

Enhanced Register Office Marriage

Thank you for choosing to hold your ceremony in Cheshire West and Chester.

These guidance notes are designed to help your day run smoothly. There is also a sample ceremony, including a number of options which the Registrar will discuss with you on the day. Please note that for legal reasons we are unable to include any religious words or music in your ceremony.

Arrival

Please aim to arrive 15 minutes before your ceremony is due to start. If you are late it may not be possible for us to marry you.

The registrar will see you both together before the ceremony. If you would prefer to be seen separately, we suggest one party arrives earlier. The registrar will check your details which will be entered on the marriage schedule.

This includes your parents' names and occupations. You can each choose to have the name and occupation of up to 4 parents included in the marriage registration - mother, father, adoptive parents or step-parents.

If a parent's information is not included at the time of the marriage, unfortunately this cannot be added to the registration entry at a later date.

There is no requirement to provide your parent's details for the registration if you do not wish to.

Witnesses

Two people must be present to witness your marriage and sign the marriage schedule. They can be friends or family, over the age of 18 and able to speak and understand English.

Music

We have a variety of background music available. If you would prefer to bring your own music we have the facility to play a CD or connect devices by Bluetooth.

Photography

Professional photographers and Videographers are welcome. Guests are also able to use cameras or devices to record the occasion.

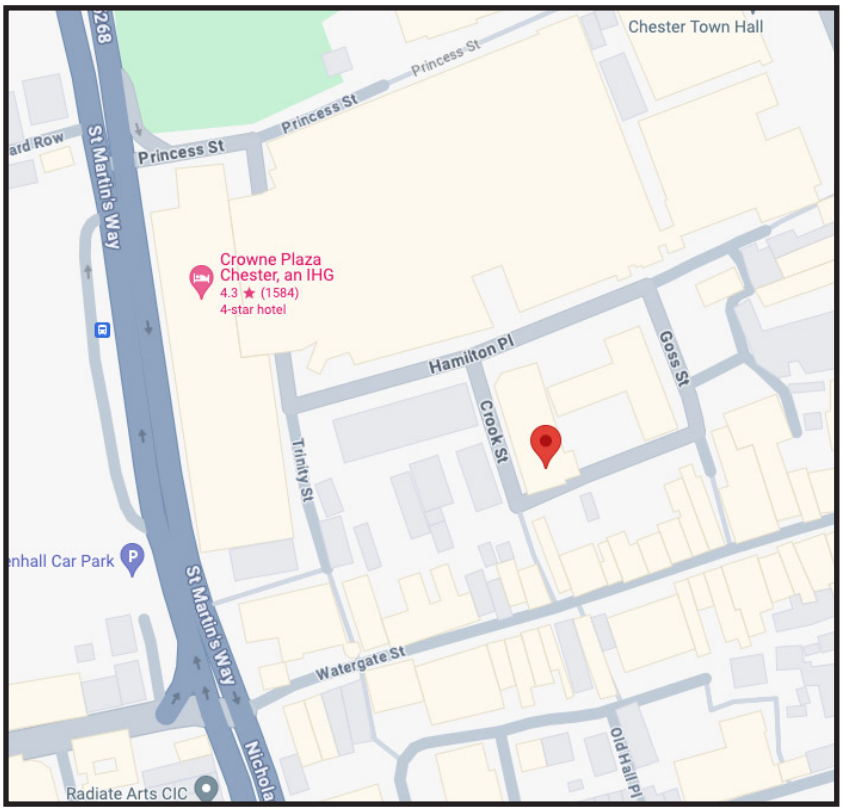
Confetti

Please be considerate if using confetti and encourage your guests to choose environmentally friendly options. It would be helpful if they could wait until they are out of the building before throwing confetti.

Merchants House, Chester:

On the day of your ceremony you and your guests should enter via the Merchants Suite ceremony room entrance situated on Hamilton Place.

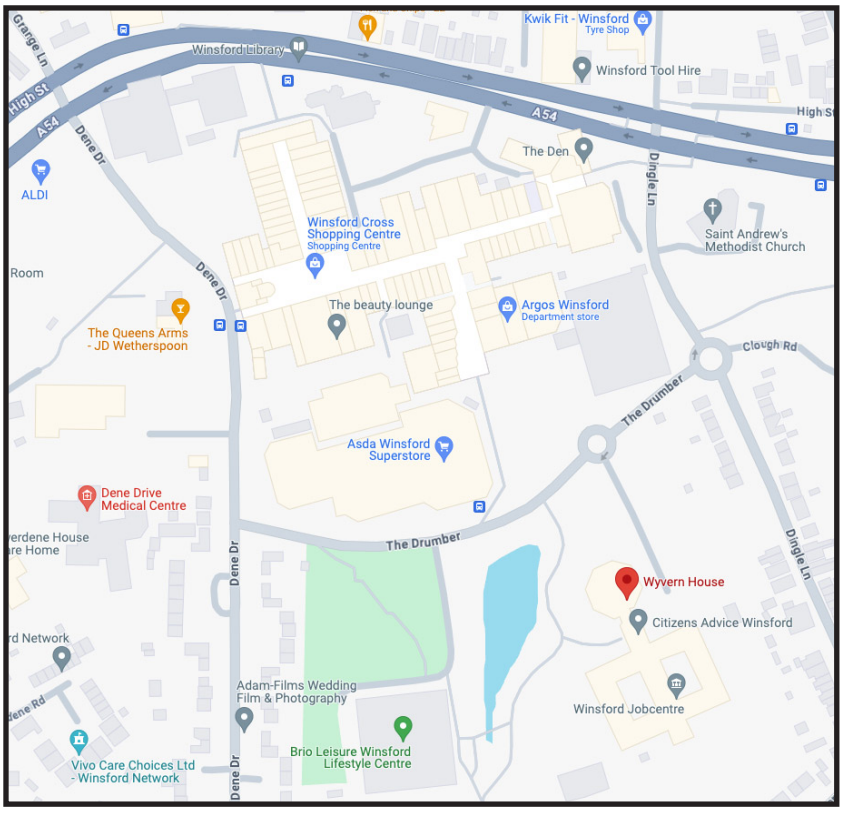
The nearest parking is on Trinity Street. There is disabled parking on Hamilton Place and Goss Street.



Wyvern House, Winsford:

On the day of your ceremony you and your guests should enter Wyvern House via the main entrance.

Parking including disabled bays are available in the Wyvern House car park on the left hand side.





Frequently asked questions

- **When is the final balance due** - Your final balance is due 5 weeks prior to the ceremony and can be paid online at: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/births-deaths-and-marriage and click 'make a payment'. Please remember to deduct the booking fee you have already paid.
- **What happens on the day** - Once you have arrived your registrars will have a chat with you away from your guests. At this point you can tell the registrar any options you have chosen including any readings.
- **Do I need to bring anything** - You do not need to bring any documents with you on the day. The Registrar will go through all of your information on the marriage schedule with you both beforehand to ensure it is correct and amend any information that may need changing before you both sign.
- **How long does the ceremony last** - The ceremony lasts anywhere between 10 – 20 minutes depending on how much you would like to include.
- **Do I need to memorise the words** - You do not need to memorise the words beforehand. The Registrar will guide you through the ceremony by asking you to repeat a few words at a time.
- **Do we have to exchange rings** - There is an option to exchange rings however it is not a legal requirement. If you would prefer to not exchange rings, please let your registrar know on the day.
- **Can I be escorted into the room** - On the day we can arrange for you to make an entrance into the ceremony room either on your own, together as a couple, or escorted with somebody. You are also welcome to have bridesmaids, flower girls and page boys etc.
- **How many guests are allowed** - Please refer to your "booking confirmation" email which will advise how many guests are allowed in the room.
- **Can I bring my dog** - We love to see your furry friends, however only service dogs are allowed at both the Merchants Suite and Wyvern House.
- **How do I get my marriage certificate** - You can order your marriage certificate 7 days following your ceremony online at: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/births-deaths-and-marriage/ordering-certificates
- **We are bringing my own music, how many songs is needed** - Generally, 3 to 4 songs are enough. If you choose to "make an entrance" music can be played as you walk into the room. It is usually then played during the signing of the schedule, having photographs taken and then at the end of the ceremony as you lead your guests out as a newly married couple.





The ceremony

A register office civil marriage ceremony usually lasts about twenty minutes, including the signing of the marriage schedule.

It is not necessary for you to memorise any words as the registrar will lead you through the ceremony and ask you to repeat the words a few at a time.

The Conducting Registrar will begin by welcoming everyone to your marriage.

My name is ... and I have the pleasure of conducting this ceremony.

My colleague ... has the important task of ensuring all the legal formalities are complete.

You are here to witness and celebrate the marriage of ... and .... We trust this day is the start of a very happy life together for them.

... and ... , before you are married I have to tell you that this place in which we are met has been duly sanctioned, according to law, for the celebration of marriages. And I should also remind you both of the solemn and binding character of the vows you are about to make.

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.

(As an optional addition the Registrar may also say)

Option 1

The purpose of marriage is that you may love, care and support each other through your life together, and that you may be fulfilled in a relationship of permanent and continuing commitment. We trust that these things may come true for you both.

Now at this point, I am required to ask that if any person here knows of any legal reason why ... and ... should not be married, they should declare it now.

The Registrar may ask the guests to sit at this point

Option to include a reading here

The Legal declarations

The Registrar will now ask you to make the two declarations which form the main part of the ceremony

..... and ..... , I am going to ask each of you to make a declaration to the effect that you know of no legal reason why you should not be married to each other.

I shall then ask you to exchange the words by which you enter into the union of marriage. ..... would you begin by stating your full name.

The First declaration

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

(This will be repeated for both of you)

Any union which you enter into has to be voluntary and therefore I will ask each of you this question:

...do you, by your own choice, freely enter into the union of marriage with ... *(Answer Yes or I do)*

(This will be repeated for both of you)

I am now going to ask each of you to make the second of the two legal declarations.

This is a declaration you make to one another by which you formally enter into the union of marriage

The Second declaration

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

(This will be repeated for both of you)

(As an optional addition the Registrar may also say)

Option 2

To live together in love and harmony, to cherish and care for you whatever the future may bring.

OR

Option 3

I pledge to share my life with you. I love, honour and trust you and look to our future together with hope, happiness and joy

The exchange of the ring(s)

(Please Note - although it is possible for couples to exchange one or two rings, this is not a legal requirement and does not have to be included)

Now we will have the exchange of the wedding ring(s), which is the traditional way of sealing the marriage contract.

(Before the ring exchange the Registrar may also say the below in option 4)

Option 4

A wedding ring is a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. May these rings always remind you of the vows you have taken and that marriage is a commitment for life.

Below are the optional words you can repeat to each other during the exchange of rings. (The ring is usually placed on the third finger of the left hand)

Option 5

I give you this ring as a token of our marriage, an outward sign of the commitment we are making to each other and a symbol of all that we share.

(Repeat for bride/groom if two rings are exchanged).

(If only one ring is exchanged) I accept this ring as a token of our marriage, an outward sign of the commitment we are making to each other and a symbol of all that we share

OR

Option 6

All that I have, I give to you. All that I am I share with you. I give you this ring with all my love and ask you to wear it today and always.

(Repeat for bride/groom if two rings are exchanged).

(If only one ring is exchanged) I accept this ring as a token of our marriage, an outward sign of the commitment we are making to each other and a symbol of all that we share.

Option to include a reading here

Conclusion and signing

... and ... you have both consented to be married. And you have made the declarations which are required by law in the presence of your witnesses, family and friends. Therefore it gives me great pleasure to declare that you are now legally married to one another.

At the end of the ceremony you and your witnesses will now be invited to sign the marriage schedule. It is very important that you check the information in the marriage schedule extremely carefully. If a correction has to be made once the marriage has been entered onto the electronic register, there will be a charge of £99, so it is very important that all details shown are correct.

Certificates

You may order your marriage certificate online after your ceremony has taken place. Marriage certificates are usually available to order 7 days after the marriage ceremony has taken place. Please visit our website www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/births-deaths-and-marriage/ordering-certificates and click 'order a certificate'.

Alternative Brochure formats

This information is also available in audio, braille, large print or other formats. Please email us at: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Telephone : 0300 123 8123 Textphone: 18001 01606 867 670

READINGS

You may like to ask a family member or friend to read one of these during or after the ceremony.

Maybe

Maybe, once in a lifetime, you find someone who
Touches not only your heart but also your soul,
Who loves you for who you are and not who you could be.
The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything;
they just make the most of everything that comes their way.
You should be with someone who makes you smile,
Because it takes only a smile to make a dark day seem bright.
Find the one who makes your heart smile.
You should hope for enough happiness to make you sweet,
Enough trials to make you strong,
Enough sorrow to keep you human,
And enough hope to make you happy.
Love is not about finding the perfect person,
It's about learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.
Maybe, once in a lifetime, if you're lucky,
you find that someone – as you have found each other

READINGS

You may like to ask a family member or friend to read one of these during or after the ceremony.

Love is Giving (Anon)

Love is giving, not taking,
mending, not breaking,
trusting, believing, never deceiving,
patiently bearing, and faithfully sharing
each joy, every sorrow, today and tomorrow.
Love is kind, understanding, but never demanding.
Love is constant, prevailing, its strength never failing.
A promise once spoken for all time unbroken,
Love's time is forever.

American Indian Ceremony

Now we will feel no rain,
For each of us will be shelter for the other.
Now we will feel no cold,
For each of us will be warmth to the other.
Now there will be no more loneliness,
For each of us will be companion to the other.
We are two bodies,
But there are three lives before us:
My life, your life and our life together.
When evening falls, I will look up and there you'll be.
I'll take your hand and you'll take mine
And we'll turn together to look at the road we travelled to reach
This the hour of our happiness
It stretches behind us as the future lies ahead,
a long and winding road
whose every turning means discovery.
Old hopes, new laughter and shared tears.
The adventure has just begun.

Once in a lifetime

Once in a lifetime you find someone
Who touches not only your heart, but also your soul.
Once in a lifetime you discover someone who
stands beside you, not over you.
You find someone who loves you for who you are
and not for who you could be.
Once in a lifetime, you find someone.
As you have found each other.