

Covid Information for Ceremonies at Rye Town Hall

Naturally there have been significant changes to wedding ceremonies over the past few months. However, things finally seemed to have settled in to the 'new normal' and we are able to give you details of how we anticipate ceremonies being conducted for the foreseeable future. Should things change, we will update couples as soon as we have some certainty about how your ceremony is likely to be affected.

You are welcome to contact us at any time to request an update, or if you have any queries about your ceremony.

General measures:

- Guests will be required to remain 2m apart from other households wherever possible, maintaining a distance of at least 1m with a mitigating measure where this is not possible.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided at the entrance to the Town Hall – we ask that everyone uses this when arriving and leaving.
- Toilets are available for you and your guests' exclusive use.

Guests:

- Our capacity is limited, due to the social distancing regulations. The maximum number of guests (excluding bride, groom and the Registrars) permitted at any ceremony is 13. The final number we can accommodate will depend on the number of households/bubbles attending – and the numbers within each of those groups. We are finding that we can accommodate around 6 'bubbles', but this is subject to the configuration, and cannot be confirmed until we have further details from you.
- A 'bubble' – ie those that can sit together - is determined as all members of the same household, living together (so not required to distance from each other). It also refers to support bubbles, formed when two households have joined together and are no longer required to distance from each other. In order to establish how many guests we can manage, we will need a list of the number of households/bubbles attending, and the number of guests in each, so we can work out a seating plan.
- Children (even babes-in-arms) need to be included as they count towards the final number.
- If you are planning on having a photographer, they will need to be included as a separate bubble, which may reduce the numbers of guests we are able to accommodate. They will be allocated a seat, and be expected to remain static throughout the ceremony.
- At least a week prior to the ceremony we will require a list of guests' and photographer's names and contact telephone numbers for Test and Trace purposes. This information will be held securely, not used for any other purpose and securely destroyed after 21 days.
- All guests attending wedding ceremonies are now required to wear a mask upon entering the building, apart from those with a medical exemption or children up to - and including the age of - 11 years.
- Guests will be admitted to the building 5 minutes prior to the ceremony start time. Please note, we do not have anywhere under cover for them to wait, so ask that they take note of the weather in advance.

Bride and Groom:

- The bride and groom will need to arrive together 20 minutes prior to the ceremony start time, to be interviewed by the Registrars. This interview will take place in the main chamber, at a distance from the Registrars. Once this interview is over, guests will be admitted to the Chamber.

- The bride and groom will be required to wear a mask during the interview, however, they are exempt from wearing a mask during the ceremony itself.

The Ceremony:

- At the ceremony start time the Registrars will enter the Main Chamber, and commence the legal proceedings. They are unable to accommodate couples being escorted into the room, music, readings, additional vows or ring words in the ceremony. Once the legal proceedings are finished, the Registrars will move to the Mayor's Parlour alone to complete the Register. Then the Bride and Groom, and witnesses will then be shown in to sign the Register.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided before you sign the Register.
- Please bring your own pens (these should be black or blue ink).
- After the Register is signed, the Bride, Groom and witnesses will return to the Main Chamber, and the Registrars will leave the building.
- If you wish to include any vows, readings or ring exchanges this can take place after the Registrars have left, and prior to leaving the Main Chamber. The wedding party should then leave the building via the main stairs and Buttermarket. Provided social distancing guidelines are adhered to, photographs may be taken in the street in front of the Buttermarket.

Town Crier:

It is currently not possible for the Town Crier to give his 'cry' at weddings. However, he is able to attend in his uniform, to greet your guests on their arrival, if you wish – please let us know.

Disabled Access:

Please note that we are unable to make our stairclimber device available for disabled access, due to the close proximity of operator and passenger.

If you have any questions about any of these measures, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jessica Neame

Tel: 01797 223902

Email: townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk

Contacting the Registrars:

Guidance for couples wishing to make a new booking:

If you would like to make a new booking for a wedding or civil partnership at a licensed venue, please complete our Registrars Availability enquiry form, including your preferred date, time and venue in the email. To help us respond as quickly as possible, please be specific about your preferences. You must speak to the venue to confirm their availability and current capacity before you contact us. Please note that during this recovery period all bookings are subject to availability, and where notice of marriage or civil partnership has not been given, also subject to the availability of an appropriate notice appointment which is very limited at this time. We will respond to all emails in order of when they are received. Due to the high volume of emails we are receiving, please wait for us to respond before emailing us again.

Guidance for couples with an existing booking:

If you already have a booking with us for a wedding or civil partnership at an agreed date and time, please wait for us to contact you to confirm the details. We will contact all couples in

chronological order to talk through the restrictions in place and give you the option to either confirm your booking or postpone without any amendment fees.

www.ceremoniesineastsussex.co.uk