



## The Marriage Ceremony

Two registration staff are present at your wedding. The Superintendent Registrar will say some words of welcome, and talk about the meaning of marriage and the marriage ceremony. You will then be asked to confirm your full names.

You will be asked to declare that you know of no lawful reason why you should not be married to each other. You can say either:

- I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I ..... may not be joined in matrimony to .....
- I declare that I know of no legal reason why I ..... may not be joined in marriage to .....
- By replying "I am" to the question "Are you ..... free lawfully to marry to ....."?

You will then be asked to make your marriage contract, again you have a choice of either:

- I call upon these persons here present to witness that I .....do take thee .....to be my lawful wedded husband / wife.
- I .....take thee .....to be my wedded husband / wife
- I .....take you .....to be my wedded husband / wife

The ring or rings are then exchanged, you can choose our traditional words for this, or you can write your own. Some popular choices are:

- I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage and as a symbol of our friendship and loyalty. I promise to love, respect and care for you, through good times and bad, completely and forever.
- I give you this ring as a sign of our future together.
- I promise to love, honour and respect you and be true to you always.
- I will be loving, faithful and loyal to you in our married life together.
- I give you this ring, a circle with no end, as a sign of our marriage and as a symbol of our friendship and loyalty.
- I give you this ring as a symbol of my love, and as evidence of the vows we have made together. May it forever signify the love we have for each other.

Readings or poems can be added at 3 places in the ceremony. We have a booklet of suitable prose, or you can choose or create you own, but it must have no religious content.

Two witnesses, who must be over the age of 16, will be invited to sign the register with you. The ceremony is completed when the Registrar presents the bride with a copy of the marriage certificate.

At this point, the photographers are invited to take whatever photos they wish, but close up shots of the register are not permitted.

## Giving Formal Notice

Firstly, you will need to make a provisional booking with the venue and registrar involved.

Before you can marry in England or Wales, you both must give notice of your intention, to the register office in the district in which you have lived for at least the last nine days. If either party is subject to immigration control, you must give notice to a designated office (Reading or Slough) once you have obtained permission to marry from the Home Office.

If you live in different districts, you each need to give notice in your own district. The notice is a legal statement showing details of your identity, marital status, and the venue for your ceremony and must be signed by you personally in the presence of a registration officer. You cannot ask a friend or relative to do this for you. You will be asked to provide evidence of your identity (shown later). A non-refundable fee is payable for the giving of notice.

Notice cannot be given more than one year in advance, and must be given at least fifteen clear days prior to the ceremony. During this time a copy of the notice is displayed in the public waiting area inside the register office. This is to allow time for any legal objections to be made.

If, for any reason, you change the venue of your ceremony after you have given notice, you will have to give fresh notices for the new venue.

## Documents we will ask you to provide

When giving notice of your intent to marry, you will need to provide proof of your name, age, marital status, nationality and address.

Passports, birth certificates and national identity cards are ideal ways of proving this information. Proof of address can be a utility bill, bank statement or recent official document. If you were born after 1982 we will require your parents' birth certificates if you do not have a current valid passport. If either of you have changed your name by deed or deed poll, this documentation must be provided.

If either you or your partner is under 18 we need proof that your parents or guardians consent to the marriage.

If either of you have married or formed a civil partnership before, either in this country or abroad, you will need to show proof of the divorce, annulment or the death of your late partner. If the divorce occurred in England or Wales, we will need to see a decree absolute bearing the official court stamp. If the divorce took place in another country, we will need to see the original document, and an official translation if in a foreign language. If your former partner is deceased, we will require a copy of the death certificate.

Please ensure you bring original documents as photocopies are not acceptable. PLEASE NOTE THAT NOTICE CANNOT BE TAKEN WITHOUT APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION.

Remember, you will need to deliver your certificate for marriage to the register office involved if you are having your ceremony in another district. (These can be issued after the 15 clear days).

### What to do next

Once you have decided whether you want a religious or civil ceremony, you will need to contact either the Vicar or Superintendent Registrar to ensure the date you have in mind is available. You will also need to confirm the booking with the venue.

If you are required to give notice of your intent, make an appointment with the register office in the district in which you live. You will also need to forward any fees required to ensure the booking is confirmed. If either of you are subject to immigration control, contact the Home Office as soon as possible as the process of gaining permission to marry or form a civil partnership can take up to 13 weeks.

After you have given notice, you should start to think about finalising arrangements, and booking other services such as cars, florists and photographers. If you have given notice in a district other than where the ceremony is taking place, you will need to forward the authorities to the Superintendent Registrar or Clergyman who is conducting the ceremony.

### Checklist of services you might need

- Superintendent Registrar / Clergy
- Venue for ceremony
- Reception venue
- Photographer or video photographer
- Weddings cars
- Flowers / buttonholes
- Wedding stationery
- Dresses / suit hire
- Toastmaster
- Live music / disco
- Entertainer
- Rings
- Gifts for attendants
- Passports for honeymoon