

## 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 begins to check the 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.

### Number of Guests

The Ceremony Room can accommodate up to 23 guests.

### 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.

### 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 16 and able to speak and understand English.

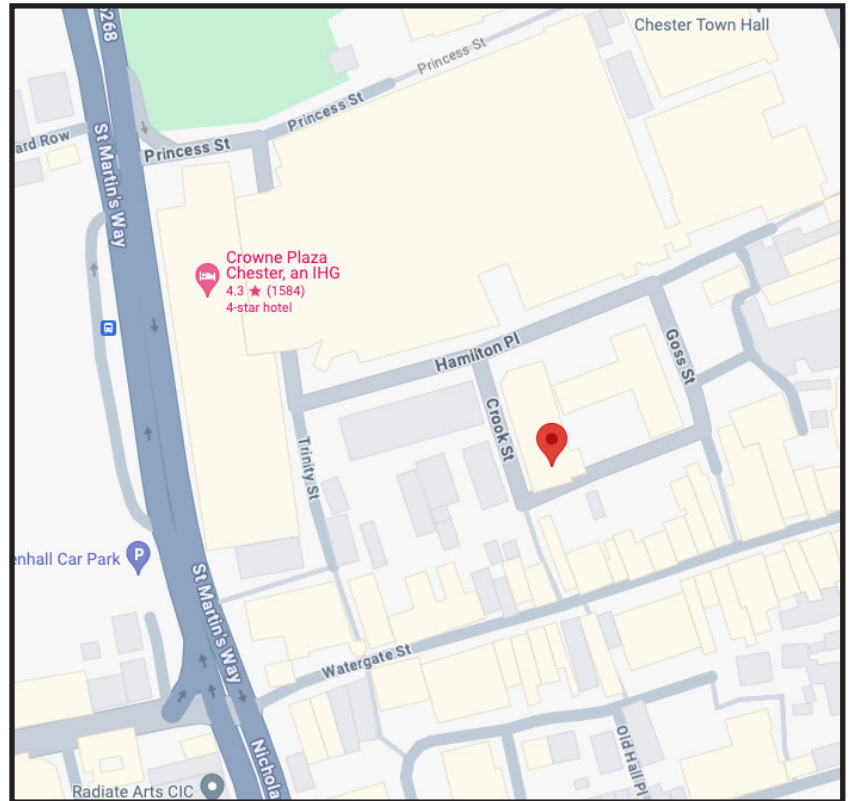
### Confetti

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.

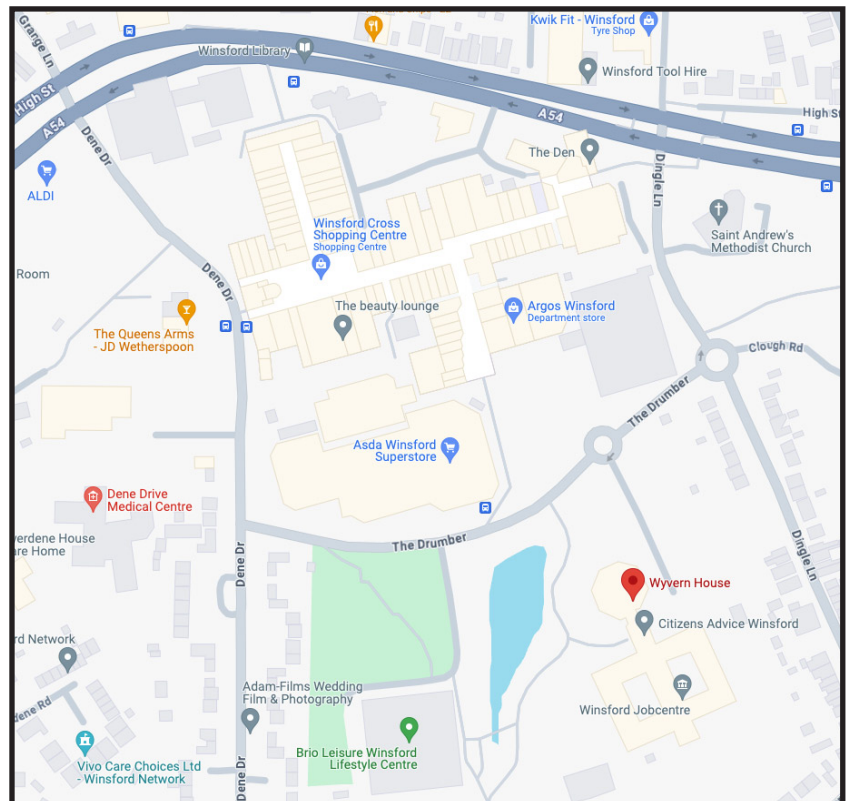
The nearest parking is on Trinity Street. There is disabled parking on Hamilton Place and Goss Street.



### 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.





# 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.

## Registrar's welcome and Introduction

*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*

## 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. Now please repeat the words of the first declaration:*

## 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.

## 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.

*(As an optional addition the Registrar may also say)*

### Option 3

**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.**

*(The ring is usually placed on the third finger of the left hand)*

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. Or 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.

## 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 £90, 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](http://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](mailto: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

### 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.