

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

Visit our website - <https://www.cambridgeshireceremonies.co.uk/rooms> - to confirm the number of people who can attend your ceremony and details of these restrictions.

## Arrival

We kindly request that you and your guests assemble in the buildingabout ten minutes before the time of your ceremony. Any photographs of the couple arriving should be completed before this.

## Entrance into the ceremony room

How would you like to enter the ceremony room? 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.

## Checking details

The Registration Officers will need to see you both before the ceremony. This is to check the details which will be recorded on the civil partnership schedule and on your certificates. This can be done either separately or together depending on whether either party is planning to make an entrance. You do not need to bring any documents to your ceremony unless you have changed your name by deed poll.

## 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 formation is delayed for any reason the Registration Officer may have to curtail your ceremony, for instance by leaving out any 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 ceremony rooms have maximum numbers that can be accommodated in each room. These have to include everyone in the room, including two Registration Officers, 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.

## Rings

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

## Music

You can choose your own music or we can play a selection of music for you. You are having a civil ceremony so the music **must have no religious connotation** including religious lyrics. For instance, music played on a church organ or pieces such as ‘Pie Jesu’ and ‘Amazing Grace’ would not be acceptable.

Music is played as you enter the ceremony room, for about 10 minutes during the checking and signing of the schedule and photographs and as you exit the room. We advise that you supply up to 3 music tracks for the signing of the schedule. All rooms have Bluetooth speakers. One of your guests should be nominated to liaise with the Registration Officer and operate the music via a phone or similar device. Please let us know the titles of the music you have chosen on your planner. If you wish to have live music then please contact us beforehand to discuss the suitability of the room and whether this may be possible.

## Words and Reading

You can choose to add additional words including personal promises, ring exchange words and a reading 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.

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. The grounds outside are available for further photographs afterwards if you wish.

## Video

We are happy for the ceremony to be filmed or live streamed. The person filming will be positioned at the front near the Registration Officer. We are unable to guarantee the wi-fi connectivity during your ceremony. The only part of the ceremony that cannot be recorded is when the couple and the witnesses sign the legal paperwork.

## Exit from the ceremony room

At the end of the ceremony you and your guests will be guided to the outside area where further photographs can be taken.

## Mobile Phones

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

## Confetti

Guests may throw biodegradable confetti or rice once they are outside the building.

## 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 formation. 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 formation

Only formally registered assistance animals are allowed at ceremonies held in our council ceremony rooms. We must be made aware of the presence of any assistance animals at least two weeks in advance. No other animals are allowed.