



SOMERSET WEDDING

registration service

Guidance for Basic “2+2” Ceremony

A wedding is a wonderful occasion filled with hopes and dreams, and we are privileged to play a part in such a memorable event. We want to make everything run as smoothly as possible for you, from giving notice to planning your perfect ceremony, and have created this guide to help you prepare for your forthcoming wedding day. If there is anything else you want to know or are unsure about, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our main office is in Taunton, but we have offices across Somerset and North Somerset where you can give notice and meet with registrars to discuss your plans. Please visit the website to find your nearest location. Use our central phone number and email address to get in touch with any of our offices.

Somerset Registration Service
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Taunton
Somerset
TA1 4AQ

SomersetRegistrations@somerset.gov.uk

www.SomersetWeddingService.org.uk

01823 282251

Giving Notice

You will both need to give Notice of Marriage. This is the legal and public declaration that you intend to marry, and that you are both free and able to do so.

This must be done no more than 12 months and no less than 28 days prior to your marriage date. We recommend that you give notice of marriage around 3 to 6 months before your wedding date. After 28 days, a legal authority to marry will be granted. The legal paperwork will be printed and retained by the Registration office in the district of your marriage ready for your ceremony.

Payment

For the Basic Ceremony, your fee is payable on the day itself, or you can pay in advance if you wish. It includes the cost of your marriage certificate. You can pay by cash or card at our offices. We can accept cheques at least 4 weeks in advance.

Visit our website for up to date information on what details you will need to provide, the costs for giving notice and ceremonies, and our locations.

Prior to the day

The Basic Ceremony is the easiest to plan, as there are limited choices to make. We will need to have your choices at least 1 week in advance to prepare your ceremony. If we haven't heard from you, we will prepare a ceremony using the first option for each element. Let us know your choices on your Pre Ceremony Check form.

Witnesses

You will be required to provide two witnesses who could be, but do not need to be, friends or relatives. We ask that they are at least 16 years old and must be able to understand the ceremony and their role within it. Your witnesses will be asked to sign the marriage schedule (formerly known as the register) after the ceremony. Give us their details on the Pre Ceremony Check Form.

Wedding Rings

It is traditional to exchange a wedding ring or rings, but you don't have to. The wedding ring is placed on the third finger of the left hand, as this is traditionally thought to be connected to the heart. If you wish to exchange a different token, you may. Please let us know on your Pre-ceremony check form.

Photographs and Videos

There isn't space for a professional photographer at a Basic Ceremony. Both you and your witnesses are welcome to take photographs at appropriate stages of the ceremony. Do remember that this shouldn't detract from the solemnity of the occasion.

On The Day

We suggest you arrive around 15 minutes before your booking. You will have a brief meeting with the registrar to check your paperwork and the details to be entered in the schedule before the ceremony begins.

Following the introduction of the Marriage Schedule System on 4th May 2021, the marriage certificate is produced after the ceremony details have been uploaded to the digital system and will be posted to you within 5 working days. If you require extra copies of your Marriage Certificate you can request and pay for these before or on the day or order them at a later date at somerset.gov.uk

We have a busy ceremony schedule so we do urge you to be on time for your booking. If there is a delay, please let us know as soon as possible. We may have to postpone your ceremony until later in the day, or even to another date if necessary.

The Ceremony

The Basic Ceremony is very straightforward and is comprised of several legal elements. It lasts around 15 to 20 minutes. If you are exchanging rings, or another token, you may choose to include a ring vow. Please let us know if you don't wish to do this, and we can remove that element from the ceremony.

Introduction and Welcome

Legal Preliminaries

Declaration of freedom

Contract of Marriage

Ring Vows (**Optional**)

Announcement

Signing of the Schedule

Your Marriage Vows

The law requires that one of each of the following choices of the 'Declaration of Freedom' and 'Contracting Words' are repeated by both parties. You must choose the same option as your partner. Please indicate your choices on the Pre Ceremony Check Form.

Declaration of Freedom

You will each be asked to repeat the following words after the Registration Officer:

1) I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I may not be joined in matrimony to

or

2) I declare that I know of no legal reason why I may not be joined in marriage to

or

3) by replying "I am" to the question "Are you free lawfully to marry?"

The Contracting Words

You will each be required to repeat the following words after the Registration Officer:

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

or

2) I take you to be my wedded wife/husband.

or

3) I take thee to be my wedded wife/husband.

Ring Vows

If you are exchanging rings, you may wish to choose one of the following vows. The Registrar will say the vow in sections for you to repeat. Please add your choices to the form.

Standard

I give you this ring as a symbol of our love, trust and marriage.

Ring exchange one

I give you this ring as a token of my love and affection.
Please wear it with a feeling of warmth and pride
I will love you, and remain faithful to you, now and always.

Ring exchange two

I give you this ring as a sign of our love
I promise to be faithful, loving and loyal for always
To cherish you through good times and bad, and to respect and honour you

Ring exchange three

I promise to give you my love and friendship,
To be there for you when you need me the most,
To laugh with you, to cry with you, and to confide in you,
To trust you, to comfort you, and to support you.
All that I have I share with you.
I promise to respect you, and be faithful to you always.
These promises I make for the rest of my life
And I give you this ring as a token of our marriage.

Ring exchange four

This ring represents our love.
I vow to love you and care for you
I shall spend my life with you
And share everything I have with you.

And Finally...

The Registrar will add closing words and the Officer will complete the registration of your marriage. You will both be required to check your marriage schedule along with your two witnesses. Please make sure everything is accurate, as there is a fee for correcting entries later. There will be an opportunity for you to take photographs before you leave.

If you have any further questions about preparing for your ceremony or what will happen on the day, please check our website or get in touch with our team who will be happy to help.

Best wishes to you both for the future.