

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Congratulations

on your forthcoming civil partnership



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**

Text phone: **18001 01606 867 670**



and

Your Civil Partnership
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 civil partnership is a relaxed and enjoyable occasion.

If you wish to register your partnership without a ceremony, you can do so, as it is not a requirement of the legal process. However, we would be delighted to offer you a ceremony to accompany and enhance the registration.

This brochure has been designed to plan the day itself and includes suggestions for creating your ceremony.



Planning your civil partnership

Arrival

If your civil partnership is being held in one of our approved venues, the registrars will arrive approximately 30 minutes before the ceremony is due to start.

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

Please arrive in good time, allowing sufficient time for photographs to be taken.

If you are late it may not be possible for the registration of your civil partnership to take place.

Witnesses

It is a legal requirement for two people to witness your partnership, so please arrange for witnesses to be present. They can be friends or relatives, usually over the age of 16 and able to understand the ceremony. They will be asked to sign the Schedule and their names will appear on your civil partnership 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 before sending out your invitations.



Music

Music certainly enhances the occasion and is usually played before and after a ceremony. You may wish to check with the venue to find out what facilities they have for playing recorded music. The registrar will be pleased to offer advice about when your choice of music, either recorded or live, can be played.

Register offices have a CD player and a range of background music, or you can provide us with music which has a special meaning for you and your partner. If you choose to do this, it is a good idea to check before the day that the CD works on the register office CD player.

Please remember that for legal reasons, religious music is not permitted. If you are unsure about your music please speak with your registrar in advance.

Photography and Videos

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

Your Certificate

Civil partnerships are recorded on a national database. It may not always be possible to provide a printed certificate from this database until the next working day after your ceremony. However, we will be able to provide you with a commemorative certificate for you to sign and take away with you on the day.



Confetti

We are happy for your guests to throw confetti but it would help us greatly if they could wait until they are outside the register office building before doing so. As an alternative to confetti you might like to consider using dried rose petals. If your ceremony is taking place at one of our approved premises please make enquiries with the venue direct.

Car Parking

On the enclosed leaflet we have provided a map indicating parking facilities near our register office. For further information about parking at approved premises please contact the venue direct.

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.





Personalising Your Ceremony

You are welcome to personalise your ceremony by including your own choice of readings and declarations. For legal reasons, these cannot be religious.

Here are some ideas for you to consider:

- Inclusion of music that is of special significance to you, before and after the registration or ceremony.
 - You may choose to make special promises to each other (see page 11).
 - Having a relative, friend or your registrar read poetry or prose that you have chosen or written yourself (see page 12).
 - You may like to be attended by a bestman, bestwoman, bridesmaids, flower-girls or page-boys.
- If you wish, the ceremony may be sealed by the exchanging of rings.
 - The registrar could make a personal announcement on your behalf e.g. mention of guests who have travelled from abroad.



Sample Ceremony

The following is an example of a simple ceremony without enhancements or readings.

The words in blue are spoken by the registrar and the words in green would be spoken by you.

Where you see the example names of 'Chris and Lee' your own names would be used instead.

Registrar's Introduction and Welcome

Welcome to (venue name) and to this ceremony which will mark the formation of the civil partnership between 'Chris and Lee' .

The registration and celebration of a civil partnership is a significant event in the lives of these two men/women.

They have chosen to make a personal and legal commitment to one another, in the presence of their two witnesses, (family and friends) here today.

You are (all) here to share in this occasion and to bear witness to the declarations they will be making to one another.

To begin the ceremony, I should tell you that this place has been licensed and approved for the formation of civil partnerships.

I should also remind Chris and Lee that the formation of their partnership is an important and binding commitment which they are entering into.

It will involve legal rights and responsibilities, which will affect many aspects of their life together.

Now at this point, I am required to ask that if anyone present is aware of any legal reason which would prevent Chris or Lee from registering their partnership today, they should declare it now.



The First Declaration

Chris and Lee, I am going to ask each of you to make a declaration about the partnership you are entering into.

Chris would you begin by stating your full name.

Now please repeat these words:

Today, I Chris make a commitment to enter into a civil partnership with Lee. I understand and acknowledge the rights and responsibilities which the formation of this partnership will involve for each of us.

Any union has to be entered into voluntarily and therefore I will ask each of you this question.

Chris do you, by your own choice, freely enter into this civil partnership with Lee? *(Answer Yes or I do)*

(Repeat the above declarations for Lee)





The Exchange of Rings

The exchange of a ring is the traditional way of marking the commitment you are making to each other. It symbolises your union in a permanent and continuing relationship.

Chris, I give you this ring as a symbol of our union and as an outward sign of the commitment we are making to each other.

(Repeat for Lee)

The Legal Declaration

I will now ask Chris and Lee to make this final declaration, which confirms that they are not aware of any legal reason which would prevent the registration of their partnership.

Chris please repeat these words.

*I declare that I know of no legal reason why we may 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.*

(Repeat for Lee)

Conclusion

Chris and Lee you have both consented to enter into a civil partnership with one another. And you have signed the schedule which is required under the Act, in the presence of your witnesses (family and friends) here today.

Therefore, I can now declare that you have become civil partners.





Enhancements to Your Ceremony


If you would like to include additional words or promises in your ceremony, here are some options you may like to consider:

Spoken by the registrar during the introduction

1. In each other's company Chris and Lee have found fulfilment and love. As a consequence of this love 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.

2. By choosing to form a civil partnership Chris and Lee are making a commitment to each other which will strengthen the love and respect they have built up over the years. And today, by this public declaration of their feelings for one another, they look to you, their relatives and friends, to offer your encouragement and support.

3. Chris and Lee you have chosen to pledge yourselves to each other by committing to a legally binding contract. Your partnership will enable the love and respect that you have for each other to develop throughout your lives. We who are witnessing your civil partnership hope that despite the stresses inevitable in life, your love, trust and understanding of each other will increase your contentment and heighten your joy in living.



Additional promises spoken by the couple

4. I pledge to share my life with you. Throughout our lives together I promise to maintain and develop the trust and respect which I have today.
5. I promise to care for you always and I look forward to our future together with hope, happiness and joy.
6. I choose you above all others to share my life. I promise to love, honour and trust you as long as I live.

Optional words spoken during the exchange of the ring(s)

7. This ring is a gift to you which represents the union of our two lives in this partnership.
8. This ring is a token of my abiding love and a sign of the promise I make to you today.
9. I give you this ring as a symbol of our union and as an outward sign of the commitment we are making to each other.

Additional words spoken by the registrar at the conclusion

10. Today will be a milestone in both your lives, which you can look back on with happiness and pride. Your futures are now permanently linked by the declarations and commitments you have made to one another. Your status as partners is now recognised in law, as well as by the family and friends who have gathered here in your honour today.





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 poetry or prose, provided they have no religious connotation.

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

Your ceremonies officer will be happy to advise you how and where the readings can be incorporated into your ceremony.

A) My True Love

*My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given.
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driven.
My true love hath my heart and I have his.
His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him, his thoughts and senses guides;
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;
I cherish his, because in me it bides.
My true love hath my heart and I have his.*

Sir Philip Sidney

B) 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



Native American Indian Love Poem C) (version 1)

*When evening falls, I will look up and there you will be.
I will 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

Native American Indian Love Poem D) (version 2)

*May the sun bring you new happiness 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 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
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.*

The Ahwahneechee Tribe



E) Romance

*I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me.
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.
I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright flows the broom.
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.
And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.*

Robert Louis Stevenson

F) I Belong In Your Arms

This poem is usually read by the couple

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



G) Look Well To This Day

Look well to this day for it is life, the very best of life.

*In its brief course lie all the realities
And truths of existence.*

*The joy of growth,
The splendour of action,
The glory of power.*

*For yesterday is but a memory
And tomorrow is only a vision but today,
If well lived, makes every yesterday
A memory of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.*

Ancient Sanskrit poem

H) 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.*

Author Unknown



Acknowledgements and Customer Satisfaction

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

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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:

**Manager, Lifetime Services
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Freepost RSGX-TCJL-LERR
Chester Register Office
Goldsmith House, Goss Street
Chester
CH1 2BG**

Alternatively you can

Telephone: 0300 123 7037 or

Email: chesterregisteroffice@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk





Tel: 0300 123 7037

Email: chesterregisteroffice@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Website: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/registration