

Premises approval for marriage or civil ceremonies

Specific Premises Requirements

- Two free of charge car parking spaces should be made available for the use of the Registration staff. These spaces should be as near to the main entrance as possible.
- The Registrar will require one table of not less than 6ft by 3ft plus seating. The guests will also require adequate seating.
- There must be a room in which to carry out a confidential interview with both partners to the ceremony. This should be adjacent to the ceremony room.
- Toilets should be available and easily accessible.
- Lighting should be such to enable the Registrar to work in comfort.
- The ceremony room must be isolated from all background music and from the public address system. Any music played in the ceremony room must be that which is acceptable to the registration staff.

Ceremony Requirements

- Registration staff must have access to the ceremony room and the interview room at least 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. Guests will require access at least 20 minutes prior to the ceremony.
- A responsible person or an appropriately qualified deputy employed by the licence holder shall be available on the premises for a minimum of one hour prior to each ceremony and throughout each ceremony.
- No food or drink may be sold or consumed in the room in which a marriage or civil partnership ceremony takes place for one hour prior to that ceremony or during that ceremony.
- All ceremonies must take place in a room which was identified as one to be used as such on the plan submitted with the approved application.
- The room in which a ceremony takes place must be separate from any other activity on the premises at the time of the ceremony.
- The arrangements for and content of each ceremony must meet with the prior approval of the Superintendent Registrar of the district or the registration authority of the area in which the approved premises are situated.
- Any ceremonies conducted on approved premises shall not be religious in nature. In particular the ceremony shall not:
 - Include extracts from an authorised religious marriage service or from sacred religious texts.

- Be led by a minister of religion or other religious leader.
- Involve a religious ritual or series of rituals.
- Include hymns or other religious chants.
- Include any form of worship.

The ceremony may include readings, songs or music that contains incidental reference to a god or deity in an essentially non-religious context. For this purpose any material used by way of introduction to, in any interval between parts of, or by way of conclusion to the ceremony shall be treated as forming part of the ceremony.

- Public access to any ceremony in approved premises must be permitted without charge.
- A suitable notice stating that the premises have been approved as a venue for marriage in pursuance of Section 26(1)(bb) of the Marriage Act 1949 and for the formation of civil partnerships under section 6(3A)(a) of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 must be displayed at each public entrance to the premises for one hour prior to the ceremony and throughout the ceremony. This notice must also identify and give directions to the room in which a ceremony is to take place

Responsibilities of the Licence Holder

It is the responsibility of the Licence Holder to:

- provide an usher/ushers for a marriage.
- ensure that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the safety of the registration staff who are conducting the ceremony. He/she should ensure that all attending the ceremony are aware of the evacuation procedures. The Licence Holder is to advise those booking a marriage or civil partnership ceremony of any limitations which may be imposed on the size of the party.
- only make a firm booking for a marriage or civil partnership ceremony after notice has been received from the Superintendent Registrar that she can attend to conduct the ceremony on that particular day. The Licence Holder must also advise couples of the necessity to make a provisional booking with the Superintendent Registrar as soon as they have made their tentative booking with the Licence Holder.
- inform the Superintendent Registrar of any ceremony cancellation within 48 hours of the cancellation.
- ensure that there is at all times an individual with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the licence conditions.
- notify the Council of his/her name and address immediately upon becoming the holder of the licence and of the name, address and qualification of the responsible person immediately upon the appointment of the responsible person.
- notify the Council immediately if there is a change in the layout of the premises, as shown in the plan submitted with the approved application, or in the use of the

premises, if there is a change in the name or full postal address of the approved premises, if there is a change in the description of the room or rooms in which ceremonies are undertaken, if there is a change in the name or address of the holder of the licence and if there is a change in the name, address or qualification of the responsible person.

General requirements

- The approved premises must be available at all reasonable times for inspection by the County Council.
- Any reference to the approval of premises on any sign or notice, or on any stationery or publication, or within any advertisement may state that the premises have been approved by the council as a venue for marriage in pursuance of Section 26(1)(bb) of the 1949 Marriage Act and the registration of civil partnerships under section 6(3A) (a) of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 but shall not state or imply any recommendation of the premises or its facilities by the council, the Registrar General or any of the officers or employees of either of them.
- If a change of name to the approved premises occurs after the issue of the certificate for marriage or the civil partnership document but before the ceremony, the former name of the approved premises as recorded in the certificate for marriage or the civil partnership document shall remain valid for its duration for the purpose of the ceremony.