Approved premises - marriage ceremony

It is our aim to make your wedding day as special as possible. So that we can do this we would appreciate it if you let us know what sort of ceremony you would like by using the ceremony planner attached.

On arrival for your ceremony

Please ensure that you and your guests arrive at least **30** minutes prior to your ceremony. In all cases you must be interviewed by the Registration Officer prior to the ceremony. We would normally interview one partner **30** minutes before the ceremony and the other **15** minutes before the ceremony. You may be seen together if you wish.

The Registration Service does not accept any responsibility for delays beyond its control. Please be mindful that our staff may be attending other ceremonies on the day and it is important that your ceremony starts on time. Our registrars will do everything they can to ensure that your wedding does go ahead, however If you are more than **10** minutes late for the start of your ceremony it may need to be arranged for another time or date.

Witnesses

You must provide two witnesses to the marriage who may either be relatives or friends. They must be able to speak and understand English and the significance of the ceremony they are witnessing and must be present for the duration of the ceremony. We also recommend that your witnesses are over the age of 16.

Music, readings and promises

You may choose to have your own choice of music, readings and promises. Please enter these into your ceremony plan for approval by the Superintendent Registrar. **Your choices of music, readings and promises must not include any religious content.**

**Copies of all readings must be sent to us for approval with your planner.**

Please note that you will need to speak to your venue about how your music will be played during the ceremony.

Entering the ceremony room

You can either enter the ceremony room separately or as a couple. You may also choose to be accompanied by a relative or friend.

Registration of your ceremony

Before you sign the marriage schedule the Registrar will ask you to check that all the particulars have been correctly recorded. It is important that you check the entry very carefully, as errors discovered after the schedule has been signed can be a lengthy and difficult process to correct and will incur a fee for correction.

Photography and videography policy

You may choose to ask your guests not to take photographs or video during the ceremony. However, your guests must not take photographs or video during the signing of the schedule.

If you wish to make a video or DVD of your ceremony, please bring this to the attention of the Registrars on the day so that they can show the operator where the camera should be positioned.

Please note where space is limited, having multiple photographers (and videographers) can distract from the solemnity of the occasion. The registrars may ask photographers to stand in specific places so as not to cause a distraction.

Please check to establish the policy on the use of confetti at your chosen venue.

Your order of ceremony

The Superintendent Registrar reserves the right to alter the order of ceremony where necessary.

Many of the elements below contain multiple options; please indicate your choices in the attached ceremony plan.

1. Entrance
2. Introduction by registrar
3. Marriage is… words

These words are **optional**. You may choose one of the following options for a short explanation of the meaning of the ceremony, or no statement on the meaning of the ceremony to be included.

**A1.** (Partner’s name) and (Partner’s name) see their marriage as the promise of hope between two people who love each other, who honour one another as individuals and who wish to share their future together. They now wish to affirm their relationship in your presence as they start their new life together.

**A2.** Marriage is a desire by two people not only to share themselves and their experiences but also to accept one another as individuals. Marriage means making a commitment to developing co-operation. It calls for honesty, patience and, of course, humour. A good partner will be loving and caring, but above all, a best friend.

**A3.** (Partner’s name) and (Partner’s name) have found in each other happiness, fulfilment and love. Their relationship has been enriched by the presence of their child / children, (children’s names), whom we all welcome here today.

**A4.** None of these

1. Reading 1

Declaratory words

These words are **required by law** to make sure your ceremony is legal. They cannot be changed or left out. You must choose one of these options.

**B1.** I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I (Partner’s name) may not be joined in matrimony to (Partner’s name).

**B2.** I declare that I know of no legal reason why I (Partner’s name) may not be joined in marriage to (Partner’s name).

**B3.** If you are free to marry, please answer “I am” to the following question: Are you (Partner’s name) free lawfully to marry (Partner’s name)?

1. Contracting words

These words are **required by law** to make sure your ceremony is legal. They cannot be changed or left out. You must choose one of these options.

**C1.** I call upon these persons here present to witness that I (Partner’s name) do take thee (Partner’s name) to be my lawful wedded wife / husband.

**C2.** I (Partner’s name) take you (Partner’s name) to be my wedded wife / husband.

**C3.** I (Partner’s name) take thee (Partner’s name) to be my wedded wife / husband.

1. Promises

These words are **optional**. You may choose one of the following promises, or none.

**D1.** As I take you to be my wife / husband, I promise to love you, to honour and respect you. I will stand by you and be true to you always.  I will care for you, laugh with you when you are happy, comfort you when you are sad. Whatever life may bring, I will always love you.

**D2.** Couple will write own promises and submit for approval by Superintendent Registrar at least ten weeks before the ceremony.

**D3.** No promise

1. Reading 2
2. Rings

The exchange of rings is **optional**. If you are not exchanging rings, this section will be left out. If you are exchanging rings, please choose one of these options.

**E1.** (Partner’s first name) I give you this ring as a token of our marriage and as a lasting reminder of the promises we have made here today. (If rings are being exchanged, Partner 2 repeats.)

If one ring is given, Partner 2 responds:

(Partner’s first name) I accept this ring as a token of our marriage and as a lasting reminder of the promises we have made here today.

**E2.** (Partner’s first name) I give you this ring as a symbol of our marriage. I promise to be loving, faithful and loyal to you in living our married life together. (If rings are being exchanged, Partner 2 repeats.)

If one ring given, Partner 2 responds:

(Partner’s first name) I accept this ring as a symbol of our marriage. I promise to be loving, faithful and loyal to you in living our married life together.

**E3.** (Partner’s first name) I give you this ring as a symbol of our love and as a lasting reminder of the vows we have made here today. (If rings are being exchanged, Partner 2 repeats.)

If only one ring given, Partner 2 responds:

(Partner’s first name) I accept this ring as a symbol of our love and as a lasting reminder of the vows we have made here today.

**E4.** No rings

1. Pronouncement of marriage
2. Signing of the marriage schedule
3. Photographs (optional)
4. Closing address by registrar

What to do next

Please complete your ceremony plan. Please check you have completed all parts and, **no later than ten weeks before your ceremony**:

* email to [registration@essex.gov.uk](mailto:registration@essex.gov.uk) or,
* print and post to Ceremonies Team, Essex Registration Service, Seax House, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
* please include copies of
  + any readings and/or
  + your promises, if you are writing your own.

You will also need to complete the [outdoor ceremony agreement form](http://www.essex.gov.uk/Births%20Ceremonies%20Deaths/Marriages-Ceremonies/Ceremony-Planner/Documents/Outdoor-ceremony-agreement-form.docx) if you are considering holding your ceremony outside.

If you have any questions, please call us on **0345 603 7632** or email us at [registration@essex.gov.uk](mailto:registration@essex.gov.uk)

Outdoor ceremony agreement form

Only complete this page if you are considering having an outdoor ceremony.

If you are considering an outdoor ceremony, this page must be completed and returned along with the rest of your planner.

# Couple contact details

**Partner 1’s full name:**

**Partner 2’s full name:**

**Couple’s telephone number:**

**Couple’s email address:**

# Ceremony details

**Name of outdoor area:  
Ceremony venue:**

**Ceremony date:**

**Ceremony time:**

On the day of our ceremony if the weather, or any other circumstance makes an outside ceremony unsuitable, our ceremony will be held in:

**Name of ceremony room:**

**Maximum capacity of ceremony room:**

The room must be licensed for the number of guests you wish to accommodate.

The decision on where the ceremony will be held is made by the registration staff after discussion with the couple and venue. The registration staff’s decision is final.

# Agreement

We agree that the final decision on where the ceremony takes place is the responsibility of the registration staff in attendance. We agree that if our ceremony cannot take place outside for any reason we will happily proceed in the named room.

**Partner 1 signature:**

**Partner 2 signature:**

(typed signatures will be accepted)

Approved premises ceremony plan

Couple’s contact details

**Partner 1’s full name:**

**Partner 2’s full name:**

**Couple’s telephone number:**

**Couple’s email address:**

Ceremony details

**Ceremony venue:**

**Ceremony date:**

**Ceremony time:**

Witnesses

**Witness 1’s full name:**

**Witness 2’s full name:**

Parents’ details

Your parents’ details will be added to your marriage entry and will appear on your certificate.

**NB – You will not receive your certificates on the day of your ceremony. Certificates will be posted 2*nd* class to you within 21 working days of the ceremony taking place. Please can we ask that you do not chase your certificates, unless it is over 25 working days since your ceremony, as this may cause further delays.**

There is the option to include biological or adoptive parents and / or step parents.

A step parent is someone who is or has been married to or in a civil partnership with one of your biological or adoptive parents.

You can each have the details of up to four parents included and you can choose in which order they appear on your certificate

Please complete the details below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner 1’s Parents’ Details** | Full Name | Occupation | Retired or Deceased |
| Biological/Adoptive mother |  |  |  |
| Biological/Adoptive father |  |  |  |
| Step parent |  |  |  |
| Step parent |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner 2’s Parents’ Details** | Full Name | Occupation | Retired or Deceased |
| Biological/Adoptive mother |  |  |  |
| Biological/Adoptive father |  |  |  |
| Step parent |  |  |  |
| Step parent |  |  |  |

Interview and entrance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How will you be interviewed before your wedding?** | **Separately/Together** |
| **How will you enter the ceremony room?** | **Separately/Together** |
| **Will either of you be accompanied?** | **Yes/No** |
| **If so, who will accompany you?** |  |

Music

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Composer/Artist** | **Title** |
| **For entrance** |  |  |
| **During schedule signing (piece 1)** |  |  |
| **(piece 2)** |  |  |
| **For when you leave** |  |  |

Readings

You must include copies of your readings with this ceremony plan.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Title of reading** | **Name of guest** |
| **Reading 1** |  |  |
| **Reading 2** |  |  |

\* Registrars are not able to perform readings

Marriage is… words (Optional)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A1** | **A2** | **A3** | **A4** (no words) |
|  |  |  |  |

**If you’ve chosen A3, what are the children’s names?**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Declaratory words

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **B1** | **B2** | **B3** |
|  |  |  |

Contracting words

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **C1** | **C2** | **C3** |
|  |  |  |

Promises (Optional)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **D1** | **D2** | **D3** (no words) |
|  |  |  |

**If you select D2 you must include a copy of your promises with this ceremony plan**

Rings (Optional)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **E1** | **E2** | **E3** | **E4** (no rings) |
|  |  |  |  |

**Number of rings:**

**Name of ring holder:**

**Any changes to your music choices, readings or personal promises must be sent to** [**registration@essex.gov.uk**](mailto:registration@essex.gov.uk) **for checking before your ceremony. All other changes can be discussed with your registrars on the day during your interview.**