Cheshire West & Chester Council

Congratulations

on your forthcoming marriage







Cheshire West and Chester

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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**



_____

and

_____

Your marriage
has been arranged to take place

Date _____

Venue _____

Time _____





Welcome to Cheshire West and Chester

The staff who work in the Registration Service will do everything they can to help make your day special and to ensure that your ceremony is a relaxed and enjoyable occasion.

This brochure has been designed to help you plan your day and choose the content of your marriage ceremony.

Once you have had time to consider your ceremony, we can discuss your requirements in person or over the telephone.

For legal reasons we are unable to include any words, readings or music which may have religious connotations.

If you have any questions, please contact us.



Planning Your Wedding Day

Essential Preliminaries

You will already have made preparations for your day by booking your venue, arranging the Registrar and giving your legal notices of marriage.

If you are unsure about any of these essential preliminaries, please ring our Ceremonies Officer on 0300 123 7037.

Arrival

Please arrive in good time, allowing sufficient time for photographs to be taken. If you are late it may not be possible for us to conduct your ceremony.

If your marriage is taking place in one of our register offices, please arrive at least 15 minutes before the start time.

If your marriage is being held in one of our approved premises the Registrars will arrive approximately 30 minutes before the ceremony is due to start.

Upon arrival the Registrar will see you privately to check the details which will be entered on the marriage schedule, including 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.

Depending on your personal choice, you can be seen separately or together.



Witnesses

It is a legal requirement for two people to witness your marriage, so please arrange for them to be present.

They can be friends or relatives, over the age of 18 and able to understand the ceremony. They will be asked to sign the marriage schedule and their names will appear on your marriage certificate.

Number of Guests Permitted

Each venue has a limit on the number of people that can be comfortably accommodated in their ceremony room. If you are unsure of how many guests may attend, please check with us or your venue before sending your invitations out.

Music

Music certainly enhances the occasion and is usually played as the guests are arriving, for the entrance, during the signing of the marriage schedule and as you leave the room.

If you are marrying at one of our approved premises, you may wish to check what facilities they have for playing recorded music.

Our register offices have a CD player and a range of background music. You are welcome to bring your own choice of music but it is a good idea to check before the day that the CD works on the register office sound system.

Please remember that for legal reasons, religious music is not permitted. Your Registrar will be pleased to offer advice.



Photography and Videos

Your guests are very welcome to bring cameras to record the occasion.

Confetti

If your ceremony is taking place at one of our approved premises please make enquiries with the venue direct.

In the register office we are happy for your guests to throw confetti but it would help us greatly if they could wait until they are outside the building before doing so.

Car Parking

For information about parking at approved premises please contact the venue direct.

On the enclosed leaflet we have provided a map indicating parking facilities near our register office.

Change of Contact Details

In case we need to get in touch before your ceremony, please inform us of any changes in your contact details.

Change of Plans

To help us provide the highest possible quality of service please tell us immediately if any of your plans change.





The Choice is Yours

There are many ways in which you can make your ceremony special and personal.

Here are some ideas for you to consider:

- You may wish to follow the tradition of not seeing one another before the ceremony.
- You could be escorted into the ceremony room by a family member or another person of your choice.
- You may be given away by a family member or friend.
- You may like to be attended by bridesmaids, flower-girls and/or page-boys.
- You may wish to be attended by a best-man or groomsmen.
- You may include live or recorded music that has special significance to you.
- If you wish, the marriage may be sealed by the exchange of rings.



- The Registrar would be happy to include any personal announcements on your behalf for example, by mentioning guests who have travelled from abroad.
- You may choose to make special promises to each other in addition to your legal vows (see italic burgundy text on pages 12 to 17).
- A relative, friend or your Registrar could read poetry or prose that you have chosen or written yourself (see page 18).

Of course you may prefer a short, simple ceremony that does not include additional promises or readings (shown in bold text on pages 12 to 17).

Your notes:



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between a simple and enhanced ceremony?

A simple ceremony includes all the elements that are required to make a legal ceremony. An enhanced ceremony gives you the opportunity to also include additional promises and readings of your choice.

How long does the ceremony last?

A simple ceremony will last for about 20 minutes, including the signing of the marriage schedule. Ceremonies with enhancements will naturally last longer.

How many registrars attend?

Two members of the Registration Service will be involved in your ceremony; the Superintendent Registrar will conduct the marriage, the Registrar will ensure that the legal formalities are complete and the marriage schedule is completed accurately.

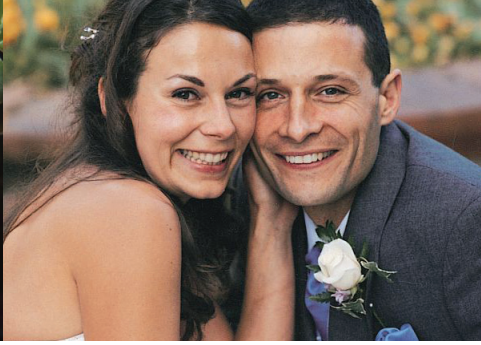
Do I need to memorise any words?

It is not necessary for you to memorise any words as the Superintendent Registrar will lead you through the ceremony. When it is your turn to speak the Superintendent Registrar will say a few words at a time which you then repeat.

Do we have to exchange rings?

It is not essential to exchange rings although many couples choose to do this as a traditional part of their ceremony. You may decide to give two rings or only one.





Order of Service

If you wish to provide an order of service for your guests then the samples below may help you decide what you would like to include.

Simple Ceremony:

- Welcome and introduction
- Legal declarations
- Exchange of rings
- Signing of the marriage schedule and photographs
- Conclusion

Enhanced Ceremony:

- Welcome and introduction
- Reading
- Legal declarations
- Promises
- Exchange of ring(s)
- Reading
- Signing of the marriage schedule and photographs
- Conclusion

You may also wish to include the titles of music you have chosen.



The Ceremony

The following sample ceremony is provided to help you decide what you would like to include.

Black text shows the simple ceremony.

Burgundy text shows the enhancements that can be added to it.

Where you see A) _____ and B) _____ your own names would be used instead.

Boxes are provided so you can indicate any enhancement options you would like to include.

It is your ceremony and your special day so if there is anything else you would like to include, your Superintendent Registrar (SR) will be pleased to discuss this with you.

Welcome

Welcome to (the venue).

My name is (SR) and I have the pleasure of conducting this ceremony and my colleague (Registrar), has the important task of registering the marriage and ensuring all the legal formalities are complete.

You are here to witness and celebrate the marriage of A)___ and B)___.

We trust this day is the start of a very happy life together for them.

Welcome Option (spoken by SR)

1 ☐ *As the people closest to them in their lives, you have been invited here today to share in A). . . and B). . . celebrations. They would like me to thank you all for being here on this very special day for them at the beginning of their new married life together.*

Before you are married to each other 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.

I should also remind you both of the solemn and binding character of the vows you are about to make.

Introduction Options (spoken by SR)

2 ☐ *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.*

3 ☐ *A). . .and B). . . wish to marry, for in each other's company they have found fulfilment and love. As a consequence, they now wish to publicly affirm their relationship and to offer to each other the security that comes from legally binding vows sincerely made and faithfully kept. You are here to witness this occasion and to share in their joy.*

4 ☐ *We are here today to share with A). . .and B). . . a very important moment in their lives. In the years they have been together, their love and understanding of each other has grown and deepened and now they have decided to live their lives together as a married couple.*

At this point you might wish to include a reading *(see pages 18-25)*

Reading Option _____

Read by: _____



Legal Declarations

A) _____ would you please state your full name?

B) _____ would you please state your full name?

At this point, I am required to ask that if there is any person here who knows of any legal reason why these two people should not be joined in matrimony, they should declare it now.

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.

A)_____Please repeat after me
I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I (A's full name) may not be joined in matrimony to (B's full name).

B)_____Please repeat after me
I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I (B's full name) may not be joined in matrimony to (A's full name).

Any union you enter into has to be done so voluntarily and therefore I ask each of you this question.

Do you A) ____by your own choice, freely enter into the union of marriage with B)_____ (Yes or I do).

And do you B) ____by your own choice, freely enter into the union of marriage with A)_____ (Yes or I do).

I am now going to ask you to make the second legal declaration required by law.

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

A)_____ please repeat after me.
I call upon these persons here present to witness that I (A's full name) do take thee (B's full name) to be my lawful wedded (husband or wife).

Promise Options (spoken by the couple after the second Legal Declaration)

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

6 ☐ *I promise to care for you always, and to keep our love and friendship as it is today. Please share my hopes and dreams and never allow anything to change the feelings that we have for each other.*

7 ☐ *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.*

8 ☐ *Your own personal choice of words. Please provide them to your Superintendent Registrar.*

B)_____ please repeat after me.
I call upon these persons here present to witness that I (B's full name) do take thee (A's full name) to be my lawful wedded (husband or wife).

Continue with options number (see 5-8) ☐

Exchange of Ring(s)

We now come to the part of the ceremony where you exchange wedding rings, which is the traditional way of sealing the marriage contract.

(Spoken by SR before the exchange of rings)

9 ☐ *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.*

10 ☐ *A wedding ring is worn on the third finger of the left hand, because of an ancient belief that a vein from that finger goes directly to the heart. It is a symbol which speaks of the love you have for each other.*

11 ☐ *A wedding ring is an unbroken circle symbolising unending and everlasting love. This will be the outward sign of the lifelong promises you have just made to each other.*

A)__ please take B's)____ ring, place it on the third finger of the left hand and say:

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.

(Alternative words for the exchange of rings)

12 ☐ *I give you this ring as a token of my love and affection and in recognition of our shared life together. Wear it with a feeling of love and joy. I choose you to be husband/wife this day and everyday.*

13 ☐ *I give you this ring as a token of my love, as a symbol of our marriage and as an outward sign of the commitment we are making to one another.*

14 ☐ *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.*

15 ☐ *Your own personal choice of words. Please provide them to your Superintendent Registrar.*

B)___, please take A)_____ ring, place it on the third finger of the left hand and say:

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.

Or continue with option number (see 12-15) ☐

At this point you might wish to include a reading (see pages 18-25)

Reading Title: _____

Read by: _____

The registrar will then announce that you have both made the legal declarations required by law in the presence of your witnesses, families and guests and you are now legally married.

The signing of the marriage schedule and photographs

At the end of the ceremony you will be asked to carefully check the details on the schedule and then to sign it. Your witnesses will also be asked to sign.

Please remember that the marriage schedule is signed in the names you used during the ceremony.

Once the marriage schedule has been signed, there is an opportunity for posed photographs to be taken with witnesses, family and friends.

Conclusion

The ceremony will be concluded with the best wishes of the Registrars for your future together.

Marriage certificate

Your marriage certificate will be available to order on line 7 days after your ceremony.

Please visit www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/registration and select order a copy certificate.



Readings

To help you to decide if you would like to include readings in your ceremony, we have provided a selection of popular examples for you.

Of course, you are welcome to include your own choice of poetry or prose, provided there is no religious connotation.

The internet is a useful source of inspiration for readings and your local library may be able to provide access.

A Marriage Is

Marriage is a dynamic process of discovery.
Marriage is a journey, not an arrival.
In marriage, being the right person,
is as important as finding the right person.
Marriage is starting to love, over and over again.
Marriage is a life's work.
Marriage is an art and like any creative process,
it requires active thought and effort.
We have to learn how to share on many different levels.
We need to practice talking from the heart
and understanding attitudes as well as words.
Giving generously and receiving graciously
are talents that are available to anyone.
But all these skills need to be developed,
if the marriage picture that we paint is to be
anything approaching the masterpiece intended.

Anon



B These I can promise

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine
I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold;
I cannot promise you an easy pathway
That leads away from change or growing old.
But I can promise all my heart's devotion;
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;
A love that's ever true and ever growing;
A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

Anon

C Love is giving

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.

Anon

D Les Miserables (excerpt)

You can give without loving but you can never love without giving.
The great acts of love are done by those,
who are habitually performing small acts of kindness.
We pardon to the extent that we love.
Love is knowing that even when you are alone,
you will never be truly alone again.
And great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved.
Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

Victor Hugo

E Sonnet 116

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.
Oh 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 within his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom:
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare





F 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.

The Ahwahneechee Tribe



G 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.

Anon





H On your wedding day

Today is a day you will always remember
The greatest in anyone's life
You'll start off the day just two people in love
And end it as husband and wife
It's a brand new beginning the start of a journey
With moments to cherish and treasure
And although there'll be time when you both disagree
These will surely be outweighed by pleasure
You'll have heard many words of advice in the past
When the secrets of marriage were spoken
But you know that the answers lie hidden inside
Where the bond of true love lies unbroken
So live happy forever as lovers and friends
It's the dawn of a new life for you
As you stand there together with love in your eyes
From the moment you whisper "I do"
And with luck, all your hopes, and your dreams can be real
May success find its way to your hearts
Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys
But today is the day it all starts

Anon



I belong in your arms

Finally
I have found a place
Into which I fit
Perfectly,
Safely,
And securely with no doubts,
No fears,
No sadness,
No tears.
This place is filled
With happiness and laughter,
Yet it is spacious enough
To allow me
The freedom to move around,
To live my life
And be myself.
This wonderful place,
Which I never believed
Really existed,
I have found
Finally
Inside your arms,
Inside your heart,
Inside your love.

Deborah Brideau





J What is a Soul Mate?

If you can always be as close and as happy as today
Yet be secure enough to grow and change along the way
If you can keep for you alone your love as husband and wife
Yet find the time to share your joy with others in your life
If you can be as one and walk through marriage hand in hand,
Yet still support the goals and dreams that each of you had planned
If you have found a smile that's the sweetest one you've known,
If you have heard, within a voice,the echoes of your own,
If you have felt a touch that stirs the longings of your heart,
And still can feel that closeness in the moments you're apart,
If you have filled with wonder at the way two lives can blend,
To weave a perfect pattern that is seamless, end to end.
If you believe some things in life are simply meant to be,
Then you have found your soul mate,
Your heart's own destiny.

Anon



Commemorative Certificate

We can provide an attractive, colour commemorative certificate as a lasting memory of your wedding day. This certificate is in addition to your legal marriage certificate. They make treasured keepsakes for other members of your family. Each certificate is personalised with details of your marriage including date, venue and witnesses and is available for an additional fee.

Please ask your Registrar for further details.

Acknowledgements

While every effort has been made to trace copyright holders, the publishers would be pleased to hear from any not acknowledged.

Cheshire West and Chester Council would like to express thanks to the photographers who have kindly given their permission to use their work throughout this booklet including:

- Cheshire Wedding Photography: www.davidandbeverleyfosterphotography.co.uk
- Evelyne Sansot: www.sansotphotos.com
- Helen Venables: www.helenvenables.co.uk
- Photogravik: www.photogravik.co.uk
- Anniversary Cars: www.anniversarycars.co.uk
- Macdonald Craxton Wood Hotel: www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/craxtonwood
- Inglewood Manor: www.inglewoodmanor.co.uk
- Helen Baly: www.helenbaly.co.uk

Customer Satisfaction

Cheshire West and Chester's Registration Service is committed to achieving the highest level of customer satisfaction and we welcome any comments from you about our service.

Please send your comments, compliments and criticisms to: ceremonies@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Alternatively you can telephone: 0300 123 7037 or follow the QR code below to our feedback form.





Tel: **0300 123 7037**
Email: **ceremonies@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**