

Your civil partnership formation 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 formation.

You may wish for your formation ceremony to be a formal celebration or you may prefer a relaxed informal gathering. You may feel more comfortable with a quiet intimate ceremony or a simple signing attended by you and your two witnesses. This is your day and the choice is yours.

You can personalise parts of your ceremony with a choice of music and a reading. You will find further information about the options in the following pages.

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. Alternatively, if you do not require a ceremony please let us know by email. We would ask that you provide us with names of your witnesses before the ceremony.

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 Formation

The number of people permitted to attend a formation 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 formation.

**Arrival**

We kindly request that your guests assemble in the ceremony room no later than ten 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 civil partnership schedule and on your certificates. 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 Formation**

The time booked is the time at which the ceremony will begin. It is essential that you keep to the time arranged for your formation. We therefore respectfully request that you and your guests are ready to start the ceremony at the agreed time. If the start of your ceremony 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 ceremony may have to be postponed until later that day, or at worst rescheduled for another day. This may require new notices of civil partnership 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 formation, 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 civil partnership 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 ceremony, 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 promises, 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 promises 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 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 civil partnership. 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.