

A guide to
Ceremonies
in Peterborough



Making your day truly memorable

Ceremonies guide



Welcome and congratulations on your forthcoming ceremony

We are delighted that you have chosen a ceremony in Peterborough.

Whether you are...

- Getting married
- Forming a civil partnership
- Becoming a British citizen
- Naming a child
- Renewing your vows

...we aim to make your day truly memorable. You may wish to have a quiet, intimate ceremony or a larger more traditional ceremony. Whatever your preferences, whatever your choice, we are happy to discuss arrangements with you, leaving you free to enjoy the day with family and friends.

Within these pages you will find the information you need to guide you through the process of planning your big day and to help answer any questions you may have. Our registration staff will also help ensure your ceremony is conducted according to your wishes and in accordance with law.

We hope this guide will provide you with the information you will need but if you would like to speak to a registrar, please call us on 01733 864646.



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“...From the booking to the service itself, everything was perfect. The staff on the day were brilliant and made everything run just as we wanted. Thank you so much...”

What is a civil ceremony?

A civil ceremony is a non-religious ceremony. Two registrars are in attendance: one to conduct the ceremony and one to register. A civil wedding or civil partnership can take place in any register office or at any licensed venue of your choice in England or Wales.

You can choose from the simplest of ceremonies in a register office with just a couple of friends or relatives as witnesses to a grand affair at a licensed venue with attendants, readings and music. The only stipulation for a civil ceremony is that there must be no religious content, including no religious music. If you choose to hold your ceremony at one of the licensed venues within the Peterborough registration district, you must contact us as soon as possible on 01733 864646 to make sure that we will have two registrars available for the big day.

You will need to ask two people if they will witness your marriage or civil partnership. The witnesses must speak and understand English and be old enough to understand the ceremony and the role they play, generally considered to be 18 years or older.

If you are currently in a civil partnership then you are now able to convert your partnership into a marriage. The conversion itself is a simple legal process but it can include a celebratory ceremony at our register office or at any approved marriage venue if you choose. The ceremony may also be held at a church or religious building if it has been licensed for same sex marriage. You will not need to bring any witnesses and there is no waiting period, although of course you will need to book an appointment.



Marriage, according to the law of this country, is the union of two people, voluntarily entered into for life, to the exclusion of all others. It is a verbal contract in which both partners must declare their freedom to marry and then make their vows to take each other as husband or wife.



“...Everything was perfect. The registrars were very professional but also very caring and thoughtful which added to the service...”

“...You conducted a beautiful ceremony for us...”

“...The registrar was brilliant and put everyone at ease. He explained what to do both beforehand and during the ceremony. It was simple and lovely...”



On the day

Arrival

Please enter the building by the main entrance where you will be greeted by a member of staff and directed to the waiting room. It is very important that you and your guests arrive in good time for your ceremony as the registrars will probably have other ceremonies to attend on the day. Therefore for ceremonies at the Register Office, it is important that you, your witnesses and your guests arrive 10 minutes before the start of the ceremony. If the bride does not want to be seen by the groom, he should arrive 15 minutes before the start. It is a good idea to check local travel news on the day and make allowances for road-works, football matches, etc. Please be aware, if you are late we may not be able to proceed as planned: the wedding may be postponed until later in the day, if that is possible, or it may have to be rescheduled for another day which may then require a new notice of marriage/civil partnership and a repeat notice of marriage fee.

Before the ceremony can begin, you must both be ready for a private pre-ceremony interview by the registrar. This is essential to ensure all your personal details are correct for the registration of your marriage or civil partnership. You will both be asked for your full names, ages, occupations and residence together with the full names and occupations of your natural or legally adoptive parents and whether they are retired or deceased.

Witnesses

The law requires that you bring at least two other people ideally aged 18 or over who are willing to witness the ceremony and sign the register. They may be relatives, friends or colleagues and they must be able to speak and understand English well and be able to hear what is taking place.

Number of guests

In addition to your witnesses, you may wish to invite your family and friends to the celebration. Each ceremony room will be licensed for a particular number of guests and you must adhere to these numbers to comply with fire regulations. Children who are able to sit on their own unaided are counted within the number of guests. The Lawns ceremony room can hold 30 guests, the Thorpe room can hold 6 guests and the Register Office room is only for the couple and 2 witnesses. Please check capacity numbers for licensed venues with the venue itself.

The ceremony

If you are using The Lawns ceremony room and you wish to make an entrance either together or individually with escorts, then you are very welcome to do this and we can arrange it so that your guests are ready waiting in the room for you. The ceremony is conducted by the Registrar and you will be given a choice of ceremony wording.

The Registrar will enter your details into the register or schedule and you will be asked to check that these have been correctly recorded. You will need to check this carefully as you may be put to some inconvenience and considerable expense if errors discovered later have to be corrected.

“...A lovely, simple, intimate ceremony conducted in a small friendly environment. Many thanks for making it so enjoyable...”

“...Thank you for making our special day even more special!...”

“...We were really nervous, but we were helped along during the service to relax and enjoy it. We loved the music. We couldn't have asked for a better ceremony...”

The Registrar will then ask you both to sign the entry in the names which you used during the ceremony. Your two witnesses will then be asked to sign the register or schedule. The ceremony (including your interview) takes approximately half an hour.

Recording the event

A wedding album is a very special memento and we are happy to allow photography at particular points in the ceremony: as the guests take their seats, as the main entrance party arrive at the doors to the ceremony room and walk up the aisle, during the exchange of rings (by the official photographer only) and after the signing of the register. How much time can be taken for photographs will be at the discretion of the Registrar. At the end of the ceremony, photographs can be taken at the official presentation of the certificate and as the couple leave the ceremony room. Afterwards more photographs can be taken in our gardens by the stone arch.

Readings and music

If you are using the Lawns or licensed venue, you can have music and additional readings for your ceremony. For the Lawns you can provide your own CD brought to us at least 1 month ahead of the big day or you can set up a playlist on your blue tooth device to play through our system. Try to provide different pieces for the arrival of the guests, the bridal entrance party, the signing of the register (2-3 tracks) and the exit. Remember as this will be a civil ceremony, there must be no religious content in your music or your readings. In the licensed venues you may also arrange live music, once again with no religious content.

Flowers

The Lawns ceremony room is decorated with seasonal displays of silk flowers.

Parking

The Peterborough Register Office has ample free parking. Please be aware that Peterborough City Council does not accept any responsibility for damage to or theft from vehicles whilst parked at the office.

Confetti

Confetti is a traditional part of many marriage or civil partnership

celebrations. At Peterborough Register Office we are happy for your guests to use biodegradable confetti by the stone archway in our gardens. You will need to check the policy of your chosen venue if you are being married elsewhere.

Interpreter

It is essential that you fully understand the content of your marriage or civil partnership ceremony, the vows you will be taking and therefore the full legal implications of such a celebration. If there are any language difficulties, you must provide a suitable interpreter to attend the ceremony. The interpreter will have to sign a declaration to confirm they have translated the legal words for you and they are satisfied that you understand the nature and purpose of the ceremony. They will also be asked to sign the register.

Fees

There are legally set fees for giving notice of marriage or civil partnership and there are additional costs for the attendance of registrars to perform your ceremony. You will be advised of these costs when you book your registrar attendance, alternatively they can be found on the Peterborough City Council website, please visit www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/births-deaths-and-ceremonies/marriages-and-civil-partnerships/

Cancellation policy

In the event that you need to cancel a ceremony for which you have already paid, you will be required to provide your request in writing and it will be subject to the following guidelines:

- Six months or more notice of cancellation – full refund (less a £20 administration fee).
- Three to six months notice of cancellation – 50 per cent refund (less a £20 administration fee).
- Less than three months notice of cancellation (or failure to cancel or show) – no refund.

In the event that you need to change the date of your ceremony, a £20 administration fee will be payable.

In the event that you need to change the time (but not the date) of your ceremony, no fee will be payable.



Celebratory ceremonies

Renewal of vows

A renewal of vows ceremony offers a way to once again say “I do” and reaffirm your love and commitment towards each other. Some couples choose to renew their vows to commemorate an important anniversary but of course it is equally appropriate for any stage of marriage. These ceremonies are also becoming increasingly popular with couples who have married abroad and wish to have a ceremony with all their friends and family present.

The renewal of vows ceremony can be as unique and individual as the couple arranging it. We will guide you through the options available. For instance, you may choose to exchange new rings or gifts to mark

the occasion and you may decide to acknowledge your children or involve friends or family members by including non-religious readings.

Two people will witness the signing of a commemorative certificate of the event and this will be presented to you along with a personalised copy of your unique ceremony script as a memento of the occasion.

If you would like a private ceremony between the two of you with just the celebrant present, please ask.

Please note that neither the renewal of vows nor any document issued following the ceremony has legal status.



Naming ceremonies

A naming ceremony is a very special way of celebrating the birth of your child and welcoming your new arrival into your family if you do not wish to have a religious ceremony. It is also the perfect opportunity to announce the names you have chosen for your child.

Children of any age may have a naming ceremony and they can also be used as a celebration to welcome adopted or stepchildren into your family unit.

As parents you are able to create your own personal ceremony by selecting readings from a number of choices. You may also choose those closest to you to pledge their love and support for your child's future. If you would like to include older brothers and sisters in the

ceremony this can also be arranged.

A commemorative certificate is presented at the end of the ceremony along with a personalised copy of your unique ceremony script as a memento of the occasion.

Please note that neither the naming ceremony nor any document issued following the ceremony has legal status. The ceremony is simply a way that parents can make a public gesture of love and commitment to their child. The record of the ceremony cannot be used as a legal document or as proof of identity and neither is the ceremony legally binding on those who take part in it.

Citizenship ceremonies in Peterborough

The citizenship ceremony is the final stage for anyone taking British citizenship. This ceremony marks the end of a long journey for people from many parts of the world and is both a celebration of their new status as British citizens and a warm welcome from the local Peterborough community. Group ceremonies are held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall or alternative arrangements may be made for a private ceremony at Peterborough Register Office.

In Peterborough the emphasis is on providing a warm welcome for an enjoyable occasion. The Mayor, a dignitary and the superintendent registrar makes a grand entrance to music and there are speeches. After the oaths or affirmations and the pledge of loyalty, each new citizen is presented with their naturalisation certificate by the Mayor and photographs are taken by the official photographer. A quality gift is given to each adult and children receive a Union Jack flag to wave.

The playing of the national anthem concludes the ceremony.

Other leading members of the community and guests also attend ceremonies and join new citizens, their guests, the dignitaries and registration staff for refreshments in the Town Hall's reception room afterwards. We value these ceremonies as important community occasions for Peterborough.



Wedding planner

Twelve months before or as soon as possible

- Agree budget, style of ceremony and number of guests.
- Consider dates then contact Peterborough Register Office to check availability and book notice of marriage.
- Book the ceremony/reception venue.
- Book photographer and/or videographer.
- Book musicians and entertainment.
- Check on wedding insurance.
- Decide on the bridesmaids, best man and ushers.
- Plan outfits for bride & groom plus attendants.
- Plan any transport required on the big day.
- Plan and book the honeymoon.
- Book caterer if required.

Six months before

- Book florist and decide on the flowers for the bridal party, buttonholes and corsages, ceremony room (if you are using a licensed venue) and reception.
- Order wedding cake.
- Order invitations/other stationery.
- Speak to hairstylist/make-up artist to plan for your day.
- Start thinking about your gift list.

Three months before

- Finalise guest list.
- Finalise menus and make wine/drinks selections.
- Send out invitations.

- Send lists of local accommodation to guests who may need it.
- Buy ring(s).
- Have a first fitting for the wedding dress.
- Plan hen/stag nights.
- If you are honeymooning abroad, check your passport is up to date and arrange vaccinations and visas if required.
- Arrange to change your surname if required and notify the passport office, DVLA, bank etc.
- Book hotel room for your first night if necessary.

Two months before

- Confirm final arrangements with the venue and plan the reception seating arrangements.
- Arrange final fitting of dress.
- Finalise groom's and attendants' outfits.
- Choose gifts for the bridesmaid(s), best man.

Four weeks before

- Send your ceremony information form to the Register Office and your CD of music if using The Lawns room.
- Collect rings if you have not already done so.
- Decide on hairstyle and have a practice run.
- Order currency for honeymoon.
- Check transport arrangements.
- Confirm all bookings: photographer, florist etc.

Two weeks before

- Advise the venue/caterer of final numbers of guests.
- Confirm final arrangements with hairdresser/beauty salon.
- Collect dresses and get advice about storage of them before the big day.
- Pick up currency and tickets for the honeymoon.
- Prepare speeches.
- Run through a rough timetable of the day with bridesmaids, best man and ushers to make sure they know what they're doing and at what time. Write everything down and give them all a copy!
- Try on wedding shoes and wear them in!

The week leading up to the wedding

- Time the journey to ensure that there will be no unexpected delays en route to the wedding ceremony.
- Take the cake to the reception venue.
- Ensure all hired clothes are collected on time.
- Arrange that presents will be packed up and taken home after the wedding.
- Start packing for your first night/honeymoon.
- Remember your passports if you are travelling abroad!

On the day

- This is your day so relax and enjoy your wonderful wedding!



Peterborough Register Office
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Telephone 01733 864646 | Email peterboroughregisteroffice@peterborough.gov.uk
www.peterborough.gov.uk/registeroffice

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