



**APPLICATION FOR PREMISES TO BE  
APPROVED AS A VENUE FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS  
IN PURSUANCE OF SECTION 26(1)(bb) OF  
THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AS AMENDED 1994, AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS ACT  
2004.**

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**TO BE RETAINED BY APPLICANT**

**NOTES ON THE REQUIREMENTS BEFORE AN  
APPROVAL CAN BE GRANTED**

The non-returnable fee for this application is £1,600 and must be submitted with the application to the Proper Officer for Registration Matters, Borough Solicitor, Corporate Services Department, Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT. Cheques must be made payable to Darlington Borough Council and crossed A/C Payee only.

The application must be made by the proprietor or trustee of the premises. When made on behalf of a limited company there should be a separate statement of the names and addresses of all the directors.

The premises must fulfil the following standard requirements in Schedule 1 of the Regulations:

1. Having regard to their primary use, situation, construction and state of repair, the premises must, in the opinion of the authority, be a seemly and dignified venue for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships.
2. The premises must be regularly available to the public for use for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships.
3. The premises must have the benefit of such fire precautions as may reasonably be required by the authority, having consulted with the fire authority, and such other reasonable provision for the health and safety of persons employed in or visiting the premises as the authority considers appropriate.
4. The premises must have no recent or continuing connection with any religion, religious practice or religious persuasion which would be incompatible with the use of the premises for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships in pursuance of section 26(1)(bb) of the Act.
5. The room or rooms in which ceremonies of marriage or civil partnerships will be solemnized if approval is granted must be identifiable by description as a distinct part of the premises.

In considering the suitability of premises as a venue the local authority will have regard to the following Guidance from the Registrar General:

1. The new law is intended to allow civil marriages or civil partnerships to take place regularly in hotels, stately homes, civic halls and similar premises without compromising the fundamental principles of English marriage law and Parliament's intention to maintain the solemnity of the occasion. The term "premises" is defined in Regulation 2(1) and there are restrictions introduced in Schedule 1. These will mean that certain premises would not be suitable for approval.
2. Marriages and civil partnerships must take place in readily identifiable premises. This will preclude marriages from taking place in the open air, in a tent, marquee or any other temporary structure and in most forms of transport.
3. Marriages and civil partnerships must be solemnized in premises with open doors, which the Registrar General interprets to mean that the public must have unfettered access to witness the marriage and make objections prior to or during the ceremony.
4. A private house is unlikely to be an appropriate venue for civil marriage or civil partnership. It would not be known to the public as a marriage or civil partnership venue or regularly available for their use.
5. The primary use of a building would also render it unsuitable if that use could demean marriage or bring it into disrepute.
6. The secular nature of civil marriage or civil partnership precludes the use of any building with a recent or continuing religious connection. This effectively rules out any building or room whose description, purpose or appearance is still considered to be linked to religion. A chapel in a stately home and a building containing furniture or fittings associated with a place of religious worship, or which has stained glass windows depicting a religious image are examples of a continuing religious connection. However, premises in which a religious group meets occasionally may be suitable if the primary use of the premises is secular.
7. Marriages or civil partnerships on approved premises may be followed by a celebration, commemoration or blessing of the couples choice, providing that it is not a religious marriage or civil partnership ceremony and is separate from the civil ceremony. However, if a religious blessing were to regularly follow marriage or civil partnership ceremonies on particular premises, or be considered part of the service being offered on the premises, there may well be a religious connection which would breach the requirements and lead to the local authority having to consider revoking the approval.

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This form when completed must be forwarded to the Proper Officer for Registration Matters at Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT together with the appropriate fee (Annex A) payable to Darlington Borough Council.

1. I apply for the premises named at item 2 below to be approved for regular use by the public as a venue for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships in the presence of a superintendent registrar.
2. **I attach 3 copies of a plan of the premises showing the room(s) in which it is intended that marriages and civil partnerships will take place.**
3. I understand that :-
  - (a) the premises will be inspected for suitability before approval is granted and, if this application is successful, may be subject to subsequent inspection;
  - (b) public notice of the application will be given by advertisement in a newspaper with a period of three weeks for objections;
  - (c) approval, if granted, will be for a three year period, subject to revocation; and,
  - (d) the premises must satisfy the local authority on fire precautions and health and safety provisions.
4. I declare that -
  - (a) I have read and understood the information contained in this form and Annexes A, B and C; and
  - (b) the building has no recent or continuing religious connection; and
  - (c) I have consulted the planning authority as to whether planning consent is required and attach evidence that it is content that the premises may be used for marriages.
5. I further declare that, if approval is granted -

- (a) the premises will be regularly available for public use as a marriage or civil partnership venue; and
- (b) I will comply with the standard conditions (Annex A) and any local conditions attached to that grant of approval

This application must be made by the proprietor or a trustee of the premises. If successful the applicant will be the holder of the approval.

Signature of applicant: .....

Date: .....

Interest in the premises: .....

Address for correspondence and contact telephone number:

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1.	Full names and private addresses of applicant. If the application is made by a limited company please give the address of the registered office and where different state also the main trading address of the company.	
2.	Name, postal address and telephone number of the premises which are the subject of this application.	
3.	Please describe the nature of the premises at question 2 (e.g. hotel, stately home, civic accommodation) and the primary and other uses to which it is regularly put.	
4.	Is the person or company named in reply to question 1 the occupier of the premises?	
5.	If the answer to question 4 above is 'No' and there is another occupier, please give their name(s) and address(es).	
6.	Please state here the maximum number of people permitted to occupy this room under any fire certificate which applies. <b>Please attach a copy of any certificate in force.</b>	
7.	Do the premises currently have the benefit of any licence authorising use for public entertainment or similar purposes? If so please attach a copy.	



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**THE CONDITIONS TO BE ATTACHED TO GRANTS OF APPROVAL**

The Authority must attach the following standard conditions from Schedule 2 of the Regulations to any approval :

1. The holder of the approval must ensure that there is at all times an individual with responsibility for ensuring compliance with these conditions (“the responsible person”) and that the responsible person’s occupation, seniority, position of responsibility in relation to the premises, or other factors (his/her “qualification”), indicate that he/she is in a position to ensure compliance with these conditions.
2. The responsible person or, in his/her absence, an appropriately qualified deputy appointed by him/her, shall be available on the premises for a minimum of one hour prior to each marriage or civil partnership ceremony and throughout each marriage or civil partnership ceremony.
3. The holder must notify the authority -
  - (a) of his/her name and address immediately upon him/her becoming the holder of an approval under regulation 7(2), and
  - (b) of the name, address and qualification of the responsible person immediately upon the appointment of a new responsible person.
4. The holder must also notify the authority immediately of any change to any of the following -
  - (a) the layout of the premises, as shown in the plan submitted with the approved application, or in the use of the premises,
  - (b) the name or full postal address of the approved premises,

- (c) the description of the room or rooms in which marriages or civil partnerships are to be solemnized,
  - (d) the name or address of the holder of the approval, and
  - (e) the name, address or qualification of the responsible person.
5. The approved premises must be available at all reasonable times for inspection by the authority.
  6. A suitable notice stating that the premises have been approved for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships in pursuance of section 26(1)(bb) of the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended) and Civil Partnership Act 2004, and identifying and giving directions to the room in which a marriage or civil partnership ceremony is to take place must be displayed at each public entrance to the premises for one hour prior to the ceremony and throughout the ceremony.
  7. No food or drink may be sold or consumed in the room in which a marriage or civil partnership ceremony takes place for one hour prior to that ceremony or during that ceremony.
  8. All marriage and civil partnership ceremonies must take place in a room identified as one to be used for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships on the plan submitted with the approved application.
  9. The room in which a marriage or civil partnership is solemnized must be separate from any other activity on the premises at the time of the ceremony.
  10. The arrangements for and content of each marriage or civil partnership ceremony must meet with the prior approval of the superintendent registrar of the district in which the approved premises are situated.
  11. Any reading, music, words or performance which forms part of a ceremony of marriage or civil partnership must be secular in nature; for this purpose any such material used by way of introduction to, in any interval between parts of, or by way of conclusion to the ceremony shall be treated as forming part of the ceremony.
  12. Public access to any ceremony of marriage or civil partnership solemnized in approved premises must be permitted without charge.
  13. Any reference to the approval of premises on any sign or notice, or on any stationery or publication, or within any advertisement may state that the premises have been approved by the authority as a venue for marriage and civil partnership in pursuance of section 26(1)(bb) of the Act, (as amended) and civil partnership act 2004, but shall not state or imply any recommendation of the premises or its facilities by the authority, the Registrar General or any of the officers or employees of either of them.

*Additionally any further conditions the local authority considers appropriate upon grant of approval.*



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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**RENEWAL**

1. The holder may apply for the renewal of an approval when the current approval has between six and twelve months to run. An application for renewal made in this period will extend the current approval until the application has been finally dealt with. A renewal will run from the expiry date of the current approval.

**REVOCAATION**

2. The authority may revoke an approval if it is satisfied, after considering any representations from the holder, that the use or structure of the premises has changed so that any of the standard or local requirements cannot be met or the holder has failed to comply with one or more of the standard or local conditions attached to the approval.
3. The Registrar General may direct the authority to revoke an approval if, in his opinion and after considering any representations from the holder, there have been breaches of the law relating to marriage or civil partnership on the approved premises.
4. When an approval has been revoked the regulations require the former holder to notify any couples who had arranged to marry or hold a civil partnership ceremony on the premises.

**REVIEWS**

5. An applicant may seek a review by the local authority of its decision to refuse to grant an approval, to attach local conditions, to refuse to renew an approval or to revoke an approval.
6. The review must be carried out by a different officer, committee or sub-committee than that which made the decision which is being appealed against. The review panel may confirm the decision, rescind it or vary it with the imposition of fresh or further conditions.
7. The authority may charge an additional fee for a review of its decision to refuse to grant an approval, to attach local conditions or to refuse to renew an approval.

8. A direction by the Registrar General to revoke an approval is not subject to review by the authority.

## **REGISTRATION**

9. Details of approved premises will be held for public inspection by the authority. These details will be copied to the superintendent registrar of the district in which the premises are situated and to the Registrar General who will periodically circulate the details to all superintendent registrars.

*Registration/Application Form*

**GUIDANCE FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO HOLD A MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONY ON APPROVED PREMISES**

1. As soon as a couple have made provisional arrangements for their marriage or civil partnership ceremony on approved premises they should be advised to contact the Superintendent Registrar for the district in which the premises are situated at Bull Wynd Darlington (Tel. (01325) 346604).
2. Without the presence of this Superintendent Registrar and a Registrar there can be no marriage or civil partnership and any arrangements for the use of the premises depend entirely on their availability. It is, therefore, essential that the couple make an advance booking with this Superintendent Registrar for his/her attendance at their proposed marriage or civil partnership as soon as a booking can be accepted. A fee for this attendance will be payable before the ceremony.
3. The couple will also have to give a notice of marriage or civil partnership to the Superintendent Registrar(s) of the district(s) in which they live. This notice must be given in person by both parties, and will be valid for one year from the dated of issue. Both should, therefore, attend the Registrar Office where they live as soon as possible after notice can be given.
4. The couple should be warned that any arrangements made for a marriage or civil partnership to take place on the approved premises are dependant on :-
  - (a) the attendance of the Superintendent Registrar and a Registrar for the district in which the premises are situated; and
  - (b) the issue of the authority or authorities for marriage or civil partnership by the Superintendent Registrar(s) to whom notice of marriage was given.
5. When a notice is given in different registration district from the one where the marriage or civil partnership is taking place, the couple will have to collect the authority before the ceremony and ensure that it is delivered to the Registrar who is to attend the ceremony.
6. The couple should be advised that only a civil, non-religious ceremony can be permitted by the Superintendent Registrar. Any music, reading, words or performance which form any part of the ceremony must be secular. The content of the ceremony must be agreed in advance with the Superintendent Registrar who will be attending the ceremony.
7. Any rights of copyright for music, readings etc. permitted at the ceremony are a matter for the couple and the holder of the approval.

