



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremony Choices and Questionnaire

This form is designed to give you all the information you will need to help you plan your ceremony with us. It covers ceremonies taking place in the Town Hall and at our approved venues and hotels.

We will give you all the options allowing you to personalise your ceremony and include things that will make your day special!

You must complete the questionnaire at the end of this form, where necessary, and return it the register office.

The register office is always here to help you with advice and guidance with all aspects of your ceremony and you can contact us at any time.

Our website contains lots of useful information about our ceremonies: www.darlington.gov.uk/registeroffice

Email: registeroffice@darlington.gov.uk

Address: Register Office
Town Hall
Feethams
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Telephone: 01325 406400

The Ceremony Wording

The ceremony script spoken by the registrar is a standard format. You have the option to choose the wording of the vows you say to each other. You may also choose to include a reading(s) that may be spoken by a family member or friend.

Vows

Marriage is a verbal contract. You become legally married upon the completion of your vows. It is custom, but not obligatory, for you to exchange rings at this point.

You must both say **declaratory** and **contractual** vows during the ceremony.

A civil partnership is a written contract. The civil partnership is formed when the couple and witnesses have signed the civil partnership schedule. You may still say vows and exchange rings if you wish.

Both parties choose from one of the following options. You must choose the same vows:

Option A

Declaratory Words: *“I do solemnly declare, that I know not, of any lawful impediment, why I (name) may not be joined in matrimony to (name)”*

Contractual Words: *“I give you this ring, as a token of my love, and as a reminder, of our marriage vows, and I call upon these persons here present, to witness that I (name) do take thee (name) to be my lawful wedded husband/wife”*

Option B

Declaratory Words: *“I declare that I know, of no legal reason, why I (name) may not be joined in marriage to (name)”*

Contractual words: *“I (name) take you (name) to be my lawful wedded husband/wife”*

Option C

Declaratory Words: *You reply “Yes” to the following question: “Are you (name) free to lawfully marry (name)?”*

Contractual Words: *“I (name) take you (name) to be my lawful wedded husband/wife”*

Please do not worry about saying your legal vows. The registrar will say them first, a few words at a time, and you will repeat them.

Additional Vows

After your legal vows, you have the option to add on some additional vows. This is a perfect way of making the exchange of your rings a more meaningful part of the ceremony and allows you to express your feelings to each other. These additional vows are optional.

Extra Vows A:

And I promise to care for you with love and friendship. To support and comfort you through good times and through troubled times. I promise to care for you with love and patience, to respect and cherish you and to be faithful always. These promises I make to you for the rest of my life.

Extra Vows B:

When you are weak, I shall strengthen you. When you are sad, I shall comfort you.

And when you need me, I will be there. In happiness I will laugh with you. And in our life together I will be forever faithful. I give you this ring as a token of my enduring love.

With my heart I pledge to you, all that I am and all that I will become. With this ring I marry you and join my life to yours.

Extra Vows C

I promise to give you my love and friendship. To be there for you when you need me most. To laugh and cry with you, to trust and confide in you. I promise to give you my comfort, support and respect. To share all I have with you, and to be faithful always. These promises I make to you for the rest of my life.

Extra Vows D

I promise to love and care for you, and to be faithful to you always. May we look to our future together with hope, happiness and joy. May we remember this day, keeping it perfect in our hearts forever.

Extra Vows E

Secure in the knowledge that you will be a constant friend, my faithful partner in life and my one true love. Today I give you, in the presence of these witnesses, my promise to support you through the good times and the bad. I promise to love you without reservation, comfort you in times of distress, encourage you to achieve your aims, always be open and honest with you, and cherish you as long as we both shall live.

Extra Vows F

I have waited my whole life to have someone as wonderful as you, for someone to love me the way you do. I am proud to marry you today. I give myself to you as your husband / wife, and I promise to treasure our life together.

Extra Vows G

To have and to hold from this day forward. Through sickness and in health, through happiness and sadness. I give to you my unending love and devotion. I promise to respect and cherish you and to be faithful always. I look forward to spending the rest of my life with you and will love you always.

Extra Vows H

Write your own additional vows to each other (these are subject to approval by the Superintendent Registrar and must contain no religious content).

Personalising the Ceremony

We recognise that it is important to make your ceremony meaningful and personal to you.

You may wish to include family and friends as part of your ceremony, and we offer ways to help you achieve this.

Whether you wish to have a short, simple ceremony or a longer ceremony we offer the following options (dependent on venue) to help you make the most of your day.

- Music
- Readings
- Candle Ceremony (hotels only)
- Promises to Children (hotels only)

Music

For ceremonies taking place at an **hotel or approved venue**, you should liaise with their staff regarding the format of the music you intend to use. You should check what equipment they have for playing music or what facilities/space they can accommodate for live musicians.

For ceremonies **at the register office** you may bring your own music to be played. You can bring a CD, USB stick or mobile device (e.g. phone) to physically connect to our music system. You can also connect via Bluetooth if preferred.

If using a mobile phone, you should ensure your music is on a dedicated playlist and downloaded to your device. It is advisable that your phone be set to 'Airplane Mode' and the passcode disabled if our staff are to play the music.

We do not allow live musicians at the register office.

If you do not bring your own music, we can play a generic choice for you. You will need music for:

1. Seating of guests (two tracks recommended)
2. Entrance of the bride/couple
3. Signing of the Marriage Schedule and official photographs (two tracks recommended)
4. Exit of the couple followed by guests

The music used in your ceremony can be entirely your choice; however, it must not be religious (no hymns or music which praises or celebrates a religion).

Readings

A reading is a wonderful way to personalise your ceremony and involve friends and family in your special day. Readings can be words that resonate with you as a couple and they will carry added meaning when spoken during your ceremony.

You may have up to three readings as part of a ceremony at an hotel and one reading at the register office.

Readings must not have any religious content but can be a poem, a passage from literature or words from a movie or a song. The Superintendent Registrar must approve all readings. Guests at your wedding must give the reading, not the registrar; however, we will speak with the reader at the start of the ceremony to put them at ease and advise on what they will need to do. Readers must bring the reading with them on the day.

Our website has a selection of more popular readings, however there are many options available if you search online. You may even have someone write a bespoke piece for you.

A reading is a lovely way of extending your ceremony and we encourage you to consider including one or more.

Candle Ceremony

A candle ceremony is offered at hotel ceremonies only (subject to approval by the hotel). This option is not available for ceremonies at the register office.

The candle ceremony takes place in two parts during your ceremony, the first part before you say your vows and the second part after your vows. It is another way for you to involve family and friends in your special day.

Three candles are required, and you must supply these yourself. We will supply everything else needed on the day. The candles must be able to stand on a table, or you should supply an appropriate holder/stand.

- Part 1:** The registrar will invite two guests to step forward to light a candle each. They do not need to speak, and the registrar will say some appropriate words to explain the candles not only represent the couple, but also the two sets of family and friends who will be joined together as one. These candles are often lit by mothers or children, although anyone can light these candles for you.
- Part 2:** After your vows the final candle can be lit. It is common for the couple to light this candle together, but you can invite anyone to do this. Using a flame from the first two candles, you will then light the final candle. The registrar will explain this symbolising the joining of your lives and celebrates the commitment you are making to each other.

Promises to Children

This is an option for hotel weddings only.

Children are an important part of your family and acknowledging them as part of your ceremony can be a bonding moment for you all.

You may choose to include the following words in your ceremony. These will be spoken by the registrar.

“(Name) and (name)’s marriage will be enriched by the lives of (children’s names). Through their commitment to each other (name) and (name) have recognised their responsibility to provide a secure and happy home in which (children’s names) can grow and prosper.

The upbringing of children is not always an easy task, but the strength of marriage will further help to guide them along this path.”

Signing of the schedule and photographs

At the end of the ceremony the couple and their two witnesses will be asked to sign the Marriage/Civil Partnership Schedule. This legally confirms the details to be added to the National Electronic Register. These details are then used to produce your marriage / civil partnership certificates.

Witnesses

A maximum of two witnesses is generally permitted. Witnesses should be at least 16 years of age. They can be any person who was in the room during your ceremony and witnessed your marriage/civil partnership take place. Witnesses do not need to bring identification to the ceremony.

Witnesses must give their full names and are required to sign the Marriage Schedule.

Photographs

There will be an opportunity for photographs to be taken after the official signing of the Schedule. Photographs will be limited to the couple themselves and photographs of the couple and their witnesses. Further photographs can be taken separate to the ceremony.

We appreciate the importance of photographs and the registrars will assist photographers and videographers on the day. We would recommend that any photographer and videographer introduce themselves to the registrars before the ceremony begins to ensure everyone understands the boundaries of recording the day.

There is no longer a blank marriage register used for photographs. Due to the sensitive and personal data recorded on the Schedule document we cannot allow the signing of this to be photographed or filmed in any way. A blank Schedule document can be used to replicate the signing if desired.

Guests will often use their phones as cameras on the day and this is encouraged. Guests should remain at their seats to take photos unless they are invited to step forward by the registrar or official photographer. Guests should be reminded that all telecommunication devices must be set to silent, or put on airplane mode, to avoid disrupting your special moment!

Certificates

Two certificates will be produced. The fees for these are included in the price you pay to the register office to perform your ceremony.

You will not receive your certificates on the day of the ceremony.

Certificates can only be produced once the details of the ceremony are entered onto the National Electronic Marriage Register. This takes place at the register office after the ceremony.

Certificates will be posted to you first class and are sent to the address on your marriage schedule unless you indicate otherwise.

We recommend you allow 7 calendar days for them to reach you within the UK.

Additional certificates can be ordered at any time via our website **www.darlington.gov.uk**

Please follow the link for 'Buy a Certificate' on the homepage. Certificates cost £11.00 each and can be posted anywhere in the world.

And finally...

The register office meets hundreds of couples each year at their marriage and civil partnership ceremonies. We understand the challenges in organising your special day and know how important it is that you celebrate in a way that suits you best. This includes small, intimate ceremonies and those with many guests.

We are here to help with advice and ideas. We want you to have the best day that you can!

Please now complete the following questionnaire and return pages 9, 10, 11 and 12 to the register office.

You should return this at least two weeks prior to the date of your ceremony.

You may:

- Scan/photograph and email it to: **registeroffice@darlington.gov.uk**
- Post or return to: **The Register Office, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT**

Your notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Ceremony Questionnaire

(Complete and return the following pages)

This section should be detached and completed with all your ceremony choices.

The questionnaire should be returned to the register office at least two weeks before the date of your ceremony.

You may:

- return the form to the register office in person
- post it to us at Register Office, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QT or
- scan/photograph and email the form to registeroffice@darlington.gov.uk

Part 1 - Ceremony details

Ceremony Venue: Your ceremony will be at one of the following: 1. The Oak Room, Town Hall 2. The Foyer, Town Hall 3. An approved venue or hotel	Please state 1, 2, or 3. If a venue, please indicate the name of the hotel/venue
Date of ceremony:
Time of ceremony:
Your names: Please state your full legal names. Indicate the name you wish us to address you by, if different to your first forename. e.g. Chris/Christopher	1. 2.

Part 2 - The people taking part in your ceremony

How many guests are attending?
Who is your Best Man/Woman? (if applicable)



<p>Are you exchanging rings?</p> <p>How many, if applicable?</p> <p>Who will be your ringbearer?</p>	<p>Yes / No (delete as applicable)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Will you have any ushers?</p> <p>If yes, how many?</p>	<p>Yes / No (delete as applicable)</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Will you have any Bridesmaids/Flower Girls or Page Boys?</p> <p>If yes, how many?</p>	<p>Yes / No (delete as applicable)</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>How are you starting the ceremony?</p> <p>1. Bridal entrance</p> <p>2. Couple walk in together</p> <p>3. No entrance, begin in the room</p> <p>Who is giving the bride/partner 1 away? (if applicable)</p>	<p>Please state 1, 2, or 3.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Do you have an official photographer?</p>	<p>Yes / No (delete as applicable)</p>
<p>Do you have a videographer, or are you recording/ livestreaming?</p> <p>Please indicate which.</p>	<p>Yes / No (delete as applicable)</p> <p>.....</p>

Part 3 - Your Choice of Vows (*You must choose the same declaratory & contractual vows*)

<p>Groom or Partner 1</p> <p>Declaratory Vows (A, B or C):</p> <p>Contractual Vows (A, B or C):</p> <p>Extra Vows:</p>	<p>Please state your option</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Bride or Partner 2</p> <p>Declaratory Vows (A, B or C):</p> <p>Contractual Vows (A, B or C):</p> <p>Extra Vows:</p>	<p>Please state your option</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Part 4 - Ceremony Content

<i>Your ceremony options</i>	<i>Your choices</i>
Music format? (CD/phone/USB/live musician)
Candle Ceremony (hotels only)	Part 1 Person 1 Person 2 Part 2 Person 1 Person 2
Readings One reading at the register office. Up to three readings at a venue/hotel.	Name of the person reading. 1. 2. 3.
Promises to Children (hotels only)	Names of children to be acknowledged:

Part 5 - Witnesses

	Please state their full name
Witness 1
Witness 2

