

GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR A FIRST CIVIL CEREMONIES LICENCE

Below is a quick guide to the application process for a venue applying for its first civil ceremonies licence. More detailed information on the process is given at the back of this pack.

A venue must be

- secular
- a permanent structure
- dignified
- regularly available to the public
- accessible to the public to witness the ceremonies

The application process – first stage

An initial inspection by a Registration Manager to discuss the suitability of the venue. To request the suitability inspection you need to submit:

- a completed application form
- 4 plans of the venue showing the ceremony rooms
- evidence of planning permission from your local district council for holding ceremonies at the venue **or** an email/statement from the local district council advising that planning consent is not required
- a fee of £110 payable by card or cheque made out to Nottinghamshire County Council

Please send the above to Nottinghamshire County Council, Registration & Celebratory Services, 3rd Floor Bridgford South, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP.

The application process – second stage

If your venue is suitable for holding ceremonies you will be asked to pay the balance of the fee of £1,340 by card, cheque or invoice in order to:

- give public notice on Nottinghamshire County Council's website
- request a health and safety inspection by the Registration Manager
- request a report from the Fire Service

The licence

Nottinghamshire County Council will issue a licence when all actions arising from the public notice, health and safety and fire reports have been completed. The licence will run for 3 years. Details of the licence will be sent to the General Register Office and publicised on Nottinghamshire County Council's website.

If you would like further advice, please call the Registration Team at County Hall on 0115 9772771 or email your enquiry to weddings@nottscc.gov.uk

APPLICATION FORM FOR FIRST CIVIL CEREMONIES LICENCE

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.

When completed the application form, plans, evidence of planning permission and the fee should be sent to Nottinghamshire County Council, Registration and Celebratory Services, 3rd Floor Bridgford South, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP.

Section 1 – Details of venue

Name and postal address of the venue which are the subject of this application	
Telephone number of the premises	
Email address of the premises	
Please describe the nature of the premises (e.g. hotel, stately home, civic accommodation)	
Name of ceremony room/s and the maximum number of people permitted to occupy each room under the premises' fire risk assessment. 4 sets of plans should be sent with the application.	
Name of person/s to be treated as 'responsible person' at the venue (This is the person/s who will be responsible at all times and be present at ceremonies to ensure compliance with the conditions attached to the licence approval and will deal with any special instructions and requirements.)	
Do the premises currently have the benefit of any licence issued under the Licensing Act 2003? If so please send a copy with the application.	
Have the premises been granted approval by the local district council for the holding ceremonies on the site? If yes please send a copy of the approval with the application. If the local district council have signified planning consent is not required please send a copy of their letter or email stating this fact with your application.	

Please complete Section 2 overleaf – Details of applicant / licence holder

Section 2 – Details of applicant / licence holder

I apply for the premises detailed in Section 1 above to be approved for the solemnization of marriages and the registration of civil partnerships. I attach 4 copies of a plan of the premises showing all the room(s) in which it is intended that marriages or civil partnerships will take place.

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 further inspection/s;
- b) public notice of the application will appear on the authority's website for a period of three weeks for objections;
- c) approval, if granted, will be for a period of three years; and
- d) the authority will need to be satisfied that appropriate health and safety provision and fire safety is in place.

I declare that:

- a) I have read and understood the information contained in this form and guidance;
- b) the premises are not religious premises;
- c) the premises are not a register office; and
- d) 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 and civil partnerships.

I further declare that, if approval is granted:

- a) subject to any exemptions in the Equality Act 2010 the premises will be regularly available for public use for the solemnization of marriages and the registration of civil partnerships; and,
- b) I will comply with the standard conditions and any further conditions that the authority considers reasonable that are attached to the approval.

Full name and private addresses of applicant. If application is made by a limited company (or other incorporated business) please give the address of the registered office and where different state also the main trading address of the company.	
Is the person or company detailed above the occupier of the premises? If the answer is "no" and there is another occupier please give their name and address.	
Should a licence be granted the name of the person who will be the authorised signatory on the licence for the applicant stated above.	

Signature of applicant Date

If applying on behalf of a company or other incorporated business please state position in the company, address for correspondence, contact telephone number and email address.

FIRST CIVIL CEREMONIES LICENCE – EXPLANATORY NOTES

By law, marriages and civil partnerships must take place in venues which have been licensed for this purpose. Nottinghamshire Registration and Celebratory Services is responsible for the application process/granting of licences for venues located within the County of Nottinghamshire. Once a licence is granted, the venue is able to hold wedding and civil partnership ceremonies along with our other range of celebratory ceremonies such as naming and renewal of vows. The licence, if granted, will run for 3 years.

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

FIRST STAGE – SUITABILITY INSPECTION

Once the application/suitability inspection fee is received a Registration Services Manager will come out to meet you and have a look around the venue and its facilities. The inspection is a check to establish that the premises meets the criteria laid down by the General Register Office as a suitable venue to hold ceremonies. It is also to make a venue aware of its responsibilities and duties if a licence is granted.

The service manager will be looking at four main areas:

- Suitability of premises
- Facilities for customers
- Facilities for registrars
- Awareness of applicant as to their licence responsibilities

Suitability of premises

The premises must be a permanent immovable structure in a good state of repair and must be seemly and dignified and regularly available to the public for the solemnization of marriages or the formation of civil partnerships. The premises must not be a religious premises or a register office. The ceremony rooms must be identifiable as a distinct part of the premises.

Outside structures – need to demonstrate that they are a permanent feature at a fixed location in the grounds comprising at least one room with a roof. An alternative room to the outside structure needs to be provided in case of inclement weather. The structure needs to be able to accommodate a minimum of 6 people - the couple, the witnesses to the ceremony and two Registrars.

Facilities for customers

The service manager will be looking at seating capacity in the ceremony room/s; toilet facilities; car parking; disabled access and facilities; appropriate furniture and furnishings, lighting, etc.

Facilities for registrars

There will need to be a separate room for the Registrar to interview the couple prior to the ceremony. Access to a telephone and parking will be looked at as well as lighting and furniture. The personal safety of the Registrar will be considered.

Awareness of applicant

To discuss the practical issues of holding ceremonies and the duties of the responsible person who will liaise with the registration team on the day of the ceremony. These will include:

Food and drink – no food or drink may be served and/or consumed within the ceremony room/area one hour before and during the ceremony. It may be consumed elsewhere on the premises but the venue is responsible for ensuring it is not brought into the ceremony area or room. Non-alcoholic drinks may be consumed prior to the proceedings.

Music – should be secular in nature and the venue is responsible for ensuring compliance where necessary with Performing Rights and Performance licence requirements.

Statutory notice – stating the premises have been approved for the proceedings must be displayed at each public entrance to the premises for one hour prior to and throughout the ceremony. The service manager will give you a form of words for the notice should your venue be licensed.

Religion – any proceedings conducted on the premises should not be religious in nature.

Public access – to any ceremony in an approved venue must be allowed without charge.

SECOND STAGE - AFTER THE SUITABILITY INSPECTION

If a venue is considered suitable to hold ceremonies they will be asked to pay the balance of the fee in order for a public notice to be arranged and to request health and safety and fire service reports.

Public notice

This appears on the Celebrate in Nottinghamshire website. It runs for 3 weeks and is to check that there are no objections to the issue of the licence.

Health and safety inspection?

A Registration Services Manager will visit to meet with the person responsible at the venue for health and safety. He/she will go through a set checklist to confirm health and safety awareness/checks/reviews are being carried out. A good source of information for health and safety policy and practice is available on the Health and Safety Executive website - www.hse.gov.uk.

The service manager will ask to inspect the ceremony rooms and other facilities at the venue.

Some of the areas asked about are given below:

Risk assessment for civil ceremonies – a venue will need to have a separate risk assessment for ceremonies taking place on the premises. If candles are used at the premises this needs to be included in the risk assessment.

Health and safety at law poster – the service manager will check this is displayed at the venue.

Health and safety management – you will be asked about induction/training of staff in fire safety, first aid, accident reporting, etc. Are systems in place to check and review health and safety standards.

Welfare arrangements – looking at lighting, temperature, ventilation, cleaning. Provision for first aider and first aid kits.

Slips, trips and falls – looking at clear routes, slipping/tripping hazards, clearing of paths in bad weather, condition of stairs.

Windows and doors – looking at operation of doors in an emergency, safety standards.

Electrical systems and appliances – testing and inspecting of lighting and sockets and other electrical equipment, PAT testing, condition of electrical systems.

Parking area – looking at on site speed restrictions, barriers, signage, etc.

Legionella - check risk assessment is in place. Regular inspection and cleaning of systems.

Asbestos – if your premises contains asbestos is it maintained in a condition to protect exposure to building users.

Gas equipment – procedures in place to inspect appliances by a Gas safe registered engineer. Portable gas equipment – how to check and securely stored.

Lifting equipment – procedure for inspecting equipment, equipment maintained and serviced. Alarm fitted in passenger lifts.

Fire Service report

A copy of your application together with a set of plans will be sent to the Fire Service to check they have no objections to the licence being issued. As well as sending a report to Nottinghamshire County Council the Fire Service may send a report to the venue to check they are aware of their responsibilities under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Information is available on the website www.notts-fire.gov.uk.

THE LICENCE

Once the public notice is closed with no objections and all issues addressed from the health and safety and fire service reports a licence will be issued to the venue which will run for 3 years. Notification will be sent to the General Register Office and the venue's details will be included on the Celebrate in Nottinghamshire website – it will be helpful at this point to have some photographs that we can include on the ceremony listing to publicise your venue.

If, for any reason, a licence is not granted please ask Nottinghamshire County Council for details of your rights to review the decision.

RENEWAL OF YOUR LICENCE

A renewal reminder will be sent to you 3-4 months before your licence expires by Nottinghamshire County Council. It is up to the venue to ensure that a renewal is made before the current licence expires. The fee structure for renewal of a licence is given below:

Renewal - non-commercial organisations - £1,450

Renewal - commercial organisations - £2,350

CHANGES AFTER THE LICENCE IS ISSUED

It is not possible to outline all potential circumstances in which a change may occur after a licence is granted. Please contact Registration and Celebratory Services on 0115 9772771 for advice or email weddings@nottscc.gov.uk with your enquiry.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The guidance issued by the General Register Office in respect of issuing a licence to a venue is available at www.gov.uk – search for approval of premises for civil marriage.