

Covid Information for Ceremonies at Rye Town Hall

Naturally there have been significant changes to wedding ceremonies over the past year. Please read the following guidance carefully. If there are any changes to this guidance that will affect your ceremony, we will update you as soon as possible.

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.
- Please note that the windows in the main chamber will be open, for increased ventilation, even in colder weather.

Guests:

- Our capacity remains limited, due to the social distancing regulations. The maximum number of attendees we can accommodate will remain at 30 (including the couple marrying) until 19 June at the earliest.
- *No earlier than 19 July 2021:*
Weddings, civil partnerships and receptions will be able to go ahead with all limits on social contact lifted. Please bear in mind that this guidance remains unconfirmed and could change. If social distancing requirements remain, then the maximum number of attendees will remain at 30 after 19 July.

This date is subject to confirmation one week beforehand and is the earliest that restrictions may be lifted.

- **We are currently able to accommodate up to 28 guests (excluding the couple marrying), according to the following seating configuration:**

4 groups of a maximum of 5 people in each = 20 guests

2 groups of a maximum of 4 people in each = 8 guests

TOTAL = 28 GUESTS MAXIMUM

Please see the separate seating plan provided with this guidance.

(We are required to enable social distancing between attendees, so that those who wish to maintain social distancing are able to. This configuration allows separate households/bubbles to distance should they wish.)

- We have calculated an alternative seating plan to accommodate a single contractor, such as a photographer. They can be counted in addition to the maximum guest number. They are included only as a separate bubble of one person, and will be allocated a seat, and be expected to remain static throughout the ceremony.
- New guidance on contact with family and friends says that it is up to the individual whether they distance from family and friends not in their household or bubble - but the advice remains to exercise caution. However, it also stipulates that the site owner's responsibility remains to calculate the number of people that can be accommodated with social distancing in place.

- Children (even babes-in-arms) need to be included as they count towards the final number.
- At least a week prior to the ceremony we will require a list of guests' (and photographers) 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 those attending wedding ceremonies are currently 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(s) and/or Groom(s):

- The Registrars interview, conducted prior to the ceremony, can now take place with the couple together, or separately provided they don't exceed the total allotted time of 15 minutes. Please ensure you notify us in advance of your preference.
- ***If being interviewed together:*** please 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.
- ***If being interviewed separately:*** The groom should arrive 20 minutes prior to the ceremony time, to be interviewed in the main chamber.
- The bride should arrive 10 minutes prior to the ceremony, and will be shown to the Mayors Parlour for the interview. It is not possible to be accompanied to this interview, and masks should be worn throughout.
- Walking down the aisle can now be accommodated, provided it does not unreasonably extend the length of the ceremony. Only one person may accompany the bride walking down the aisle, should you wish.
- The couple will be required to wear a mask during the interviews, however, they are exempt from wearing a mask during the ceremony itself.

Music:

- Music is now permitted during the entrance of the bride and whilst walking down the aisle, and during the signing of the Schedule.
- We are currently unable to provide equipment for the playing of music.
- You should nominate a guest to be responsible for the music, which can be played from a phone or portable speaker.
- Music should be at a volume low enough not to encourage people to raise their voices to be heard.

The Ceremony:

- At the ceremony start time the Registrars will enter the Main Chamber, and commence the legal proceedings. Once the legal proceedings are finished, the Registrars will move to the Mayor's Parlour alone to complete the Schedule. Then the couple, and witnesses will be shown, individually, in to sign the Schedule.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided before you sign the Schedule.
- Please bring your own pens (these should be black or blue ink).
- After the Schedule is signed, the couple and witnesses will return to the Main Chamber, and the Registrars will leave the building.

- If you wish to include any readings or further embellishments, these 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:

The Town Crier is now able to give a 'cry' at the end of ceremonies. We have made some small adjustments to ensure everybody's safety.

- The Town Crier remains unable to make any announcements indoors, prior to the ceremony.
- For his traditional 'cry', after the ceremony, the Town Crier will make his cry from the rear of the Buttermarket, once everyone has exited the space to the front of the building. We recommend that the couple stand either side of the Buttermarket steps while the cry takes place, to provide a photo opportunity should you wish.
- No one should re-enter the Buttermarket area during, or immediately after the cry.

Disabled Access:

Please note that we are currently 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

Email: townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01797 223902

Contacting the Registrars:

Ceremoniesineastsussex.co.uk

Email: ceremonieshub@eastsussex.gov.uk

Tel: 0345 60 80 198

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

Reviewed 23/06/21 JN