



Celebrate with us

Your guide to memorable ceremonies in Gloucestershire



Congratulations

on your engagement. There are many beautiful settings here in Gloucestershire and our aim is to make your wedding day a very special and memorable occasion. Whether you have chosen a small intimate occasion or a larger celebration, we wish you a most enjoyable day.

We hope this guide will give you all the information you require for your ceremony. We offer you a choice of enhancements for your ceremony, but if you find this selection does not suit your personal requirements please do contact our dedicated ceremony team on ceremonies@gloucestershire.gov.uk where they will be happy to discuss your wishes.



The Ceremony

A Guide

There is no need to be nervous about the ceremony. Remember the Registration Officers are there to guide you through all you have to say and do.

Ceremony time

Register Offices: It is important that you arrive at least fifteen minutes before the start of your ceremony.

Approved venues: Please ensure you are available 30 minutes prior to your ceremony.

Please make allowances for traffic delays and time for pre-wedding photographs.

Although we make every effort to accommodate late arrivals, your ceremony may have to be postponed if you or any of your guests are late. You should do your utmost to ensure everyone arrives on time.

On arrival

Prior to the wedding, the Registration Officer will see the couple individually in a designated room in the venue to confirm the necessary information and talk through the ceremony to put you at your ease so that you can enjoy your day. You will each be asked questions similar to those you were asked when you gave notice at your local registration office.

When these formalities are completed you will be invited to join your guests and the ceremony will begin.

You may choose to enter the ceremony room together as a couple, or opt for a more traditional entrance being escorted into the room by a relative or friend.

Witnesses

You will need two people who may be either friends or relatives to witness your ceremony and sign the register. They must be credible witnesses aged 18 or over and have sufficient command of English to understand the ceremony. You may be asked to choose another witness if the Registration Service feels a chosen witness is unsuitable to undertake the role.

Etiquette

Please check with the venue whether confetti may be used. If you are getting married in one of our register offices, please be aware that all confetti must be biodegradable and cannot be thrown in the building or its immediate surroundings.

Music

Music may be played at appropriate times during your ceremony.

Please note that any music must by law be non-religious and seemly and dignified to reflect the solemnity of the occasion.

- *If you are marrying at one of our approved premises, please contact your venue to arrange the playing of the approved music*

Photography

There will be an opportunity to take photos after the register has been signed. It must always be remembered, however, that the ceremony creates a solemn and binding contract between the couple and it is essential that their attention should not be distracted in any way from the meaning and dignity of the occasion.

Video recording

If you would like someone to take a video of your ceremony they will need to comply with the following guidelines:

- Video recording is by prior agreement with the Registration Service
- Only one video camera may be used during the ceremony
- The equipment must be battery operated. We cannot provide a power source for any video equipment
- The recording may only be made using the lighting available in the room
- The camera operator must remain in one place throughout the ceremony as agreed with the Registrar at the ceremony and not focused on the register
- These guidelines may vary slightly at approved venues

Interpreters

If either of you are unable to, or have difficulty in speaking English you will need to bring an interpreter along with you. He or she could be a family member or friend. You will be asked to repeat the words used in the ceremony in English. Afterwards, the interpreter will be asked to sign the register as one of your witnesses and also to sign a declaration to confirm both of you have understood the full meaning of the ceremony.

Personalising your ceremony

There are ways in which you may wish to enhance your ceremony with short poetry or prose readings. The decision to add up to two of these to the ceremony is entirely your choice, but there must be no religious content in any of the poetry or readings. They may be read by you, a relative or friend. If you decide to take up this opportunity, a full copy of your chosen reading(s), including the title, author and source will need to be included on your completed choices form. All short poetry or prose readings must be seemly and dignified to reflect the solemnity of the occasion. All reading choices will be subject to an approval process and you will be advised if amendments or substitutions must be made. Gloucestershire Registration Service's decision regarding suitability is final.

Each ceremony is individually scripted from the choices you make. You may wish to personalise your promises or ring vows. If so, please remember to provide a full text copy of your chosen words on your ceremony arrangements form. All choices will be subject to an approval process and you will be advised if amendments or substitutions must be made. Gloucestershire Registration Service's decision regarding suitability is final. Please note your completed choices form must be completed two months prior to your ceremony date for your ceremony to be agreed and prepared. We regret to advise that late submissions may not be accommodated

In Gloucestershire we regard it as a privilege to be involved in your special day. The following choices have been prepared for you to select the ceremony to suit you as a couple.

This guide offers a choice of enhancements for your ceremony. However, if you find that this section does not suit your personal requirements please do contact our dedicated ceremonies team on ceremonies@gloucestershire.gov.uk they will be happy to discuss your wishes in more detail.

Instructions

Please read through the choices and select one from each section that you want to include as part of your ceremony.

Welcome

Option 1 On behalf of *(informal name)* and *(informal name)* I would like to welcome you all to *(the name of venue)* today to share with them in this wedding ceremony.

Option 2 We are here today to celebrate the marriage of *(informal name)* and *(informal name)* and on their behalf I welcome you. I know it means a great deal to them that you can be here to share in their happiness on this special occasion.

Option 3 Welcome to the marriage of *(informal name)* and *(informal name)* who would like to thank you all for coming to celebrate the beginning of their new life together. Family and friends are with them today, and it means a great deal to them that you can share their happiness, and witness their marriage vows.

This place in which you are now met has been duly sanctioned, according to law for the celebration of marriages and we are here today to witness the joining in matrimony of *(informal name)* and *(informal name)*.

(informal name) and *(informal name)* before you are joined in matrimony it is my duty to remind you both of the solemn and binding character of the vows you are now about to make. Marriage in this country means the union of two people, voluntarily entered into for life, to the exclusion of all others.

If any person here knows of any lawful impediment to this marriage, they should declare it now.

Address to the couple (optional)

The address is optional you do not have to include it if you do not wish.

Option 1 *(informal name)* and *(informal name)*, the purpose of Marriage is that you may always love, care for, and support each other through the joys and sorrows of

life. Marriage means making a commitment for life to developing and maintaining co-operation, friendship and mutual respect. It is not to be entered into lightly, nor lightly put aside.

Option 2 (*informal name*) and (*informal name*), today you will exchange vows, which will unite you in marriage before this company of family and friends. These vows are a formal and public pledge of your love and a promise of lifelong commitment to each other. Marriage is a solemn union to provide the love and friendship, help and comfort, each ought to have for the other. Marriage requires closeness and distance, the closeness of a couple growing together and enough distance to allow each person to be an individual.

Option 3 (*informal name*) and (*informal name*), you have found in each other happiness, fulfilment and love and now you wish to offer each other the security which comes from legally binding vows, sincerely made and faithfully kept. Marriage is a decision made by two people to share their lives and their experiences. It is a willingness to accept each other for who they are. Marriage means making a commitment to co-operation, friendship and mutual respect. Marriage is the best in living, sharing good times, understanding, forgiving. It is contentment, joy, laughter, believing in each other, and supporting hopes and dreams.

Giving Away (optional)

Option 1 Who brings (*name*) to be married to (*name*)? (The person accompanying them replies “I do.”)

Option 2 One of the many historic customs involved in the wedding ceremony is the giving away of (.....) Today, this act is seen as a symbol of support for the marriage, and a promise of continued trust and affection from family and friends. So – I will now ask – who gives (*name*) to be married to (*name*)? (The person accompanying them replies “I do.”)

Introduction to the Declaration

I am now going to ask each of you in turn to declare that you do not know of any lawful reason why you should not be married to each other.

Declarations

You must choose from one of the following declarations and vows below. The declarations and the vows of marriage are set down by statute and may not be changed. Both parties will be asked to repeat these vows in turn.

** For heterosexual couples the legal definition is husband and wife

****** For same sex couples the legal definition is husband and husband or wife and wife as appropriate

Option 1 I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, *(full name)* may not be joined in matrimony to *(full name)*

Option 2 I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, *(full name)* may not be joined in marriage to *(full name)*

Option 3 Answer, "I am" to the question, "Are you *(full name)* free lawfully to marry *(full name)*?"

The Vows

And now the solemn moment has come when *(informal name)* and *(informal name)* make their formal and legal contract before you all. So will everyone please stand.

Option 1 I call upon these persons here present to witness that I *(full name)* do take thee *(full name)* to be my lawful wedded wife / husband

Option 2 I *(full name)*, take you *(full name)* to be my wedded wife / husband

Option 3 I *(full name)*, take thee *(full name)* to be my wedded wife / husband

Promises (optional)

The promises are optional; you do not have to include them if you do not wish.

Option 1 I promise to care for you with love and friendship, to support and comfort you through good times and bad, to respect and cherish you, and to remain faithful always. These promises I make to you today, and for the rest of my life.

Option 2 I promise that I will respect you as an individual, support you through difficult times, rejoice with you through happy times, be loyal to you always and, above all, love you as my partner and friend.

Option 3 I pledge that from this day, I will love you, comfort and encourage you, honour and respect you, and to be faithful, honest and devoted to you as long as we both shall live.

Reading 1 to be positioned here

If rings are to be exchanged (optional)

Option 1 It is a tradition in this country for the marriage contract to be sealed by the giving and receiving of rings (a ring). It has no beginning and no end, an unbroken circle that symbolises unending and everlasting love, it is the outward sign of the lifelong promises that you have made to each other.

Option 2 (*informal name*) and (*informal name*) have chosen to mark their wedding day with the giving and receiving of a ring/s.

Ring Vows

The ring vows are optional; you do not have to include them if you do not wish.

Option 1 I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and commitment to you. Wear it with love and as a sign of all we have promised and done this day.

Option 2 I give you this ring as a sign of our love and marriage, and as an outward sign of the commitment we have made to each other.

Option 3 I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and I promise to care for you with love and friendship. To support and comfort you through good times and through troubled times. I promise to care for you with love and patience, to respect and cherish you and to be faithful always. These promises I make to you for the rest of my life.

Reading 2 to be positioned here

Conclusion

Option 1 Marriage is a commitment to life, in which people can find and bring out the best in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. When two people pledge to love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written word. Marriage is a promise, which you have both taken, and has been made in the hearts of two people who love one another. It is my privilege to declare that you are now Legally married. (You may now kiss each other)

Option 2 (*informal name*) and (*informal name*) you have both made the declarations and vows required by law, in the presence of these witnesses – your family and friends. I am delighted to announce that you are now Legally married (You may now kiss each other)

Option 3 (*informal name*) and (*informal name*). The purpose of marriage is that you may always love, care for and support each other through all the joys and sorrows of

life; and that love may be fulfilled in a relationship of permanent and continuing commitment. We trust that these things may come true of you both. It gives me great pleasure to declare that you are Legally married (You may now kiss each other).

SIGNING THE REGISTER

Exit

Ladies and gentlemen, that completes our official duties. My colleague and I wish the couple every happiness and we hope you all have a very enjoyable day. Please stand for their exit.....

Contact

If you require any information please call our ceremonies team on 01452 425060 (option 3) or email us at ceremonies@gloucestershire.gov.uk Further information can also be found on our website www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/registration

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