

2023/2024 EDITION



CEREMONIES IN DURHAM

EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR
THE PERFECT WEDDING DAY

WHAT'S INSIDE?

HISTORIC VENUES

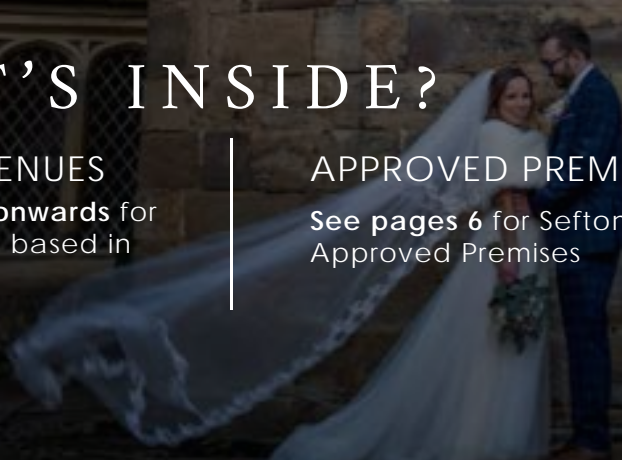
See pages 14 onwards for historic venues based in Sefton

APPROVED PREMISES

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WEDDING TIPS

See pages 38 onwards for tips on planning the perfect day





Contents

Welcome To County Durham



From its Western boundary high in the Pennine hills to the lime stone cliffs of its North Sea coast, few counties have as much variety as County Durham.

Easily accessible by motorway, rail and air, the county boasts a rich cultural and historical background. The historic city of Durham is home to the world-famous Castle and Cathedral, which together form a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

However, the county also has much more to offer than its many picturesque villages and towns, beautiful rolling countryside and unspoilt moorlands. Bordering Northumberland, Cumbria and North Yorkshire, the county also has sporting ties with Durham County Cricket Club which is based in an idyllic setting at Chester-le-Street in the shadow of Lumley Castle.

Durham University is world renowned and is at the forefront of high educational achievement.

Other attractions include the Bowes Museum, Beamish North of England Open Air Museum, Raby Castle, Auckland Castle and the stunning coastline to the east of the county.



Ceremonies In County Durham

The County of Durham Registration Service offers a wonderful range of venues, and, regardless of whether you are having a small friendly gathering or the largest of celebrations, we hope to make your ceremony a special, memorable and enjoyable occasion.

We can cater for all ceremonies, whether you are planning a wedding, civil partnership, naming or renewal of vows ceremony, and it is advisable to book well in advance to secure the venue, date and time that you want.



It is important to remember that although you may have made a booking with your chosen Approved Premise venue, you must also contact the Register Office local to the venue to make sure that we are available to conduct your ceremony.

In Durham we have a dedicated ceremony co-ordination team, who offer a very personal service to help you plan and organise your ceremony. They will work to ensure that your day will run as smoothly as possible, leaving you with memories to treasure.

Documents you need to provide

When you give your notice of intention to marry or enter into a civil partnership, the registrar will ask questions about you and your partner.



They will ask...

To give your full names, occupations, ages, addresses, nationalities and whether you have been married or been in a civil partnership before. The registrar will also ask you to provide written evidence of your full name, age and proof of current address.

Acceptable documents are listed below:-

Proof of identity

- Photo ID (passport or other relevant document)
- Birth certificate showing parents' details
- Any deed poll or name change document

Proof of current address

- A driving license
- A council tax bill (dated within a year)
- A utility bill (dated within three months)
- A bank statement (dated within one month)
- A letter signed by someone able to confirm your residence



If you've been in a marriage or civil partnership before

If you have been in a previous marriage or civil partnership, you will need to bring documentary evidence to show that the marriage or civil partnership has ended and that you are now free to marry or enter into a civil partnership.

- A decree absolute (following divorce)
- A dissolution certificate (from a previous civil partnership)
- A death certificate (if your husband/wife or former civil partner has died)

Please note: original documents are needed photocopies or electronic copies are not acceptable

All divorce and dissolution documents must have the original stamp of the issuing court. Some overseas documents may have to be referred to the General Register Office for clearance (with a certified translation, if appropriate).



"Love is the greatest refreshment in life."

Pablo Picasso





What happens next?

After you have both given your notices of intention to marry or to form a civil partnership you will be given a ceremony pack.

The ceremony pack will give you lots of ideas about how you can personalise your ceremony with readings, music and personal promises. The involvement of family and friends will also give a personal touch and a warmth to the ceremony.

You may have children and want to involve them, or you may want to have a candle ceremony or group singing.

These are purely suggestions and the list is not exhaustive. The only stipulation is that there must be no religious content.



On the day...

On the day, the registrars will arrive at the venue about 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. This allows them time to introduce themselves. They will see both of you, privately and separately, to check that the details to be entered into the marriage register and civil partnership schedule are correct.

The registrars will speak to everyone involved in the ceremony, e.g. guests who have been asked to do readings, musicians, the photographer and the person who has 'charge of' the rings. This is the ideal opportunity for you to ask any last-minute questions.

The ceremony will begin with a warm welcome from the registrar and you will be asked, in turn, to repeat your legal vows. The ceremony will follow the format you have personally chosen and discussed with the ceremony co-ordination team.

At the end of the ceremony, you will be asked to sign the marriage/civil partnership schedule.


Religious Marriage

If you want a religious ceremony in a church (other than the Church of England), you will need to speak to the minister or priest at the church and book a date.

At least one of you must be a resident in the district where the church or building is situated. However, if the church or building is outside your district of residency, you may still be able to marry there if it is the usual place of worship for one or both of you.

Formal notice of marriage needs to be given in the same way as applies to civil marriage and civil partnership. If you require the presence of a registrar at the church, it is important that you contact the ceremony co-ordination team as soon as possible to arrange this. Your minister or priest will advise.

Remember, not all churches are licensed for civil partnership and same-sex marriage.



"If you find someone you love in your life, then hang on to that love."

Princess Diana





Renewal of vows

A renewal of vows is an opportunity for couples to renew their marriage or civil partnership vows in a unique and personal ceremony. Although many couples choose to renew their vows at milestone anniversaries, the ceremony is just as appropriate at any stage of a relationship.

It is also ideal for couples who have married abroad and now wish to celebrate their wedding or civil partnership with family and friends who were unable to attend the original ceremony.

The ceremony has no legal status but nevertheless is still of great significance. It also acts as a public statement by the couple of their continuing love and commitment to one another. A commemorative certificate will be signed and presented at the end of the ceremony.



Naming Ceremony

A naming ceremony is a special, non-religious way of celebrating a birth of a child or welcoming adoptive and/or stepchildren into a family. It is an opportunity for parents and supporting adults to declare, before family and friends, their commitment to the upbringing of the child.

A commemorative certificate of the ceremony will be signed and presented at the end of the ceremony.

Citizenship Ceremony

Citizenship ceremonies are a vital part of the processes of becoming a British citizen and are designed to aid the integration of those who adopt the UK as their permanent home. To new citizens, these ceremonies mark a momentous life event.



The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 provides that applicants for British nationality make a citizenship oath and pledge at a ceremony which will be the final part of their naturalisation process. Attendance at a ceremony is mandatory for those 18 years and over applying for British citizenship.

The ceremonies are regarded as significant occasions and are generally carried out as group ceremonies attended by either the Dignitaries of Durham County Council who officially welcomes the new citizens into the county.

Ceremonies are concluded with a graduation style presentation by the Dignitaries of a Certificate of Naturalisation. There is also the opportunity of having your photograph taken which will then be despatched to you. Individual ceremonies can be arranged on request and a fee is payable for this service.

The County of Durham Registration Service can offer advice about the ceremony only and not the process of acquiring citizenship, which must be made to the Home Office.

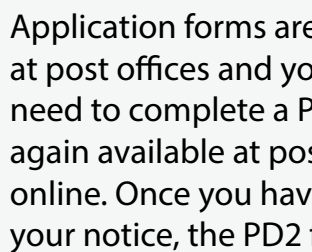
The Home Office website is:
www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/applying

Changes to your passport

There are so many things to organise when you are getting married or entering into a civil partnership that you may forget to notify the passport authorities if you are changing your name.

Some countries might not accept a passport that has not been amended even if you are taking your marriage or civil partnership certificate with you. Check with your travel agent or the country's consulate if you are in doubt.

You can change your passport details at any time up to three months before the ceremony, although you will not be able to use your passport until after you are married or have formed the civil partnership. To do this you will need to apply to the Passport Office for a new standard UK passport. Alternatively, the Passport Office will amend your existing passport to show your future married or civil partnership name.



Application forms are available at post offices and you will also need to complete a PD2 form, again available at post offices or online. Once you have given your notice, the PD2 form can be sent to the appropriate Register Office where it will be signed and returned to you. You should then send the signed PD2 form to the Passport Office, together with the application for the passport or amendment to your passport.



If you are going abroad on your honeymoon, remember to book any travel tickets in the name you will have in your passport at the time of travelling. For further information, contact www.passport.gov.uk





Your questions

Should I purchase wedding/civil partnership insurance?

Yes, we strongly recommend that everyone should purchase insurance. Things do go wrong sometimes. It is always wise to be covered!

How far in advance can I make a wedding/civil partnership booking?

You can make a booking as far in advance as you wish, but please remember you must give notice within 12 months of the ceremony taking place.

Who can we have as witness?

A minimum of two witnesses are required to sign the register/civil partnership schedule. It can be family or friends and they must be able to understand the nature of the ceremony. If an interpreter is used during the ceremony, they must also sign the register /civil partnership schedule as a witness.

We have children. How can we involve them in the ceremony?

There are so many roles that children can play to ensure that they feel part of your special day. They could, for example, be bridesmaids, flower girls, pageboys or a ring bearer. During the ceremony, a child could read a poem or something they have written themselves. Some couples like to give a child a gift following the exchange of rings.



Will I see the registrar before the ceremony?

On the day, the registrars will arrive at the venue about 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. This allows the registrars time to introduce themselves (they will see you separately) and check that the details to be entered into the marriage or the civil partnership schedule are correct. At this time, the registrars will also speak to guests who are doing readings. This is the ideal opportunity for couples to ask any last-minute questions.

Can I get married or have a civil partnership on a beach?

The law in England and Wales does not allow you to be married or have a civil partnership on a beach. However, a number of licensed venues in County Durham do have outside spaces, allowing a ceremony to take place outdoors, weather permitting!

What happens if I am late?

The registrar may have other ceremonies on that day and might have to leave to conduct another ceremony.

Will I meet other ceremony parties on the day of my ceremony at the same venue?

It is possible because some ceremony venues are very popular. However, when this occurs the different ceremony parties will be kept completely separate from each other. It is important that you tell your guests to arrive on time to minimize the risk of this happening.



Acknowledgements

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We would also like to thank Dash Photography for supplying the photographs throughout the brochure:

The County of Durham Registration Service has a number of ceremony rooms available within their Register Offices. Please contact our dedicated ceremony coordination team to discuss your requirements.



Directory

Top 10 Wedding Planning Tips

- 1** Start planning early to allow yourself enough time to research vendors and make informed decisions.
- 2** Set a budget and stick to it. Consider prioritizing what's most important to you and allocating funds accordingly.
- 3** Hire a wedding planner or coordinator to help alleviate stress and ensure everything runs smoothly.
- 4** Choose a venue that fits your style and guest count, and book it as soon as possible.
- 5** Create a detailed timeline to keep track of tasks and deadlines leading up to the wedding day.
- 6** Communicate clearly with your vendors to ensure they understand your vision and expectations.
- 7** Don't forget about the little details, like signage, favors, and seating arrangements.
- 8** Consider hiring a professional photographer and videographer to capture the memories of your special day.
- 9** Plan for unexpected situations, like inclement weather or vendor cancellations, by having backup options in place.
- 10** Remember to enjoy the process and focus on what's most important: celebrating your love with friends and family.



Ceremony Checklist

- ☐ Decide on the ceremony date and time
- ☐ Book the ceremony venue
- ☐ Contact the Register Office to confirm arrangements
- ☐ Book reception venue
- ☐ Decide on catering arrangements
- ☐ Choose bride's ceremony dress and accessories
- ☐ Arrange groom's attire
- ☐ Arrange attendant's outfits
- ☐ Book photographer and videographer
- ☐ Book florist
- ☐ Book transport
- ☐ Order ceremony cake
- ☐ Order ceremony stationery, invitations and place names
- ☐ Finalise ceremony guest list
- ☐ Buy ceremony rings
- ☐ Arrange honeymoon
- ☐ Buy gifts for bridesmaids, best man, etc...



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without expecting anything in return."*

Madonna



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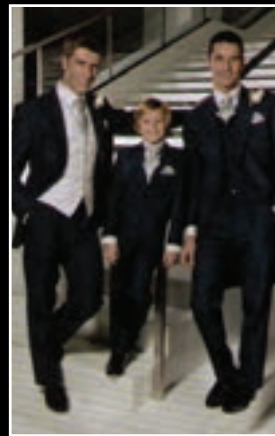
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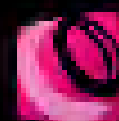
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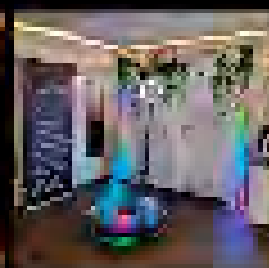
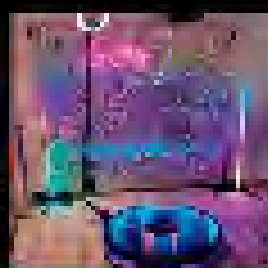
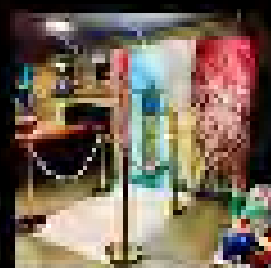
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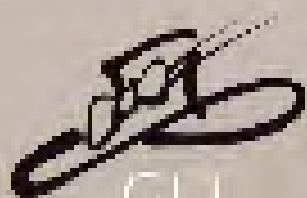
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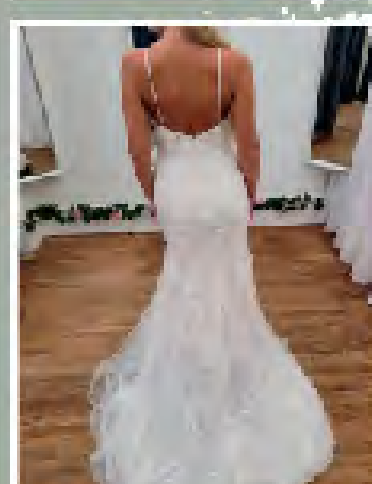
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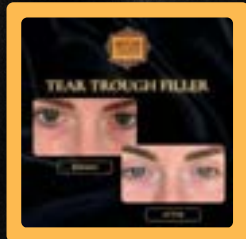
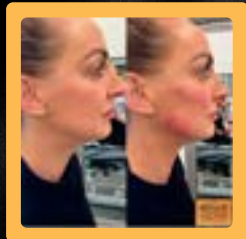
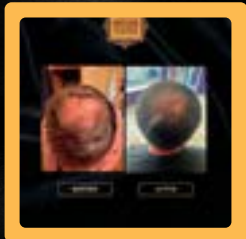
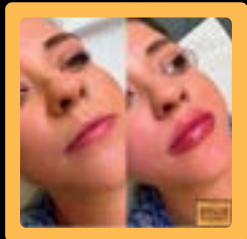
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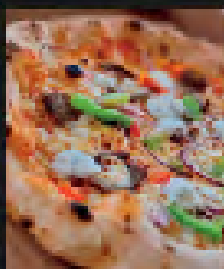


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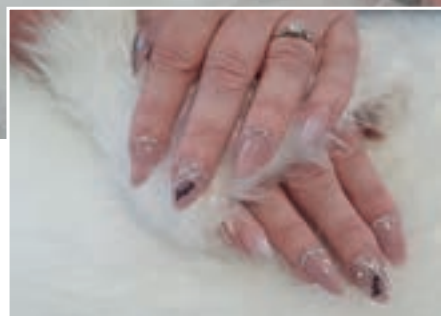
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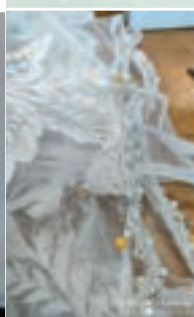
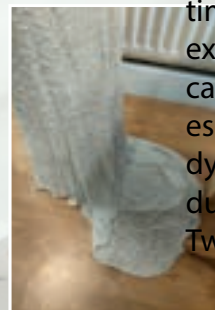
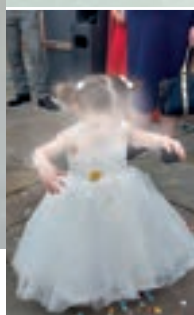
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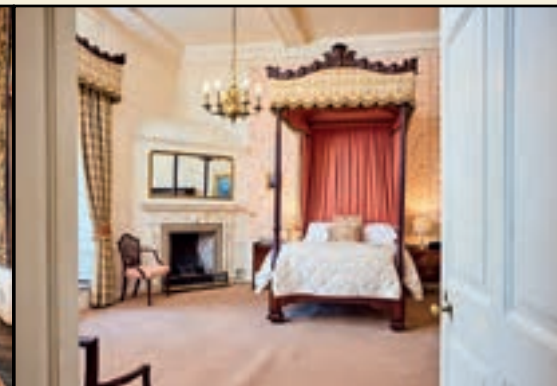
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A civil ceremony is a non-religious ceremony performed by a registrar. A civil wedding or civil partnership can take place in any register office or at any licensed venue of your choice in England and Wales.

These days, it is possible to have almost any kind of ceremony, ranging from a simple 'I do' in a register office with a couple of friends as witnesses, to a grand affair at a licensed venue, with bridesmaids, attendants, readings, music and singing.

In fact the only restriction is your own imagination! Almost anything goes, but be aware that civil ceremonies must not include any religious content.

You will need to ask two people, friends or relatives, if they will witness your marriage or civil partnership. Your witnesses must speak and understand English and be old enough to understand the ceremony and the role that they will play.



*"Love is a promise; love is a souvenir,
once given never forgotten, never let
it disappear."*

John Lennon





Having a civil ceremony in England and Wales?

Having a civil ceremony is not complicated. The following information explains what you need to do before hand, to make sure that on your special day everything goes as smoothly as possible.

If you are marrying or having a civil partnership in a register office or licensed venue, you must give notice of your intention to marry or form a civil partnership to the registrar in the district where you live. If you and your partner live in different districts, you must each give a separate notice to the registrar of your own district.

Giving notice means making a legal declaration intention to marry or to form a civil partnership that you are both free to marry or form a civil this will incur additional costs.

partnership to each other.

You must give your notice of intention to marry or

You cannot give notice of your intention to marry to form a civil partnership in person. A friend or

or form a civil partnership until you have booked relative cannot give notice on your behalf. The the place where you want your ceremony to take notices of marriage and civil partnership will be place. This information is included on your legal displayed publicly in the register office where you notice. The documents you will be required to live.provide are listed in the following pages. If either or both of you live in Scotland or You may give your notice of marriage or to form Northern Ireland and wish to marry or to form a a civil partnership up to one year before the date civil partnership in England or Wales, the above of your ceremony. A notice of marriage and civil rules do not apply. Please contact the ceremony

partnership is only valid for twelve months from co-ordination team for further information and

the date on which the notice is given. If you advice. The law is different if one or both of you

decide to change the venue for your ceremony is not a British citizen or a national from the

after you have given notice, you will need to European Economic Area (EEA) and subject to

begin the process again and give fresh notice ofimmigration control (see immigration rules).

Immigration Rules

If either or both of you are subject to immigration control, i.e. non-British, you will need to follow special guidance. You will not be able to give your notice or intention to marry or form a civil partnership without the correct visa or relevant documentation from the Home Office.

Guidance and further information can be obtained regarding immigration rules from the Home Office website. ceremony co-ordination team will also be able to assist.

There is a statutory fee for giving a notice of intention to marry or form a civil partnership, please see our website: www.durham.gov.uk/article/2224

