after the registrar*

And now . . . . (Party B). . . .

*Declaration - Party B – You will repeat these after the registrar*

*I Do/I Will Declarations - These words are optional – Please see additions to the ceremony document for the available options or submit your own - you do not have to choose the same option.*

Before they make their legal vows, . . . (first name & first name) . . . have chosen to make their own personal declarations to each other.

*. . . (Party A). . . please repeat after me (if selected):*

*Optional I Do/ I Will Declaration for Party A if chosen*

*And now . . . (Party B) . . . would you also repeat after me:*

*Optional I Do/ I Will Declaration for Party B if chosen*

*(To the guests)*

We have now come to the legal vows.  The vows that . . . (name & name) . . . are about to make will not only last a lifetime but will join them as . . . husband and / wife, wife and wife, husband and husband.  Those of you that are able, would you please stand.

*Vows -* *You must choose an option for this part of the ceremony (these are the words that legally marry you, so must be included before any personal vows. You do not have to choose the same.) - Please see additions to the ceremony document for the available options.*

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

*Vows - Party A – You will repeat these after the registrar*

And now, . . . (Party B) . . . would you please repeat after me?

*Vows - Party B – You will repeat these after the registrar*

*You have the option to add Personal Vows to the ceremony - These words are optional (Choose from one of the options offered or submit own – you do not have to choose the same)*

To support the legal vows they have just made, . . . (name & name) . . . have also chosen to share some personal vows.

*Personal Vows - Party A – You will read these from a card*

and now . . . (party B). . .:

*Personal Vows - Party B – You will read these from a card*

(Guests, would you please be seated)

*Optional reading - by family member or friend – Please see additions to the ceremony document for the available options or select your own choice. If selecting your own please attach a copy.*

*Ring Exchange - These words are optional (Choose from one of the options offered or submit own – you do not have to choose the same)*

. . . (first name & first name) . . . have chosen to exchange rings.  The giving and receiving of wedding rings is the traditional way of sealing a marriage commitment.

Your rings, chosen with thought and care, are the outward sign of the vows you have made today.

. . . (ringbearer’s name) . . .  would you please bring forward the rings.

. . . (name) . . ., please take . . . (name’s) . . . ring, place it on their finger and repeat after me:

*Ring Exchange - Party A – You will repeat these after the registrar*

And now . . . (party B). . .:

*Ring Exchange - Party B – You will repeat these after the registrar*

*The ringbearer will retake their seat.*

. . . (first name & first name) . . . you have made a statement to those around you of the relationship you wish to cherish and share.  A strong marriage is formed by love and friendship and by caring for one another.  Today marks a new beginning for you both as a married couple and we hope you look back on this day with happiness, love, and laughter.

Our wish for you is that you always treat each other as unique individuals; respect each other’s ideas, suggestions, and traditions, and remind yourselves often of what brought you here, together, today.  These celebrations are just the start of a lifetime of precious memories.

You have 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.   You have given to each other a promise of lifelong love and commitment and 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 and wife / wife and wife / husband and husband.

I believe now may be a good opportunity for you to seal your union with a kiss.

**LEGAL PROCEDURES & CONCLUSION:**

Everyone, there is now going to be a brief pause while we complete the legal record of marriage; we do ask that you remain in your seats and enjoy some music chosen by . . . (first name & first name) . . .;  we will return to the ceremony shortly.

*Signing of the schedule by couple, witnesses and registrars with background music playing.  Photographs can be taken by professional photographer / nominated guest.  (No photographs to be taken of the real Marriage Schedule).*

*Once signing and photographs are completed, attract guests' attention to close the ceremony.  (DR comes forward to join DSR and couple at front).*

Our final duty as registrars today is to wish . . . (name & name) . . . many congratulations for a fabulous celebration day, and a long and happy life together.

. . . (name & name) . . . are ready to lead you from the room, so would you all please stand, and welcome, the newly married Mr and Mrs / Mrs and Mrs / Mr and Mr / name and name.

*Finally, the newlyweds can lead guests out of room with background music playing.*