

OXFORDSHIRE

THE PLACE TO CELEBRATE



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OXFORDSHIRE

THE PLACE TO CELEBRATE



Welcome to your **Oxfordshire the place to celebrate** brochure and congratulations on your forthcoming ceremony.

Whether you live in Oxfordshire or not, getting married or entering into a civil partnership is a very special occasion and choosing your venue is very important. From the dreaming spires of Oxford to beautiful scenery and riverside settings around the county, Oxfordshire has everything to create the perfect place for your big day.

We hope this guide will provide you with all the information you will need over the next few months. Whatever your arrangements, whatever your choice, we will do our very best to ensure that your day is happy, relaxed and everything you dreamed of.

Alicja

Alicja Gilroy
Superintendent Registrar

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration



OXFORDSHIRE

THE PLACE TO CELEBRATE

CONTENTS

2	Oxfordshire Ceremonies – a huge choice	21	Festival Ceremonies
4	Getting started - Giving Notice	22	Dream Venues
5	Documentation – All the Legalities	33	Your Day – Your Way
8	Your Ceremony	34	Oxfordshire – Our Ceremony Rooms
9	Ceremony Format	36	Approved Venues – Licensed to thrill
10	Countdown to the Big Day	39	The Perfect Venue
12	Choosing Vows and Promises – Traditional, Modern or Simple?	40	Celebratory Ceremonies - Renew your vows
13	Ring Promises	41	Naming Ceremonies – Welcome to our family
14	Civil Partnership Ceremony	42	Tie the Knot and Cut the Cost
15	Poetry & Readings – Make it personal	44	Green Weddings (& Civil Partnerships)
18	Ceremony Music/Ceremony Chants	46	Change of name, change of passport
19	Perfect Timing		
20	Outdoor Ceremonies		

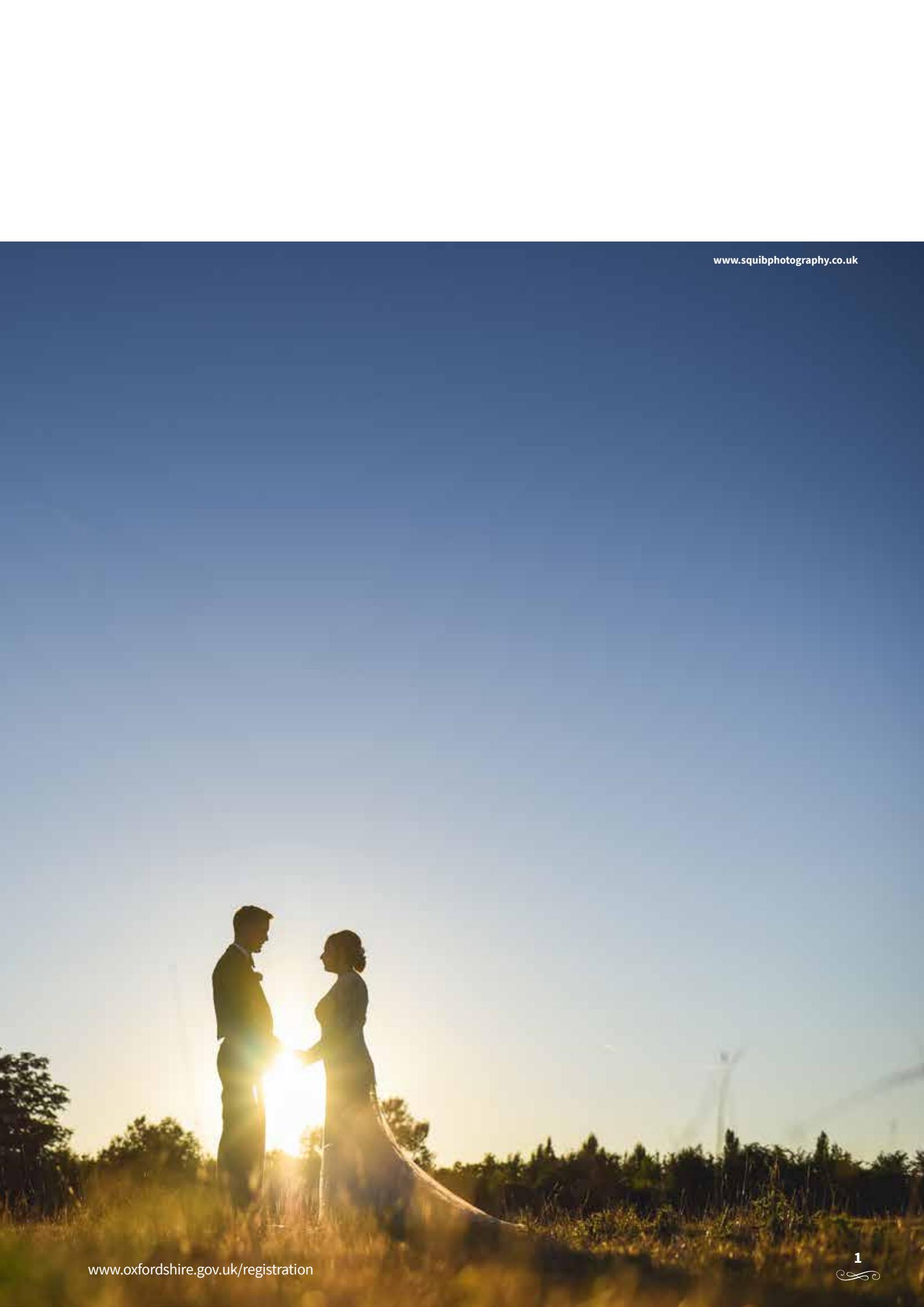


OXFORDSHIRE THE PLACE TO CELEBRATE

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OXFORDSHIRE



CEREMONIES

Gone are the days when a Civil Ceremony meant a quick and simple process in front of an office desk...



Civil Marriage

These days, you can have almost any kind of wedding, from a simple “I do” in a Registration Service Ceremony Room with a couple of friends as witnesses, to a more grand affair at an approved venue, with bridesmaids, attendants, readings and music: the works! Nearly anything goes but be aware that civil ceremonies must not include any religious content.

There will be two Registrars at your wedding; one to conduct the ceremony and the other to register your marriage. All ceremonies are held in English. If either partner is unable to speak or understand English, an interpreter must be present. You can discuss this with the Registrar who takes your Notice of Marriage so that you can make appropriate

arrangements. The only other requirement on the day is that you have two adult witnesses present who also must be able to speak and understand English.

There is a huge variety of places in which to have a civil wedding in Oxfordshire.

Booking a Civil Ceremony

Once you have settled on the date and venue for your ceremony and made a provisional booking, you will need to get in touch with the helpdesk on **0345 241 2489** to ask if Registrars will be available on the day and at the time you want.

It is essential that you do this before making any other arrangements.

Registration Office Ceremonies

There are several ceremony rooms across the county, in Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Oxford, Wheatley (part time) and Witney. They all vary in style, size and appearance, from the more traditional rooms, such as Oxford's wood-panelled Dexter Room and Banbury's Bodicote House to the purpose-built modern Broadway Room in Didcot. You can see a list of these, with photos, on pages 34 and 35. Please note, apart from Oxford, not all offices are open every weekend.

The Register Office for Oxfordshire is situated in the heart of Oxford city centre and its helpdesk is pleased to answer questions on arranging a ceremony in any of the rooms in the county.

Call **0345 241 2489** for further information on the rooms, their capacity for guests and to discuss any special requirements you or your guests may have, such as provision for people with disabilities.

Civil Partnership

A civil partnership schedule is signed by both of the partners, two witnesses and a Registrar. A civil partnership is recognised as a legal contract between two partners and can be conducted at any register office or approved premises.

Civil Partnership Conversion

You can convert your existing civil partnership into a marriage at a register office or an approved venue. You can choose to have a purely administrative process or to have a ceremony following the legal registration of your marriage.

For the conversion you will require:

- Original civil partnership certificate
- Proof of identity, e.g. a passport
- Proof of address, e.g. utility bill or bank statement

Approved Venues

Instead of having your ceremony in a Registration Office, you could opt to hold it in one of the many diverse approved venues throughout Oxfordshire, from an old Cotswold hotel or a famous city centre museum to an Oxford College. The only difficulty will be making your decision!

Registrars are happy to attend ceremonies at approved venues on any day, including Sundays and Bank Holidays (excluding Christmas Day). Time restrictions on ceremonies have been lifted, so you can now have your ceremony at any time subject to staff availability. Provisional bookings can be taken in advance of your legal Notices of Marriage or Civil Partnership.

Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership

After booking your wedding or civil partnership at a Registration Office or an approved venue, both of you will need to give your Notices of Marriage or Civil Partnership. Details of how to do this are on pages 4 to 6.

Marriages and Civil Partnerships in Churches

A religious ceremony may take place in any religious building which has been registered for worship and marriages and civil partnerships. Your first contact should be with the church minister where you would like to hold your ceremony and they will advise you further. Following their agreement to conduct your ceremony, you may need to contact the Register Office where you live (see page 4 - 'Giving Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership').

The telephone number for the Oxfordshire Register Office is **0345 241 2489**.

You may find the following links useful:
www.achurchnearyou.com
www.yourchurchwedding.org

Marriage Abroad

Tying the knot abroad is becoming an increasingly popular option. If you are thinking of doing this, please contact the appropriate country's embassy in England for advice on the formalities and documentation required.

Insurance

If, for whatever reason, you need to change your plans, it could be extremely expensive, so we advise you consider wedding insurance.

GETTING



STARTED

Giving Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership



Holding a civil ceremony is not a complicated affair. The following four pages explain what you need to do before the day to ensure your preparations go as smoothly as possible.

You will need to give notice of your marriage or civil partnership in your local registration district. If you and your partner live in different areas, you will both need to give notice in your own district. If you are subject to immigration control please see page 5 - 'Foreign Nationals'.

In order to give notice of marriage or civil partnership in a Registration Office, you and your partner must have lived in that district for a minimum of seven days (immediately before you give your notice). If you are coming from abroad the day of arrival does not count and notice cannot be given until the ninth day; for example, if arrival day is Tuesday, notice cannot be given until the following Wednesday.

If you live in Oxfordshire, you will need to make an appointment to give notice by calling the Registration Service helpline on **0345 241 2489**. If you live outside the county, please contact your local Register Office for advice.

The earliest date the notice of marriage or civil partnership can be given is 12 months before the ceremony. Normally 28 clear days notice is required; for example, if you give notice on the 1st May, the ceremony can take place on or after the 30th May. In some circumstances this may be extended to 70 days (see page 5 - 'Foreign Nationals').

DOCUMENTATION



As with all legal events, you will need to provide evidence of your full name, nationality, age and proof of current address

Proof of identity

BRITISH CITIZENS:

Born before 1st January 1983

- Valid passport or
- Birth certificate and photo ID with evidence of current name or
- Naturalisation certificate and photo ID.

Born after 1st January 1983

- Valid passport or
- Naturalisation certificate and photo ID or
- Full birth certificate and photo ID with evidence of current name, together with evidence of your parents' nationality (passport or birth certificate).

EEA NATIONALS:

- Valid passport or
- National photo ID card.

FOREIGN NATIONALS:

You will need to provide proof of your full name, age, nationality and address. With the introduction of the Immigration Act 2014, some foreign nationals may be subject to immigration control. They may be referred to the Home Office if they do not hold either Indefinite Leave to Remain or a marriage or civil partnership visa, and the waiting period extended to 70 days.

Acceptable documents are:

- Valid passport or
- Valid Home Office travel document
- Indefinite Leave to Remain
- Marriage or civil partnership visa.

Proof of Current address

- Council tax bill (current year)
- Utility bill (dated within the last three months)
- Bank statement (dated within the last month)
- Valid UK driving licence
- A letter signed by the owner of the house who is able to confirm your residence over the previous seven days.

Please note: original documents are needed, photocopies are not acceptable.



If you've been in a marriage or civil partnership before

If you have been in a previous marriage or civil partnership, you will need to bring with you one of the following types of documentary evidence to show that the marriage or civil partnership has ended and that you are now free to give your notice:

- a decree absolute (following divorce)
- a dissolution certificate (from a previous civil partnership)
- a death certificate (if your husband/wife or former civil partner has died).

All divorce and dissolution documents must have the original stamp of the issuing court. Some overseas documents may have to be referred to the General Register Office for clearance (with a certified translation, if appropriate) and may take longer than the minimum 28 clear days notice period. A fee will apply to clear any foreign divorce.

If you're under 18 or have changed your name

If one or both of you are under the age of 18 years, or have changed your names, you will need to provide us with one or both of the following documents:

- evidence of change of name (by Deed Poll/Statutory Declaration)
- parental consent, if under 18 years of age and not previously married or in a civil partnership.

Again, original documents are needed, photocopies are not acceptable.

Interpreters

All ceremonies and registrations are conducted in English so if either one of you cannot speak or understand English you must provide an interpreter. Please discuss this with the Registrar who takes your notice of marriage or civil partnership, to be sure the legal requirements are met.

Witnesses

You will need two people to be your witnesses; friends or relatives are fine but they must be over the age of 16 and able to understand the English language.

Foreign nationals

If you are subject to immigration control, you will be required to give notice of marriage or civil partnership to a Registrar at one of 75 designated register offices in England and Wales. You must attend the register office together (in Scotland and Northern Ireland, all register offices are designated, and notice of marriage or civil partnership is normally given by post).

If you do not have Indefinite Leave to Remain or a marriage or civil partnership visa you may be referred to the Home Office and your waiting period extended to 70 days. For detailed information, take a look at the UK Border Agency website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

Fees

Fees for all ceremonies are payable **3 months before** the 'Big Day'. If you are having your ceremony in less than 3 months, you will be asked to pay in full straight away.

Please refer to our terms and conditions: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

Payments can be made online or by card payment by telephoning **0345 241 2489**.

Visa, Mastercard, Switch/Maestro and Delta are all accepted in our offices. Payment can also be posted to us at:

**Oxford Register Office,
1 Tidmarsh Lane, Oxford OX1 1NS,**

with cheques made payable to Oxfordshire County Council.

A nationally set, non refundable fee is payable for each notice of marriage and civil partnership.

You can order and pay for copy certificates by calling **0345 241 2489** (select option 5). Please note that a handling fee will be made for all credit/debit card payments.

Commemorative certificates are also available.

For full details of fees and costs, please do not hesitate to contact us on our helpline on **0345 241 2489** or visit our website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

FAQ

What if I need to cancel my ceremony?

If you need to cancel for any reason, please contact us immediately on **0345 241 2489**. A cancellation fee will apply.

Can we bring food and drink?

Please note that food, drink and chewing gum are not permitted.

I am very nervous, what if I forget the words I have to say?

Don't worry. You repeat the words after the Registrar and you do not need to learn them.

Can people take photographs of, or record, the ceremony?

Your guests are more than welcome to take photos at the ceremony but please discuss this with the Registrar first.

Video recordings are allowed but please let the Registrar know this before the ceremony so the person can be directed to the most appropriate position.

Can guests throw confetti?

Some venues have restrictions on confetti, so please discuss this with the Registrar conducting your ceremony and the staff at the venue.

Why can't there be any religious content?

Civil ceremonies were created for those who cannot, or did not wish to hold their ceremony in the Church. The law of this country states that civil ceremonies must not be religious in nature, nor should they include extracts from an authorised religious ceremony.

Is a ceremony conducted by an independent celebrant legal?

No. Please see page 33 for further information.

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JOP

YOUR CEREMONY



We want you to have a memorable ceremony...
so, what happens and when?



Before the ceremony

To make sure everything goes ahead on time and without any hitches, please ensure you and your guests arrive at least 15 minutes before the time of your ceremony. Remember to make allowances for traffic delays, parking and any photographs and inform your guests of this.

Before the ceremony, the Registrar will see the couple privately to check that the details to be entered into the register are correct. You can be seen either individually or together, whichever you prefer. This is also an opportunity for you to ask any last minute questions. After these checks have been made we can proceed with the ceremony itself.

The ceremony

Saying “I do” in front of friends and family can be a nerve-racking event but the Registrars will be on hand to help you every step of the way. They will guide you through everything you need to do or say, so there is no need to worry about forgetting your lines or doing things in the wrong order!

Once you, your guests and your witnesses are seated, the ceremony will begin with a welcome by the Registrar. The couple will be asked, in turn, to repeat a number of solemn declarations, which will be the choices you made for your legal declarations and contracting words (your vows) and your promises. See pages 12 and 13 for the options you can choose from.

After you have made your contract, you and your witnesses will sign the register. After this, the Registrars will sign the register and will present you with your certificate.



THE FORMAT

*Pre-arrival music
Entrance music*

**Welcome
Arrival and Presentation
Introduction
Legal Statements
Reading (optional)**



Rings and promises

(optional promises: see page 13 of brochure)

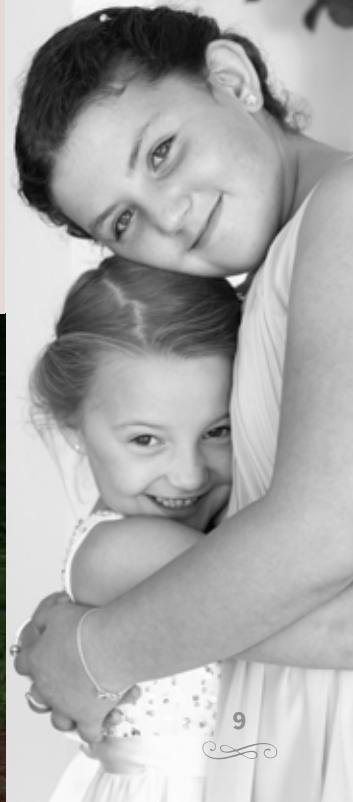
Signing of Register

Signing Music

**Photographs
Presentation of Marriage Certificate**

Closing words

Exit music



COUNTDOWN

TO THE BIG DAY



Once the date is set...

- Draw up a rough budget for your ceremony plus the guest list
- Book the Registration Office or approved venue and arrange a Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership for you both
- Book the reception venue, caterers and entertainment
- Choose your bridesmaids, attendants, best man and ushers, if applicable!
- Book the photographer and/or videographer
- Order your invitations, if you are having them made
- Decide on what sort of transport you will be using and book cars for the ceremony and going away
- Make any travel arrangements required
- Start shopping for your outfits
- Decide on and speak to a hairdresser and/or your beauty salon for your Big Day.

3 months before...

- Order the cake
- Pay your ceremony fees
- Choose the rings
- Send out the invitations, order menu cards and place cards
- Book a florist and choose flowers for the reception, including buttonholes and corsages
- Decide on your gift list
- Have a first fitting of your outfit (if it is being made to measure)
- If you are travelling abroad, arrange any necessary visas and vaccinations
- If you are changing your name, allow at least six weeks (preferably more in the peak holiday season) for a new passport and remember to change your driver's licence and bank details
- Book a hotel for the night of the celebration.

6 weeks before...

- Finalise your guest list
- Choose gifts for the bridesmaids, attendants, best man and mothers
- Order gift boxes if you plan to send out cake to guests who cannot attend
- Attend a second fitting (if appropriate).

4 weeks before...

- Have the final fittings for your outfits
- Book an appointment with your hairdresser for a trial run
- Confirm numbers with the caterers and arrange the seating plan
- Speak to your Registrar about the ceremony, discussing your readings, vows and music choices
- Prepare thank you letters for the presents you will receive .

2 weeks before...

- Work out a rough timetable for the reception and run through it with the best man, bridesmaids and attendants
- Write out place cards for the reception
- Order foreign currency if travelling abroad
- Wear-in your new shoes at home
- Double check the travel timings to and from your ceremony/reception venue(s) - allow for heavy traffic.

On the day...

This is your day, remember, so ask friends and family to see that the following arrangements are made for you on the day

- The cases are sent on to your overnight hotel
- Your outfits are packed and taken home and any hired items are returned as soon as possible
- The presents are carefully packed up and taken home
- Cake is sent to anyone unable to attend.



Choosing vows and promises:
Traditional, Modern or Simplified?

CEREMONY

VOWS

While a civil wedding ceremony has a fairly standard format, there is plenty of scope within it to make it a personal statement of your love and commitment to each other. The minimum vows for a legal civil wedding are included below, under **legal declarations** and **contracting words**.

You can choose which version suits you best from each one: a, b or c and you repeat these words after the Registrar so you do not need to remember them.

LEGAL DECLARATIONS

(a) Traditional

I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I (your full name) may not be joined in matrimony to (your partner's full name).

(b) Modern

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I (your full name) may not be joined in marriage to (your partner's full name).

(c) Simplified

The Registrar asks: "Are you (your full name) free, lawfully, to marry (your partner's full name)?" You reply: "I am".

CONTRACTING WORDS

(a) Traditional

I call upon these persons, here present, to witness that I (your full name) do take thee (your partner's full name) to be my lawful wedded wife/husband.

(b) Modern

I (your full name), take you (your partner's full name) to be my wedded wife/husband.

(c) Simplified

I (your full name) take thee (your partner's full name) to be my wedded wife/husband.

RING PROMISES

- 1 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 wife/husband and friend.
- 2 I promise to care for you above all others, to give you my love and friendship, support and comfort, and to respect and cherish you throughout our lives together.
- 3 I give you this ring as a token of my love and friendship.
- 4 I give you this ring as a token of our love and marriage, as a symbol of all that we share and in recognition of our life together.
- 5 I promise to love and respect you. Helping our love grow, always being there to listen, comfort and support you, whatever our future may bring.
- 6 I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage and as a symbol of our love. I promise to care for you, to respect and cherish you, throughout our lives together.
- 7 I give you this ring as a sign of our love, trust and marriage. I promise to care for you above all others, to give you my love, friendship and support, and to respect and cherish you throughout our life together.
- 8 I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and affection, wear it with happiness and pride – now and always.

PROMISES

After the ‘legal’ part of the ceremony has taken place, you can become more personal and creative, if you so wish, by saying promises to each other.

The following are suggestions that some people have used in the past.

PERSONAL PROMISES

Alternatively, if none of these take your fancy, you may be able to write your own promises; it is best to discuss this with your Registrar first to gauge their views on this. If you get the go-ahead, you can start putting pen to paper to come up with vows that really do come from the heart – and yours, not someone else’s.

The following promises may give you some inspiration:

- ⌚ To get through whatever life throws at you, both good and bad
- ⌚ To love, cherish and respect one another
- ⌚ To stay together for life
- ⌚ To share happiness and laughter
- ⌚ To be kind, trusting, tolerant and understanding
- ⌚ To be good friends forever.

This way you can decide which aspects and elements of your relationship you wish to share with your family and friends.

Remember not to include any religious content.

CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

CEREMONY

There are several choices available to you
when registering your partnership

You can keep things simple by registering your civil partnership, which will consist of the declaration below and the signing of the schedule or you can opt to have a ceremony as well. The choice is yours.

LEGAL DECLARATION

which must be read, repeated or acknowledged by each partner:

• I declare that I know of no legal reason why we many not register as each other's civil partner. I understand that on signing this document we will be forming a civil partnership with each other.

PROMISES

- I will seek to build a strong, loving relationship based on kindness, understanding and trust that are already part of us both.
- I promise to share my life with you as an equal partner, and to ensure that our love and friendship continue to grow.
- I promise to love you in good times and bad, to cherish and care for you, to live with you in love and harmony, whatever the future may bring
- I promise to love you above all others, to cherish and respect you throughout our lives together.



POETRY

& READINGS

Personalising your ceremony is easy with well chosen poetry and readings

You can make your ceremony an even more personal occasion by including a reading, which can either be read by you or a friend or family member. Readings are a fantastic way of summing up what you feel about each other.

There is a vast choice of suitable passages or poems from which to select; your only restriction is that it must not contain any religious references, nor, of course, be offensive to anyone attending.

If you are finding it difficult choosing a reading, sit down together and think about any poems, authors or pieces of writing that you have enjoyed or that have moved you most.

A wide selection of readings can also be found on the Internet under 'Civil Weddings Readings and Poems'. The Sonnet by William Shakespeare is a traditional love poem that is always popular at weddings. The lyrical language suits the high emotions you are bound to feel on the day.

However, if you would prefer something more modern, or your readers are too daunted at the prospect of attempting a sonnet, modern poetry offers many options too! Pam Ayres' comedic verse warmly and amusingly conveys the reality of married life in a way that is bound to bring a smile of recognition to everyone who hears it.



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Sonnet 116

William Shakespeare

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove;
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken:
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks
But bears it out even to the edge of doom;
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.*

Love is a Temporary Madness

Louis de Bernieres

Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your root was so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. that is just being in love, which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

He's not perfect

Bob Marley

"He's not perfect. You aren't either, and the two of you will never be perfect. But if he can make you laugh at least once, causes you to think twice, and if he admits to being human and making mistakes, hold onto him and give him the most you can. He isn't going to quote poetry, he's not thinking about you every moment, but he will give you a part of him that he knows you could break. Don't hurt him, don't change him, and don't expect for more than he can give. Don't analyze. Smile when he makes you happy, yell when he makes you mad, and miss him when he's not there. Love hard when there is love to be had. Because perfect guys don't exist, but there's always one guy that is perfect for you."

Yes, I'll Marry You, My Dear

Pam Ayres

*Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
And here's the reason why;
So I can push you out of bed
When the baby starts to cry,
And if we hear a knocking
And it's creepy and it's late,
I hand you the torch you see,
And you investigate.
Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
You may not apprehend it,
But when the tumble-drier goes
It's you that has to mend it,
You have to face the neighbour
Should our Labrador attack him,
And if a drunkard fondles me
It's you that has to whack him.
Yes, I'll marry you,
You're virile and you're lean,
My house is like a pigsty
You can help to keep it clean.
That sexy little dinner
Which you served by candlelight,
As I do chipolatas,
You can cook it every night!
It's you who has to work the drill
and put up curtain track,
And when I've got PMT it's you who gets the flak,
I do see great advantages,
But none of them for you,
And so before you see the light,
I do, I do, I do!*

The Magic of Love

Helen Steiner Rice

*Love is like magic, and it always will be,
For love still remains life's sweet mystery.
Love works in ways that are wondrous and strange,
And there's nothing in life that love cannot change!
Love can transform the most commonplace
Into beauty and splendour and sweetness and grace.
Love is unselfish, understanding and kind,
For it sees with its heart, and not with its mind.
Love is the answer that everyone seeks;
Love is the language that every heart speaks.
Love can't be bought, it is priceless and free.
Love, like pure magic, is life's sweet mystery!*

From a Native American Indian Ceremony

Anonymous

*May the sun bring you new energy by day;
May the moon softly restore you by night.
May the rain wash away your worries
And the breeze blow new strength into your being,
And all the days of your life may you walk
Gently through the world and know its beauty.
Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter
for the other.
Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth
to the other.
Now there will be no more loneliness,
Now you are two persons, but there is one life before you.
Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your
life together,
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.*

The Amber Spyglass

Phillip Pullman

*"I will love you forever; whatever happens. Till I die
and after I die, and when I find my way out of the land
of the dead, I'll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I
find you again... I'll be looking for you, every moment,
every single moment. And when we do find each other
again, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and
no one'll ever tear us apart. Every atom of me and
every atom of you... We'll live in birds and flowers and
dragonflies and pine trees and in clouds and in those
little specks of light you see floating in sunbeams...
And when they use our atoms to make new lives, they
won't just be able to take one, they'll have to take two,
one of you and one of me."*

Take time

Anonymous

*Take time to be gentle to each other
Remember, words harshly spoken trouble the spirit,
heart and mind.
Take time to talk to each other
The secret to understanding is in open communication.
Don't be afraid to speak your mind, but listen in return
and listen careful, wisely and not selfishly.
Take time to remember why you chose one another,
and don't try and change one another, but learn to grow
and value one another.
Take time to show respect, and be a friend to each other
Admiration can be seen by others, by that look, by that
smile, by that touch.
Be a good teacher, be a good student
You each have so much to share and offer one another.
Take time to be alone, so that you can gather your
innermost thoughts, and then share them with each
other when you're together again.
Take time to disagree with one another. It clears the air,
and the lungs, and agree never to carry a row over to
tomorrow.
Remember, there are others in this world, don't live only
for each other.
You are also part of family and have friends, don't block
their love.
Lastly, take time to be loving, it's what everyone needs
every hour, every day and for the rest of your lives.
Love each other, as we love you, today and always.
And go on your way, knowing there are others here today,
who love you almost as much as you love one another.*

CEREMONY MUSIC



Music is another wonderful way to personalise your ceremony. Traditional musical pieces are often chosen above modern alternatives because many of them were written with the ceremony in mind. And just because you are having a civil ceremony, it does not mean you cannot have something traditional in your music choices! However, modern songs, from pop to folk to jazz, can offer a refreshing change and might express your feelings even more appropriately. The choice really is yours, but just remember that songs must not contain any religious content.

As a general rule of thumb, it is good to have five or six songs to play while your guests take their seats. As these are purely for background, they can also be repeated should any delays occur.

It is always a good idea to assign someone to operate the music system, so that the music can be faded out subtly as you reach the front of the room, and to ensure all the levels are correct.

Please note, re-readable CDs often don't play well on different CD players, so it is a good idea to provide or back up your music on yours or a friend's Smartphone or other i-device.

All our Registration Office music systems offer either an i-pod docking station or auxiliary cable.

TALK TO US



If you have chosen to hold your ceremony in an approved venue, such as a hotel or stately home, your fee includes the option to meet with the Registrar who will be conducting your ceremony. Staffing is usually confirmed four weeks prior to your big day. This meeting will usually take place at the local Register Office which looks after your chosen venue.

This is your day and we are here to make it exactly as you wish.

If you wish to arrange a meeting, we would recommend that you call the ceremony helpdesk a month before your big day on **0345 241 2489** (Monday to Thursday 9.00am - 4.30pm, Friday 9.00am - 4.00pm).

As Registrars have busy schedules, particularly during the summer season, please allow ample time when making your appointment.

PERFECT TIMING

To ensure perfect timing on the day, we would recommend that you, or one of your family or trusted friends, does a dry run on the journey time a week or so before the big day, at the same time and day of the week, to check for any possible issues.

Please remember that if the car is taking the Bridesmaids/Page Boys first and then returning, you will need to factor this into your timings, as the journey back from the venue may take longer than the journey there.

Where possible, we would suggest that the Groom/Partner is at the venue a minimum of half an hour before the ceremony, ready to meet the Registrars in the ceremony room. If the Bride/Partner then arrives around 15 minutes before the allocated starting time, this allows for a couple of photographs with the car and means that, if you plan not to see each other until the ceremony begins, this is easier to orchestrate.

For couples who may be getting ready at the venue, the Registrar completing the paperwork will want to see you and check your details at least 15 minutes prior to the ceremony, and so we would ask you to ensure that you are fully dressed, with your hair and/or make-up completed, in order to be able to concentrate fully on these important legal checks. A fee will apply to correct the details on a certificate after the ceremony so please take the time to check it carefully.

In this increasingly busy world, traffic jams or tight schedules by car hire companies can all create time delays on your big day.



OUTDOOR CEREMONIES



Outdoor ceremonies are increasingly popular, even though the great British weather isn't always very reliable!

Many venues in Oxfordshire which are licensed for marriage and civil partnerships offer the option of holding the ceremony in a 'garden structure', a fixed structure with a permanent roof and floor, which is large enough to accommodate the couple, their witnesses and the registrars.

More and more couples choose to hold their ceremony outside and registration staff are happy to try and accommodate this where possible. In fact, we all enjoy conducting ceremonies 'outside'! Holding your ceremony in the garden or grounds of a licensed venue sets the scene for a relaxed celebration of your special day, and can provide a very memorable backdrop for you and your guests.

However, it will not always be possible to hold your ceremony outside due to inclement weather which can include rain (or the likelihood of showers), wind, very cold conditions, or high temperatures with no shade for guests. It is a legal

requirement that marriage and civil partnership legal paperwork should be kept safe and dry, and in pristine condition. These are the official records of the ceremony. For this reason the registrars will have the ultimate decision on whether your ceremony can be held outside.

Please do not let it spoil your day if the ceremony cannot take place outdoors for any reason. Make sure that you have a back-up plan and select another room at your chosen venue – please remember that it must be big enough to accommodate all your guests.

Venues which currently offer outdoor ceremonies are shown on pages 37 and 38, displaying the [outdoors] symbol.

Please contact us on 0345 241 2489 if you would like to discuss holding your ceremony outside.

FESTIVAL CEREMONIES

When guests have travelled a long way to celebrate with you, and when you have friends and family aged from 3 to 93 to entertain, many couples choose to hold a festival-style celebration, lasting late into the night or even spanning a whole weekend.



Your legal ceremony can take place in one of our local registration offices and be followed by a ceremony to celebrate your marriage or civil partnership conducted by one of our experienced celebrants in the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside – maybe in a farmer's field, or in the woods, or by a river.

Guests can be seated on hay bales or vintage deckchairs while you exchange your vows and promises in the open air, and your gathering can be personalised with handmade bunting or wild-flower and foliage garlands. Marquees or festival tents can provide the perfect place to relax during the festivities, as well as shelter from the sun and rain.

Food and drink are a vital component of any successful celebration, and there are plenty of options to choose from. A traditional hog roast is always popular, but why not consider street-style food, catering for all tastes from vegetarian or vegan to the exotic flavours of Lebanese, Indian or Thai cuisines? Or you could even hire in a fish and chip van or an ice cream van for a traditional seaside atmosphere.

Tea and cake always goes down well, especially if the cake is homemade and the tea is served from vintage china. Not forgetting drinks – craft beer on tap from one of Oxfordshire's micro-breweries is one possibility, but you could also source some of the county's excellent locally produced wine or fruit juices.

Children love an outdoor celebration of any kind, but could be easily kept entertained with some old-fashioned games, like rounders, quoits or croquet, or giant Jenga or Connect 4. Children and adults alike will enjoy the relaxed vibe that having live music can bring to your day, and what could be better than having your first dance to your favourite music played by your favourite local band?

Some couples choose to end the day under the stars around a camp fire, with the chill kept at bay with cosy blankets, marshmallows and toasting forks in hand. Others provide bell tents, yurts or tipis for their guests to stay the night, enjoying the tranquillity of the countryside, ready for the party to start again at breakfast time!

YOUR DREAM VENUE

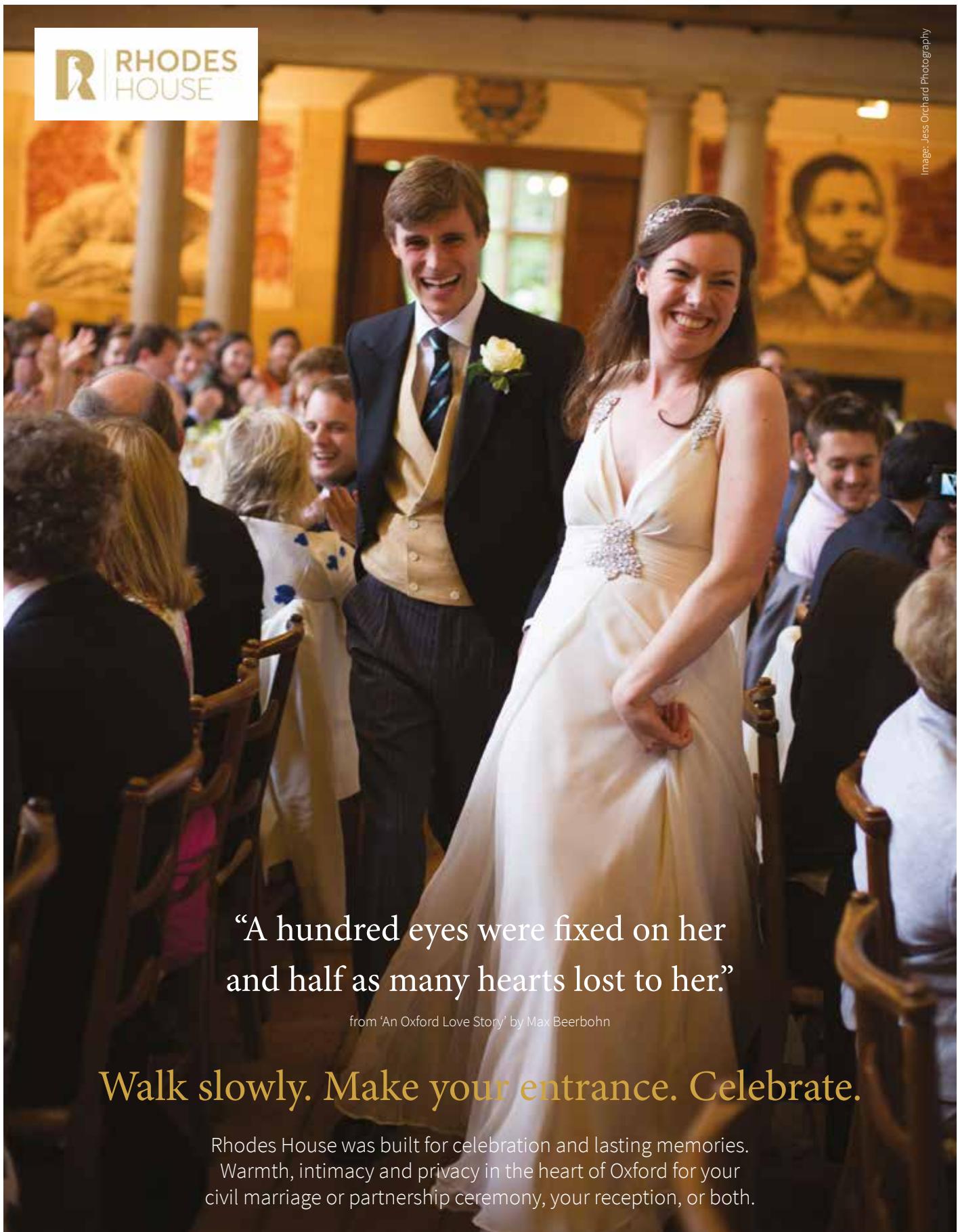
Top tips for choosing your venue

- Each venue will have its own atmosphere, charm and 'feel' so make sure you visit several before making up your mind
- Will you have unlimited access to the venue's facilities during your day?
- If any of your guests has mobility problems will the venue still be suitable?
- Are there any facilities for children?
- Is there sufficient parking?
- What sort of accommodation can they offer (if appropriate) and do they offer guests a discount?
- Is the venue easy to find? Are there suitable or adequate signposts?

RHODES HOUSE



Image: Jess Orchard Photography



“A hundred eyes were fixed on her
and half as many hearts lost to her.”

from ‘An Oxford Love Story’ by Max Beerbohm

Walk slowly. Make your entrance. Celebrate.

Rhodes House was built for celebration and lasting memories.

Warmth, intimacy and privacy in the heart of Oxford for your civil marriage or partnership ceremony, your reception, or both.

01865 282599 | www.rhodeshouseoxford.com

events@rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk

Rhodes House, Oxford OX1 3RG

THE CROWN & THISTLE HOTEL



The Crown & Thistle is a historic, homely and delightfully eclectic venue for both intimate and informal weddings, blessings and civil ceremonies. Our two characterful function rooms, The Barn and the Minstrels Gallery can be hired separately or together.

We love creating a day that's as individual as you are, which tells your story and embraces every guest.

Our wedding coordinators' attention to detail is legendary, creating bespoke weddings celebrations, and delivering flawlessly on the big day. With a unique approach to every wedding, our job is to ensure your day is truly unforgettable, from 'I do', through the reception, to the bridal suite at the end of the night.



01235 522556 | www.crownandthistleabingdon.co.uk

jakecooper@oakmaninns.co.uk

18 Birdge Street, Abingdon-on-Thames OX14 3HS



MILTON HILL HOUSE



CELEBRATE YOUR SPECIAL DAY WITH US

The perfect wedding venue to make your dreams come true



01235 825720 | www.miltonoxfordshire.co.uk

milton.enquiries@thevenuescollection.co.uk

Steventon, Abingdon, Oxford OX13 6AF



THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY



Photo: Weddings by Nicola & Glen

Set in the heart of the dreaming spires, the Bodleian Library is a historic venue steeped in romance and elegance, featuring late gothic architecture in the Divinity School and a fan vaulted ceiling in Convocation House. With both spaces licensed for civil ceremonies, and the opportunity to have your wedding breakfast and evening celebration under the magnificent stone carved ceiling in the Divinity School, the Bodleian Library offers a unique Oxford experience. Whether an intimate ceremony, or a jubilant celebration, the Bodleian Library provides the most magnificent backdrop to your special day.

01865 277224 | www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/weddings

weddings@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG



THE BAY TREE HOTEL



Dating back to 1565, The Bay Tree Hotel is full of charm, with flagstone floors, roaring log fires and a galleried staircase.

As a small country house hotel, The Bay Tree is perfect for Exclusive Use Weddings and boasts a wonderful collection of rooms to host your big day. Step outside and the hotel is draped in ancient wisteria, with a secret walled garden, quaint summer house (licensed for ceremonies!) and quirky deckchairs.



01993 822791 | www.cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/the-bay-tree-hotel

info@baytreehotel.info

Sheep Street, Burford OX18 4LW



BICESTER HOTEL RESORT & SPA



Set in more than 100 acres of rolling Oxfordshire countryside, Bicester Hotel Resort and Spa is the perfect setting for a beautiful Wedding. Our four star hotel, with banqueting rooms, health club, golf club and spa, has everything you could wish for.

We offer a range of all-inclusive packages or can tailor make your wedding to your requirements. We are also licenced for civil ceremonies and can cater for up to 150 guests.



01869 241204 | www.bicesterhotelgolfandspa.com

events@bicesterhgs.com

Chesterton, Bicester OX26 1TH



HAWKWELL HOUSE



Situated in the quaint village of Iffley amid 3 acres of gardens and just 2 miles from the centre of Oxford, Hawkwell House Hotel has a history of making weddings special.

Licensed for indoor and outdoor ceremonies, we offer totally bespoke and tailor-made experiences as well as a range of inclusive packages.

So whether it is an intimate evening affair or a lavish garden party, trust Hawkwell House to make your dream day come true.



01865 749988 | www.hawkwellhouse.co.uk

events@hawkwellhouse.co.uk

Church Way, Iffley Village, Oxford OX4 4DZ



THE TYTHE BARN LAUNTON



Entirely exclusive and wonderfully private, this country wedding venue flaunts a stunning rural setting.

The family-run business is well-known for its faultless attention to detail and is loved by couples for its flexibility and relaxed atmosphere.

It really is perfection in the countryside.



01869 321442 | www.thetythebarn.co.uk

info@thetythebarn.co.uk

Charbridge Lane, Launton, Bicester OX26 4SR



WORTON HALL

Oxfordshire's modern country venue hosting weddings and ceremonies for 60 to 250 guests

Indoor & Outdoor Ceremonies

• 4* On-Site Accommodation

• Flexible Catering Options

• Late Availability Packages



Photo credit: Laura Eddolls



01865 882644 | www.wortonhall.co.uk

enquiries@wortonpark.co.uk

Worton Park, Cassington OX29 4SU



HENLEY TOWN HALL



Henley Town Hall - an iconic Grade II* Listed Building.

Four rooms are available to hire. The oak panelled main chamber can accommodate 60 people. The grand Main Hall with a round-arched ceiling on the second floor, reached via a grand marble staircase can accommodate up to 210 people for the ceremony or reception. Two additional reception rooms are also available.



01491 576982 | www.henleytowncouncil.gov.uk

enquiries@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Market Place, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2AQ



SPREAD EAGLE HOTEL



The Spread Eagle is a traditional coaching Inn owned by Art Hotels.

The Hotel has 35 Boutique Rooms, including 3 Suites & 9 Garden Rooms. We have a smaller function room for up to 20 people for an intimate family wedding or The Fothergill Hall which can cater for 160 people and 200 people in the evening. Wedding Packages from £52 per person. The Hotel has 2 dedicated Wedding Co-ordinators to help plan your special day.



01844 213661 | www.spreadeaglethame.co.uk

events@spreadeaglethame.co.uk

16-17 Cornmarket, Thame OX9 2BW



MERCURE THAME LAMBERT HOTEL



Situated at the foot of the Chiltern Hills in Watlington, bordering

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Mercure Thame Lambert Hotel provides that authentic wedding experience in a wonderful suite and surroundings with the capacity of up to 130 guests.

At the hotel itself, you'll find beautiful gardens and a picturesque courtyard in the centre, perfect for pictures!



01844 351496 | www.mercurethame.com

events@mercurethame.com

London Road, Aston Rowant, Watlington OX49 5SQ



STONOR PARK



WEDDINGS

AT STONOR



Stonor offers many wonderful marquee locations within the park.

01491 638587 | www.stonor-weddings.com

enquiries@stonor.com

Henley-on-Thames RG9 6HF



KIRTLINGTON PARK



This stunning 18th Century stately home in rural Oxfordshire, offers exclusive use of our elegant state rooms and extensive gardens with breathtaking views towards the Chiltern Hills.

We are licensed for ceremonies for 150 guests in our Saloon with adjacent dining in our spectacular Great Hall.

Ample parking and close to Oxford.



01869 350236 | www.kirtlingtonpark.co.uk

events@kirtlingtonpark.com

Kirtlington OX5 3JN



COGGES MANOR FARM



www.jonnybarratt.com

The rustic barn wedding venue at Cogges Manor Farm is a beautiful blank canvas which oozes charm and gives couples the flexibility to create their own dream wedding. Plus, there's loads of space around the barns and on the Manor House lawn, with stunning walled garden, orchard and play areas for guests to explore. Cogges also offers fabulous opportunities for photos, where you can even include the farm animals in your special day!



01993 772602 | www.cogges.org.uk

ops@cogges.org.uk

Church Lane, Witney OX28 3LA

WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL



Woodstock Town Hall is a beautiful Grade II listed building, built by architect Sir William Chambers in 1766. It commands one of the finest views over the picturesque and historic market town of Woodstock, and is adjacent to Blenheim Palace and its estate.

The Town Hall has two rooms licensed for weddings: The Mayor's Parlour downstairs is a wonderful setting for your ceremony and the first floor Assembly Room, a larger room, which is suitable for the wedding ceremony or perfect for a reception afterwards.

Woodstock Community Centre is also available for receptions. Public parking and transport within easy reach of the venue.

01993 811216 | www.woodstock-tc.gov.uk

info@woodstock-tc.gov.uk

Market Place, Woodstock OX20 1SL

THE COSENER'S HOUSE

Surrounded by picturesque gardens overlooking the River Thames, this intimate venue provides the perfect backdrop. With a capacity of 80 seated and 150 evening guests, it's ideal for weddings with close family & friends.



Our experienced wedding planner will be with you every step of the way to inspire and assist you in creating your dream day. When your celebrations come to a close, we have 48 bedrooms available for you and your guests.



THE COSENER'S HOUSE

conferences, events, wedding, accommodation

01235 523198 | www.thecosenershouse.co.uk

coseners@stfc.ac.uk

15-16 Abbey Close, Abingdon OX14 3JD



OXFORD WITNEY HOTEL



Just ten miles from the historic city of Oxford, equally close to the stunning scenery of the Cotswolds, Oxford Witney Hotel benefits from a location that is both beautiful and easily accessible for your guests.

We are licensed for civil ceremonies, enabling us to host your wedding ceremony as well as your reception. Whichever you choose, you can be confident of the warm welcome, excellent service and attention to detail that we are renowned for.

OXFORD WITNEY HOTEL Witney

01993 779777 | www.oxfordwitneyhotel.co.uk
events@oxfordwitneyhotel.co.uk
Ducklington Lane, Witney OX28 4EX

SILVER PEAR WEDDINGS AT FRIARS COURT



Friars Court – a 17th century Cotswold stone manor house set in three acres of idyllic, part-moated, grounds. Our approach is one of relaxed, friendly, informality with set-up days included in the hire, no 'approved-only' suppliers and no venue corkage charges.

Our licensed ceremony locations range from the intimate Red Dining Room to the romantic Rose Arbour, receptions range from the Garden Room and the three marquee locations to the ever-popular 'blank canvas' Stone Barn.



01367 810206 | www.silverpearweddings.co.uk
jeffrey@silverpearweddings.co.uk
Clanfield, Bampton OX18 2SU

KINGSTON BAGPUIZE HOUSE



This historic house set in acres of rolling parkland provides an unforgettable setting for all styles and celebrations, from traditional to the unexpected.



With various locations for both indoor and outdoor ceremonies, as well as a stunning marquee for celebrations, Kingston Bagpuize House is the perfect venue for a Wedding.

Kingston Bagpuize House WEDDINGS

01865 818166 | www.kbhweddings.uk
weddings@kbhevents.uk
Kingston Bagpuize, Abingdon OX13 5AX



BRITWELL HOUSE

Steve Barry Photography



Britwell House is open for Civil Ceremonies and Champagne Receptions. It is a private venue built in an early Georgian Style.

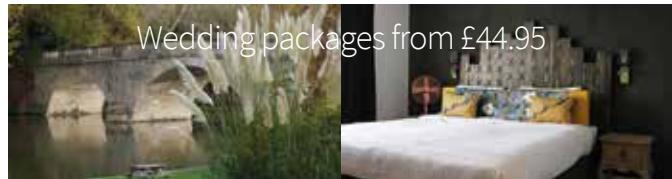


Britwell House provides a romantic and secluded setting coupled with exceptional and unparalleled views towards the Chilterns.

Parties of up to 60 people.

01491 613354/07885 932691 | www.britwellhouse.co.uk
ceciliaakressner@hotmail.com
Britwell Salome OX49 5LJ

SHILLINGFORD BRIDGE HOTEL



Shillingford Bridge
HOTEL

01865 858567 | www.shillingfordbridgehotel.co.uk

events@shillingfordbridgehotel.co.uk
Shillingford Hill, Wallingford OX10 8LZ

LITTLEBURY HOTEL & RESTAURANT



A family business since 1959.

We are delighted to be able to offer the complete wedding package for your special day.

Licensed to hold your civil ceremony.

35 ensuite bedrooms, large gardens and private car park.

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and Restaurant

01869 252595 | www.littleburyhotel.com

littleburyhotel@gmail.com
Kings End, Bicester OX26 6DR

ABINGDON ABBEY BUILDINGS



A unique and stunning venue for your special day.

The medieval Long Gallery and gardens are a truly romantic setting which you and your guests will love.



01235 525339/07389 063158 | www.friendsofabingdon.org.uk
enquiries@friendsofabingdon.org.uk
18 Thames Street, Abingdon OX14 3HZ

THE GUILDHALL ABINGDON



This exquisite venue comprises five unique historic rooms in the heart of Abingdon's ancient market place, just 6 miles from Oxford.



Recently refurbished, the Guildhall provides a memorable, affordable and highly photogenic setting for your wedding ceremony and/or reception.

We offer a full range of wedding packages to suit your exact requirements and budget.

Guildhall
Abingdon-on-Thames



01235 524085/07496 831553 | www.guildhall.ac
enquiries@guildhall.ac
Abbey Close, Abingdon-on-Thames OX14 3JD



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SQUIB

PHOTOGRAPHY



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07946 478831

www.janecoulcher-theweddingharpist.co.uk
janelcoulcher@gmail.com



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OXFORD



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Ear Candy Oxford provide high-end entertainment for Ceremonies, Drinks Receptions & Evening Receptions - including a DJ Service, Microphones for Speeches and Wedding Breakfast Playlists. Create the perfect soundtrack to your big day with Ear Candy Oxford.



07960 392159 | www.earcandyoxford.com
info@earcandyoxford.com



THE SOUNDTRACK TO YOUR BIG DAY



WALLINGFORD

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It is our privilege to capture your memories in unforgettable and timeless images.

We pride ourselves on providing you with an innovative style of photography that will reflect your personality and taste and remind you of a fantastic wedding day in years to come.



07876 293377 | www.wallingfordportraits.co.uk

wpwphotos@googlemail.com

- CAPTURING YOUR BIG DAY PERFECTLY -



Would you like to celebrate
in Oxfordshire?



Join us as we celebrate the finest ceremony venues in Oxfordshire.

We would love you to be part of our next publication.

If you're interested in advertising, please contact Julie Morris.

01925 486445 | www.placestomarry.com

julie.morris@crystalpublications.co.uk

COMBINE YOUR LEGAL CEREMONY IN ANY ONE OF OUR DISTRICT OFFICE CEREMONY ROOMS
FOLLOWED BY A CELEBRATORY CEREMONY IN A VENUE OF YOUR CHOICE.

What is a Legal & Celebratory ceremony?

A Legal & Celebratory ceremony is a legal and bespoke ceremonial marriage or civil partnership package in two parts.

The legal marriage or civil partnership takes place in a local authority ceremony room followed by a celebratory ceremony, usually held in a location which would not be eligible to be licensed for marriages or civil partnerships.

YOUR DAY

YOUR WAY

Why do couples choose them and how popular are they?

Couples choose a Legal & Celebratory ceremony because they wish to celebrate their marriage or civil partnership in a venue that is not licensed for ceremonies such as a marquee in their parents' garden, or another spot which is special to the couple.

These Legal & Celebratory ceremonies are increasing in popularity as it gives couples the best of both options:- a legal marriage or civil partnership with the freedom to have a celebration of that marriage or civil partnership where they choose.

How do I arrange one?

You need to contact our help desk on **0345 241 2489** to discuss your options.

Are there legal requirements I need to fulfil?

There are no legal requirements for the celebratory ceremony itself. However, once you have decided where you wish to hold your legal ceremony you would need to give your Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership.

A ceremony in one of our district ceremony rooms is a popular choice and we include this in our Legal & Celebratory ceremony 'package' which is detailed below.

What is the cost?

We have recently launched a package which includes both the Legal & Celebratory ceremony. Please see our Fees page:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/fees-registration-services>

Package includes:

- A legal ceremony in one of our local authority ceremony rooms (Mon to Fri & Sat am)
- A bespoke celebratory ceremony in a location which would not usually be eligible for licensing for marriages or civil partnerships
- Inspection and assessment of proposed location by registration employee (if applicable)
- Planning meeting with your celebrant.

Not included:

Statutory fees payable for the legal preliminaries for Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership.

ABINGDON CEREMONY ROOM



The School House is the tailor-made location for the smaller and more intimate ceremony, this ground floor room holds up to 20 guests. It is tastefully decorated in cream and green, and is situated overlooking a pretty garden square in the heart of this historic town.

A good choice of restaurants and hotels are within easy walking distance. There is also ample public car parking, including disabled parking facilities close by.

0345 241 2489

School House, Bridge Street, Abingdon OX14 3HU
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

BANBURY CEREMONY ROOM



The ceremony room at Bodicote House, Banbury was the former dining room in the old manor house. The room has recently been refurbished to enhance its traditional features and contains a stone fireplace and oak panels with a burgundy colour scheme. The room will accommodate up to 56 guests (seating for 37) and leads out on to a lovely garden, which is available for pictures. Parking and disabled access is very good.

0345 241 2489

Bodicote House, Banbury OX15 4AA
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

BICESTER CEREMONY ROOM



 Licensed outdoor structure

Located in the award-winning Garth Park, the room is traditionally decorated and is light and airy with a long aisle and holds 50 guests.

Disabled access is good. The bandstand within the grounds of Garth Park also has a licence for ceremonies and can accommodate up to 50 guests. Use of the bandstand for ceremonies is limited as it is used for other functions and availability must be checked.

Parking is available within Garth Park.

0345 241 2489

Garth Park, Launton Road, Bicester OX26 6PS
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

DIDCOT CEREMONY ROOM



The Broadway Room is in the library building in Didcot. It is a purpose-built, modern ceremony room. It has been refurbished in a rich aubergine and cream, creating a very serene and tranquil atmosphere.

This room is airy and is able to accommodate 45 guests (seating for 28).

Parking is good and disabled access is via a lift to the first floor.

0345 241 2489

197 Broadway, Didcot OX11 8RU
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

HENLEY CEREMONY ROOM



Regatta Court is a purpose-built ceremony room. It is very light and airy and decorated in light colours.

This room is able to accommodate larger ceremonies of up to 60 guests (seating for 58), and works well as it has an exit directly to an outside terrace where photographs can be taken.

Parking is available and disabled access is very good.

0345 241 2489

Regatta Court, Northfield End, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2JN
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

WHEATLEY CEREMONY ROOM



Following major refurbishment, the Shotover Room is now available for ceremonies, with much improved facilities. The spacious ceremony room will seat 56 guests and is attractively decorated in light colours with a contrasting navy carpet. This venue is popular with couples wishing to avoid Oxford's busy city centre. Car parking is available close by and disabled access can be arranged.

0345 241 2489

Littleworth Road, Wheatley OX33 1NR
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

OXFORD CEREMONY ROOM



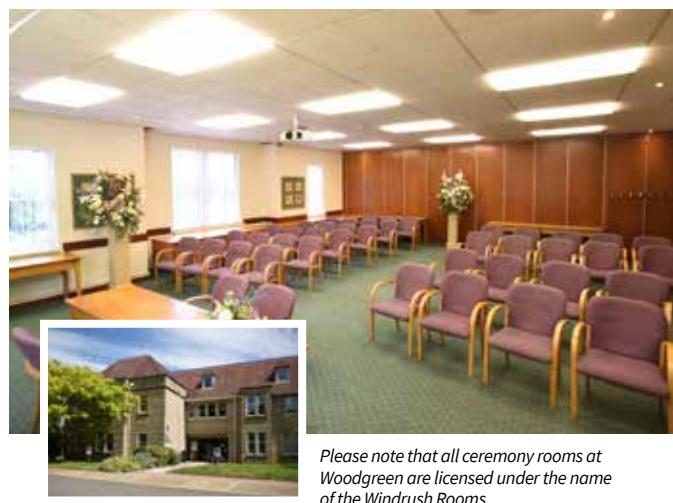
Enjoy your ceremony in a Victorian building close to the city centre.

The larger Dexter Room has oak panelling and stained glass windows. The room is attractively decorated in cream and aubergine with decorative cornices and is licensed for 50 guests for ceremonies at weekends and bank holidays. The maximum number is 25 on weekdays. There are also three offices available for a small ceremony with just two witnesses. Disabled access is good and public car parks are close by.

0345 241 2489

Tidmarsh Lane, Oxford OX1 1NS
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

WITNEY CEREMONY ROOM



Please note that all ceremony rooms at Woodgreen are licensed under the name of the Windrush Rooms.

Ceremonies at the District Council offices at Woodgreen, Witney take place on Fridays in one of the attractive ground floor Windrush Rooms, unless the upstairs Council Chamber is specified at the time of booking. Weekend ceremonies accommodate seating for 46 guests, with 20 guests permitted for Friday ceremonies. There is a large free car park, with good access and disabled parking.

0345 241 2489

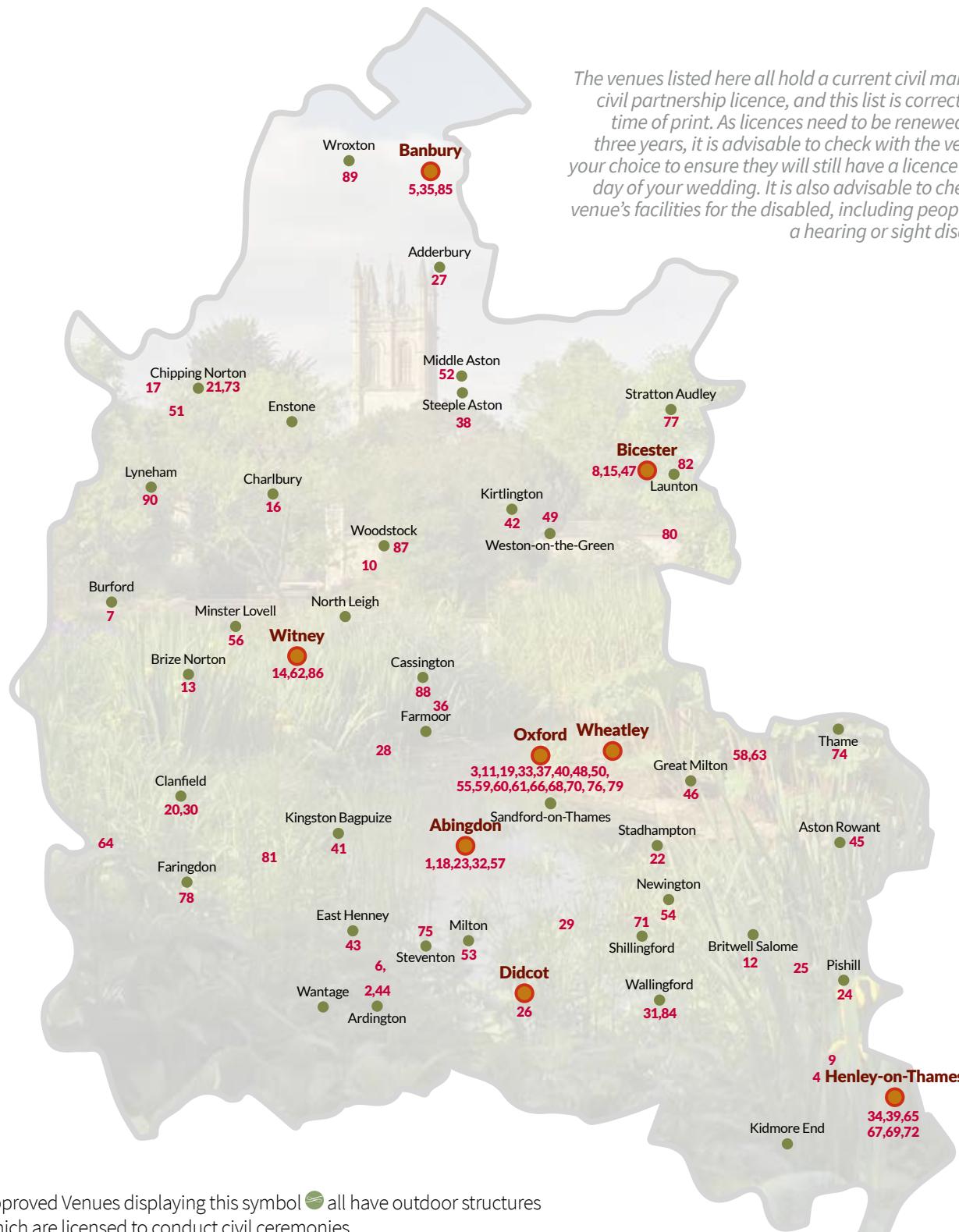
Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/registration

All Ceremony Room photos: www.mazzimage.com

APPROVED



VENUES



Approved Venues displaying this symbol all have outdoor structures which are licensed to conduct civil ceremonies.

For information on outdoor Ceremonies please see page 20.

The venues listed here all hold a current civil marriage/civil partnership licence, and this list is correct at the time of print. As licences need to be renewed every three years, it is advisable to check with the venue of your choice to ensure they will still have a licence on the day of your wedding. It is also advisable to check the venue's facilities for the disabled, including people with a hearing or sight disability.

1 Abingdon Abbey Buildings
Checker Walk, Abingdon, OX14 3HZ
Tel: 01235 525339
www.friendsofabingdon.org.uk

2 Ardington House 
Ardington, Wantage, OX12 8QA
Tel: 01235 821566
www.ardingtonhouse.com

3 Ashmolean Museum 
Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2PH
Tel: 01865 610406
www.ashmolean.org

4 Badgmore Park Golf Club 
Badgmore, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 4NR T
el: 01491 637300
www.badgmorepark.com

5 Banbury Town Hall
Bridge Street, Banbury, OX16 5QB
Tel: 01295 250340
www.banburytownhall.co.uk

6 Barton House
East Lockinge, Wantage, OX12 8QD
Tel: 078687 361 982
www.bartonhouse.co.uk

7 Bay Tree Hotel 
Sheep Street, Burford, OX18 4LW
Tel: 01993 822791
www.cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/baytree

8 Bicester Hotel Resort & Spa 
Chesterton, Bicester, OX26 1TH
Tel: 01869 241204
www.bicesterhotelfolandspa.com

9 Bix Manor 
Bix, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 4RS
Tel: 01491 579929
www.bixmanor.co.uk

10 Blenheim Palace
Woodstock, OX20 1PS
Tel: 01993 813874
www.blenheimpalace.com

11 Bodleian Library
Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG
Tel: 01865 277224
www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/venue-hire

12 Britwell House
Britwell Salome, OX49 5LJ
Tel: 01491 613354
www.britwellhouse.co.uk

13 Caswell House 
Caswell Lane, Brize Norton, OX28 3NJ
Tel: 01993 701064
www.caswellhouse.co.uk

14 Cogges Manor Farm
Church Lane, Witney, OX28 3LA
Tel: 01993 772602
www.cogges.org.uk

15 The Chesterton Hotel
Chesterton, Bicester, OX26 1UE
Tel: 01869 326550
www.thechestertonhotel.com

16 Cornbury Park 
Charlbury, OX7 3EH
Tel: 01608 811276
www.cornburypark.co.uk

17 Cornwell Manor
Cornwell, Chipping Norton, OX7 6TT
Tel: 01608 658469
www.cornwellmanor.com

18 The Cosener's House
Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JD
Tel: 01235 523198
www.thecosenershouse.co.uk

19 Cotswold Lodge Hotel
66a Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6JP
Tel: 01865 512121
www.cotswoldlodgehotel.co.uk

20 The Cotswold Plough
Bourton Road, Clanfield, OX18 2RB
Tel: 01367 810222
www.theploughclanfield.co.uk

21 Cotswolds Club Chipping Norton 
Southcombe, Chipping Norton, OX7 5QH
Tel: 01608 642383
www.cotswoldsclub.co.uk

22 The Crazy Bear Hotel
Stadhampton, OX44 7UR
Tel: 01865 890714
www.crazybeargroup.co.uk

23 The Crown and Thistle Hotel
18 Bridge Street, Abingdon, OX14 3HS
Tel: 01235 522556
www.crownandthistleabingdon.co.uk

24 The Crown Inn
Pishill, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6HH
Tel: 01491 638364
www.thecrowninnpishill.co.uk

25 Denman
New Road, Abingdon OX13 6NW
Tel: 01865 391991
www.denman.org.uk

26 Didcot Civic Hall
Britwell Road, Didcot, OX11 7JN
Tel: 01235 512436
www.didcot.gov.uk

27 Dovecote Barn
Aynho Road, Adderbury, OX17 3NP
Tel: 01295 816566
www.dovecotebarn.com

28 The Ferryman Inn
Bablock Hythe, Northmoor, OX29 5AT
Tel: 01865 880028
www.theferrymaninn.co.uk

29 Fison Barn
Little Wittenham, Abingdon, OX14 4QZ
Tel: 01865 407792
www.earthtrust.org.uk

30 Friars Court 
Clanfield, OX18 2SU
Tel: 01367 810206
www.friarscourt.com

31 George Hotel
High Street, Wallingford, OX10 0BS
Tel: 01491 836665
www.george-hotel-wallingford.com

32 The Guildhall
Abbey Close, Abingdon on Thames, OX14 3JD
Tel: 01235 524085
www.abingdon.gov.uk/abingdon

33 Hawkwell House Hotel 
Church Way, Iffley Village, Oxford, OX4 4DZ
Tel: 01865 749988
www.hawkwellhouse.co.uk

34 Henley Town Hall
Market Place, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2AQ
Tel: 01491 576982
www.henleytowncouncil.gov.uk

35 Hook Norton Brewery
Brewery Lane, Hook Norton OX15 5NY
Tel: 01608 730384
www.hooky.co.uk

36 The Hill End Centre
Eynsham Road, Farmoor, OX4 2GQ
Tel: 01865 863510
www.hill-end.org

37 Holiday Inn Oxford
Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 8JD
Tel: 0871 942 9086
www.hioxfordhotel.co.uk

38 The Holt Hotel
Oxford Road, Nr Steeple Aston, OX25 5QQ
Tel: 01869 340259
www.holthotel.co.uk

39 Hotel du Vin
New Street, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2BP
Tel: 01491 848400
www.hotelduvin.com

40 Jurys Inn Oxford
Godstow Road, Oxford, OX2 8AL
Tel: 01865 489988
www.jurysinns.com/hotels/oxford

41 Kingston Bagpuize House 
Kingston Bagpuize, Abingdon, OX13 5AX
Tel: 01865 818166
www.kbh.uk

42 Kirtlington Park
Kirtlington, OX5 3JN
Tel: 01869 350236
www.kirtlingtonpark.co.uk

43 La Fontana
Oxford Road, East Hanney, Wantage, OX12 0HP
Tel: 01235 868287
www.la-fontana.co.uk

44 Lains Barn
Grove Park Drive, Ardington, Wantage, OX12 7QG
Tel: 01235 832745
www.lainsbarn.co.uk

45 The Lambert Hotel
London Road, Aston Rowant, OX49 5SB
Tel: 01844 351496
www.thelamberthotel.com

46 Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons 
Great Milton, OX44 7PD
Tel: 01844 278881
www.belmond.com

47 Littlebury Hotel 
Kings End, Bicester, OX26 6DR
Tel: 01869 252595
www.littleburyhotel.com

48 Malmaison
3 Oxford Castle, Oxford, OX1 1AY
Tel: 01865 268400
www.malmaison.com

49 The Manor 
Weston-on-the-Green, OX25 3QL
Tel: 01869 350621
www.themanorweston.co.uk

50 Mansfield College
Mansfield Road, Oxford, OX1 3TF
Tel: 01865 282888
www.mansfield.ox.ac.uk

51 Merriscourt Farm 
Merriscourt, Chipping Norton, OX7 6QX
Tel: 01608 658585
www.merriscourt.com

52 Middle Aston House 
Middle Aston, OX25 5PT
Tel: 01869 340361
www.middleastonhouse.com

53 Milton Hill
Milton, Abingdon, OX13 6AF
Tel: 01235 825720
www.miltonoxfordshire.co.uk

54 Newington House 
Newington, Wallingford, OX10 7AG
Tel: 07786 087201
www.newingtonhouse.com

55 The Old Parsonage Hotel
1 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX1 6NN
Tel: 01865 310210
www.oldparsonage-hotel.co.uk

56 Old Swan and Minster Mill 
Old Minster, Minster Lovell, OX29 0RN
Tel: 01993 774441
www.oldswanandminstermill.com

57 Oxford Abingdon Hotel
Marcham Road, Abingdon, OX14 1TZ
Tel: 01235 553456
www.oxfordabingdonhotel.co.uk

58 The Oxford Belfry 
Milton Common, Nr Thame, OX9 2JW
Tel: 01844 279381
www.qhotels.co.uk

59 Oxford Golf Club
Hill Top Road, Oxford, OX4 1PF
Tel: 01865 242 158
www.oxfordgolfclub.net

60 Oxford Spires Hotel
Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4PS
Tel: 01865 324324
www.oxfordspireshotel.co.uk

61 Oxford Town Hall
Oxford City Council, St Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1BX
Tel: 01865 252195
www.oxfordtownhall.co.uk

62 Oxford Witney Hotel
Ducklington Lane, Witney, OX28 4EX
Tel: 01993 779777
www.oxfordwitneyhotel.co.uk

63 The Oxfordshire Golf Hotel & Spa
Rycote Lane, Milton Common, OX9 2PU
Tel: 01844 278300
www.theoxfordshire.com

64 Oxleaze Barn 
Filkins, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, GL7 3RB
Tel: 01367 850216
www.oxleazebar.co.uk

65 Phyllis Court Club
Marlow Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2HT
Tel: 01491 570500
www.phylliscourt.co.uk

66 The Randolph Hotel
Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2LN
Tel: 01865 256400
www.macdonaldhotels.com

67 The Red Lion
Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2AR
Tel: 01491 572161
www.redlionhenley.co.uk

68 Rhodes House
South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3RG
Tel: 01865 282599
www.rhodeshouseoxford.com

69 River and Rowing Museum
Mill Meadows, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1BF
Tel: 01491 415600
www.rrm.co.uk

70 St Hilda's College 
Cowley Place, Oxford, OX1 1DY
Tel: 01865 276888
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk

71 Shillingford Bridge Hotel
Shillingford Hill, Wallingford, OX10 8LZ
Tel: 01865 858567
www.shillingfordbridgehotel.co.uk

72 Shiplake College
Henley-on-Thames, RG9 4BW
Tel: 0118 940 2455
www.shiplake.org.uk

73 Soho Farmhouse 
Great Tew Estate, Banbury Road,
Chipping Norton, OX7 4NS
Tel: 01608 691000
www.sohofarmhouse.com

74 Spread Eagle Hotel
High Street, Thame, OX9 2BW
Tel: 01844 213661
www.spreadeaglethame.co.uk

75 Steventon House Hotel 
Milton Hill, Steventon, Abingdon, OX13 6AB
Tel: 01235 831223
www.steventonhousehotel.co.uk

76 St Edmunds Hall
Queens Lane, Oxford, OX1 4AR
Tel: 01865 279000

77 Stratton Court Barn
Stratton Audley, Nr Bicester, OX27 9AJ
Tel: 01869 278899
www.strattoncourtbarn.co.uk

78 Sudbury House Hotel 
Folly Hill, Faringdon, SN7 7AA
Tel: 01367 241272
www.sudburyhouse.co.uk

79 The Old Bank
92 High Street, Oxford OX1 4BJ
Tel: 01865 799599
www.oldbank-hotel.co.uk

80 The Tally Ho Hotel 
Ploughley Rd, Arncott, Bicester, OX25 1NY
Tel: 01869 247170
www.tallyhotel.com

81 The Trout Inn at Tadpole Bridge 
Buckland Marsh, Faringdon, SN7 8RF
Tel: 01367 870382
www.troutinn.co.uk

82 The Tythe Barn 
Manor Farm Launton, Bicester, OX26 5DP
Tel: 01869 321442
www.thetythebarn.co.uk

83 Voco Oxford Thames 
Henley Rd, Sandford-on-Thames, OX4 4GX
Tel: 01865 334417
www.oxfordthames.vocohotels.com

84 Wallingford Town Hall
Wallingford Town Council, 9 St Martins Street,
Wallingford, OX10 0AL
Tel: 01491 835373
www.wallingford.co.uk

85 Whately Hall Hotel
Banbury Cross, Banbury, OX16 0AN
Tel: 01295 253261
www.mercure.com

86 Witney Lakes Resort 
Downs Road, Witney, OX29 0SY
Tel: 01993 893003
www.witney-lakes.co.uk

87 Woodstock Town Hall
Market Place, Woodstock, OX20 1SL
Tel: 01993 811216
www.woodstock-tc.gov.uk/weddings

88 Worton Park 
Cassington, Witney, OX29 4SU
Tel: 01865 882644
www.wortonhall.co.uk

89 Wroxton House Hotel
Wroxton St Mary, Nr Banbury, OX15 6QB
Tel: 01295 730777
www.bw-wroxtonhousehotel.co.uk

90 Wychwood Golf Club
Lyneham, Chipping Norton, OX7 6QQ
Tel: 01993 832011
www.thewychwood.com

THE PERFECT VENUE



Oxfordshire has so many wonderful venues that the biggest problem you will face is choosing the right one!

We hope the following tips can make your task less daunting.

First and foremost, your choice will be influenced by where you hold your ceremony.

If it is in a Registration Office (see pages 34-35) then you will need a venue in which to celebrate afterwards.

However, if you would prefer to hold your ceremony in one of the county's approved venues (pages 37-38), you can have your ceremony and celebration in the same place, thereby removing any worry and cost associated with travel from one venue to another. Below is a list of all the different types of venues in which you can either do the whole thing or celebrate in, after your Registration Office ceremony.

City hotels and museums

If you want a more modern, urban celebration, a hotel or museum in Oxford can be a wonderful choice. An added bonus is that guests will have a wider choice of easily accessible accommodation, either at your venue (if appropriate) or at a hotel or B&B that suits their budget. They can also enjoy good transport links to and from the venue or even walk if they fancy some exercise!

Oxford colleges

Oxford's biggest claim to fame is its ancient university, so why not have your big day in one of its colleges? The architecture and gardens will provide a dramatic backdrop to your photographs and the unusual atmosphere within their walls is perfect for that special day. Your guests will appreciate some of the city's tradition at first hand and you will have wonderfully central, but interestingly peaceful, surroundings in which to celebrate.

Country hotels

From old Cotswold-stone buildings to riverside hotels, there is a wide choice of venues in the county. Country hotels provide a romantic setting and many have fantastic gardens for those important photographs. Depending on the size of both your party and the venue itself, you may have full rein on the day, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.



Stately homes

Imagine having access to a fantastic stately home for longer than a guided tour; this could be your chance to do so. Prices might be higher than at other venues but, if you fancy being Lord/Lady of the Manor for a few hours (or more), what better day to choose than this, potentially the most important day of your life?



Celebratory Ceremonies

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COUPLES TO RENEW THEIR COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER

A celebratory ceremony is a non-religious ceremony. Not only used on a special anniversary, such as 10th, 25th or 40th, but more often held after a ceremony abroad, or an original low-key event, thus enabling family and friends who were unable to attend, to enjoy the celebrations and become involved.

Any couple of any age or gender can arrange a celebratory ceremony. Couples do not have to live in Oxfordshire.

You will have the chance to work closely with a professional Celebrant to select from the options available, and tailor a ceremony that is special for you and your family. Every ceremony is different, so you can create something unique for you to remember and treasure.

Each ceremony is divided into sections and can reflect events in your life together, which gives you the chance to create something personal and special.

The ceremony can be as simple or as complex as you wish:

Introduction and welcome

Readings or music can be included at various points

Mention of children of the marriage

Vows/pledges

Exchange of new or additional rings, or re-dedication of original rings

Speech by original guest

Presentation of certificate

Closing words.

We offer celebratory ceremonies in all Registration Offices and approved premises within the county. They may be celebrated on any day of the week except Christmas Day. Ceremonies on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Boxing Day or New Year's Day will be subject to staffing availability.

If you would like to use a different venue, for example a village hall, or a marquee in the grounds of a hotel or the garden at your home, this would need to be discussed beforehand and visited by a member of the Registration Service to ensure it is a suitable venue for the ceremony.

Anniversaries

1st	Paper	13th	Lace
2nd	Cotton	14th	Ivory
3rd	Leather	15th	Crystal
4th	Fruit, flowers	20th	China
5th	Wood	25th	Silver
6th	Sugar	30th	Pearl
7th	Copper, wool	35th	Coral
8th	Bronze, pottery	40th	Ruby
9th	Pottery, willow	45th	Sapphire
10th	Tin	50th	Gold
11th	Steel	60th	Diamond
12th	Silk, linen		



What's in a name?

NAMING CEREMONIES

This is a special occasion to gather close family and friends together to witness your commitment to your child, whether it is to celebrate your newborn baby's birth or to welcome adoptive and stepchildren into your family. You can make promises of commitment to support and nurture the child and other adults can be appointed as mentors until your child reaches adulthood.

Please note: both celebratory ceremonies and naming ceremonies are non-statutory and therefore the ceremony itself and the issue of any certificates carry no legal status.

Any parent, legal guardian or person who has parental responsibility of the child/children may arrange a ceremony. Parents do not have to be married to do so.

Although traditional christenings or baptisms are still common there is an increasing need for a non religious ceremony.



www.wallingfordportraits.co.uk

Tie the knot and cut the cost

With the average ceremony costing at least £30,000, it's nearly enough to make you say "I don't". However, you don't need to spend a fortune to have a fantastic day...

Work out your budget...

... and stick to it. Sit down together and decide what you can realistically afford for your wedding and which aspects of the process are the most important to you. For example, you may not care how you get from the ceremony to the reception venue but you would like to spend a bit extra on flowers.

Be ruthless with your guest list

This is the first place you need to consider to prevent costs from spiralling. Sometimes it is tempting to invite every distant relation or friend of a friend but with each invitation, your costs are rocketing. If money is tight, make a list of your closest family and friends, the ones you really do not want to miss the day.

Invitations

It is nice to do something terribly original with wedding invitations but, while this is nice, it can cost up to £90 for a set. If you want to make your invites personal, pop into a stationers and pick up some decent card, gold and silver pens or a calligraphy pen and set to work writing them yourself. Stationers also often sell glitter and other decorative items that you could glue to your invitation.

Flowers

Simple arrangements can be just as effective as larger ones, so do not feel you need to go overboard. A small posy for the bride is often enough, with one main arrangement in the ceremony room.

If you want flowers on the tables at your reception, you could do what Alison did at her wedding: "We bought gerberas from a local garden centre and put them in pretty plant pots on the tables as a centrepiece, then told the guests they were welcome to take them home afterwards as a way to remember the day."

Photography

Photography can take up a considerable chunk of your budget. If you cannot afford the prices of a professional photographer, why not ask someone you know who is good with a camera? Jenny did this at her wedding. "One of my friends was a keen amateur photographer and I always admired his pictures at get-togethers. We asked him to take our pictures and paid for the camera film for him. It was wonderful having someone we knew taking our pictures on the day as we felt more relaxed. The pictures were fantastic; more informal than a photographer would take but since we wanted a more relaxed wedding, we were more than happy with the results."

For the reception itself, you could buy disposable cameras and put them on the table, asking guests to take pictures and leave the cameras afterwards.



www.squibphotography.co.uk

Outfits

Everyone wants to look beautiful on their special day but you don't need to bankrupt yourself in the process.

If your budget is very tight, you can easily hire a dress/outfit from a local shop (look in the Yellow Pages for information on this). There will be a wide variety of choices, from the more traditional styles to those with a modern or funky twist, with a pleasant price tag attached! If you are only going to wear it one day in your life, why spend a fortune on it?

Alternatively, hit the high street in search of a bargain. Shops like Monsoon and Debenhams have beautiful gowns/suits to buy from as little as £100, with matching accessories to boot. If you opt for a 'ballgown' design, you can always wear it on other smart occasions, thereby getting even more use out of it.

Finally, for those of you with a conscience, check out Oxfam's wedding departments. Some of the bigger charity shops have a dedicated section where you might find the dress/outfit of your dreams at a fraction of the first price. Not only will you look amazing on your ceremony day but you can feel good that your choice has benefited someone in need.

Food

The cheapest catering option is to provide your own food (if you are hiring a hall: restaurants, hotels and pubs might insist that you use their catering facilities if you hire a room with them). A finger buffet can be the cheapest and easiest option. If you can stretch your budget more, you can order sandwich platters from supermarkets or from local delicatessens.

Some supermarkets do wedding cakes at vastly lower costs than those charged by a cake maker. Alternatively, see if you have a relative who is good at baking to come up with something!

Drink

Buying in bulk is the most cost-effective option. Wine merchants and supermarkets often offer good discounts on bulk buys, while some places also offer a glass-hire service, the cost of which is sometimes refunded if you return the glasses clean and undamaged at the end. Cava is a great alternative to champagne, at a fraction of the price.

Ceremony

If you want a small celebration (yourselves plus two witnesses) and a short ceremony, you are able to marry or hold your civil partnership in a register office for the statutory fee. This is only available on certain days and times of the week.

Reception

There are various ways of holding a good reception. You could hire out a room (or several) in a hotel, and ask them to cater the event for you. Church and village halls can be hired fairly cheaply, though you will need to check in advance if a special licence will be needed for serving alcohol. Additionally, local pubs and restaurants often hire out rooms for celebrations, so look around and see what suits you best.

Transport

If you want to ride in something unusual on your big day but your budget is too tight, why not ask family and friends to see if they can provide a car (or at least drive you in theirs)? It is highly likely that someone has a smart sports car or vintage vehicle that you can borrow. If not, have some fun decorating your own car, as Pete did. "We didn't want to spend a fortune on a horse-drawn carriage or limo so we bought some ribbon and balloons and decorated the car with those. Our friends 'helped' us a little when we drove away from the ceremony to the reception by adding pots and pans and shaving foam that said, 'Just married' on the back windscreen. I don't think a hire car would have allowed that! It was nice having our car as part of our special day; it made it more personal."



A NICE DAY FOR A...

Green Wedding

(or civil partnership)

Billy Idol may have had a top ten hit in the 80's with "White Wedding" but we can show you how to have a Number One green event today!



While white weddings have been the rage for a while, international charity Oxfam estimates that 15 per cent of couples feel that having an ethical approach to their ceremony is important.

Current concerns about the state of the environment mean that many couples want to make their special day as eco-friendly as possible, and this can be done more easily than you think!

Recycled rings

There is often controversy over rings: has the gold or silver used to make them been ethically sourced? At what cost to the planet's resources? To minimise any negative impact, look for rings in antique shops or at student art shows or choose ones made from other materials such as wood. Alternatively, look for recycled gold or fair trade silver on the internet, or for conflict-free diamonds, check out the Kimberley Process website.

Something borrowed

Everyone wants to look their best on their special day but you don't necessarily need a new outfit to do this. Why not check out some of the charity shops that specialise in bridal gowns?

Oxfam has nine dedicated bridal shops throughout the UK, and the charity's wedding co-ordinator Barbara Warmsley says that there is a growing trend for women to source their dresses second-hand. "I started selling wedding dresses for Oxfam in 1960; now we've got a business that is booming. It's great that so many brides are coming to Oxfam for their dresses."

Caring confetti

Confetti has become unpopular in recent years because of the mess it makes on pavements and outside of buildings. If guests are keen on throwing something, why not use dried rose petals? They look pretty, smell divine and are biodegradable!



Trusty transport

If you want to cut down on transport, choose a venue that's close to home. Why not arrive at the ceremony in a horse-drawn carriage for a more traditional feel or, alternatively, why not use an electric car and make a real statement?

Walking and cycling are also possibilities... if you're brave enough to try them! If the ceremony and reception aren't at the same place, try to encourage guests to share cars or look into providing a coach.

Gifts that go on giving

Many couples nowadays either have been living together for years or have already set up home and don't need toasters, kettles and vases.

Why not use this opportunity to create a wish list on a charity website, where friends and families can donate gifts to charities instead?

Alternatively, you could choose a charity, or charities, and simply ask guests to make a small donation; wildlife and conservation charities seem the obvious choice here.

If guests still insist on giving you something, ask for plants, trees or wildlife products for the garden, where you can make a small, but important, impact on your local environment.

Top nosh

Many of Oxfordshire's hotels and restaurants place a big emphasis on sourcing locally produced and seasonal ingredients, so do enquire when you're looking at reception venues. A large number of local caterers also incorporate this ethos into all their catering by using ingredients from suppliers that are local, organic and fair trade, and can cater for dietary requirements such as vegetarian and vegan.

If you are hosting your own event, buy organic wine, spirits, beer and soft drinks from such providers as Vinceremos, Vintage Roots or Festival Wines. Try, wherever possible, to support local, seasonal and organic food production by buying from local farmers or from shops that do so.

Although washing-up can be a pain, do try to avoid using disposable cutlery, plates and glasses and ensure that empty bottles and containers are placed in recycling bins.

Honeymoon at home

A honeymoon is often the one chance couples think they'll have to travel somewhere exotic; however, jetting off to Thailand clocks up air miles and CO₂ emissions. Think about all the romantic destinations you can visit here in the UK by train, without spending 12 hours on a plane. Equally there are stunning places right on your doorstep in Oxfordshire just waiting to be explored: call in at a local tourist information office for ideas. After all, you're starting a new life together: what better opportunity to find out more about where you live while you get to know one another?

Changes to your passport

There are so many things to organise when you are planning your ceremony and celebrations that notifying the passport authorities if you are planning to change your name after your ceremony may be overlooked. Any person who is planning to marry or form a civil partnership and then travel abroad immediately after the ceremony can apply for a post-dated passport to be issued to them in advance, showing the name they intend to use after the ceremony. You can apply up to three months before the date of your ceremony.

Alternatively, you can travel on a current passport in the name you are known by before your ceremony. In these circumstances, it would be advisable to carry your marriage or civil partnership certificate with you, and to consult a representative of the country to which you wish to travel, to ensure that the documentation will be considered valid by that country.

If you would like to apply for a passport in a future name, you will need to submit a completed Form PD2 (available online) to the passport authorities, along with supporting documents and photographs. Once your Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership has been given, the form can be completed. One section will be completed by you, and one section by the Registrar or Minister of Religion who will be conducting your ceremony. If you are planning to travel abroad, remember to book your tickets in the name which will be shown in your passport at the time of travel.

For further information, contact www.gov.uk.





Further advice

If you require any advice or help please call us on **0345 241 2489**,
Monday to Thursday 9.00am-4.30pm, Friday 9.00am-4.00pm
and we will be very pleased to help you.

We aim to offer you a personal and professional service
and to share in the happiness of your day.

If you feel we have not given you this service then we would like to know.

Please write to:
The Superintendent Registrar,
Oxfordshire Registration Service,
1 Tidmarsh Lane,
Oxford OX1 1NS

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COUNTY COUNCIL**