Approved Premises for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships - 
Introduction and Application
This booklet sets out the arrangements currently operated by Kent County Council (KCC) for the licensing of venues as Approved Premises for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

These arrangements also apply to the renewal of a licence.

Please read it carefully.

The County Council may change these arrangements from time to time.

If you require advice or assistance please contact either:-

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NOTES

In this booklet the term “Approved Premises” means “Approved Premises for the solemnization of civil Marriages under The Marriage Act 1949, and the registration of civil partnerships under The Civil Partnership Act 2004”.

Licence means the approval of any premises pursuant to The Marriages and Civil Partnership (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005

The registration and approval authority is Kent County Council. Throughout this document it will be referred to as KCC and any reference should be construed accordingly.
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Introduction

- Kent County Council (KCC) is responsible for the provision of the Registration Service in the County of Kent. Part of this Service deals with the registration and celebration of civil marriages, the registration of civil partnerships, and includes the approval (licensing) of venues where civil marriages and civil partnerships may take place.

- Under The Marriage Act 1994, the Civil Partnership Act 2004 and The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, KCC may approve suitable venues where civil marriage and civil partnerships may take place without compromising the fundamental principles of English law and Parliament’s intention to maintain the solemnity of the occasion for these important events. These venues are called “Approved Premises” and include hotels, stately homes, civic halls, castles and similar places. Many venues also have garden gazebos or other free standing structures where marriages may be celebrated—subject to suitable weather conditions.

- KCC welcomes applications in respect of all types of venues that meet the requirements and conditions detailed in this Booklet.

- However, before making an application applicants are advised to arrange a pre-inspection visit by the Licensing Team. There is no charge for this service and it provides an excellent opportunity to discuss an application, ensure that the venue is suitable and that applicants fully understand the requirements of the licence.

Civil Marriage

- Civil marriages may be take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm on any day of the week including Sundays, Bank and national holidays. The latest commencement time for a ceremony is 5.00pm.

- All civil marriages are solemnised by a Superintendent Registrar (the Celebrant) and registered by a Registrar of Marriages. These staff are provided by KCC and will normally arrive at the venue one hour prior to the start of the ceremony.

- All bookings for a civil marriage are taken and agreed by the approved premises. KCC will provide the approved premises with access to an On-line Ceremony Booking system.

- Whilst civil marriages may take place on any day (see above) the approved premises does not have to accept any booking—the decision is for the venue.

- Providing a couple are legally able to be married KCC will guarantee all bookings accepted by an approved premises. There are three conditions to this
guarantee:—

- firstly on days when there are a large number of bookings a venue and the couple may be asked to move the timing of a ceremony to ensure that registration staff are available.
- Secondly where the couple may wish to be married in less than 28 days, and
- thirdly where one or both of the couple are foreign nationals and require the approval of the Home Secretary to marry in this Country.

- In the second and third instances Approved premises need to speak as soon as possible to their local Ceremonies Manager for advice.

### Civil Partnerships

- Civil partnerships may be take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm on any day of the week including Sundays, Bank and national holidays. The latest commencement time for a registration is 5.00pm.
- Unlike a civil marriage, a civil partnership is legalised by a registration. However, couples may wish to enhance their registration with a ceremony and KCC is pleased to provide a ceremony combined with the registration.
- All civil partnerships are registered by a Civil Partnership Registrar. In addition where a couple wish to celebrate with a ceremony, a Celebrant will conduct this. These staff are provided by KCC and will normally arrive at the venue one hour prior to the start of the ceremony, and 30 minutes prior to a registration.
- All bookings for a civil partnership are taken and agreed by the approved premises. KCC will provide the approved premises with access to an On-line Ceremony Booking system.
- Whilst civil partnerships may take place on any day (see above) the approved premises does not have to accept any booking—the decision is for the venue.
- Providing a couple are legally able to contract a civil partnership KCC will guarantee all bookings accepted by approved premises. There are three conditions to this guarantee:—
  - Firstly on days when there are a large number of bookings a venue and the couple may be asked to move the timing of a registration/ceremony to ensure that registration staff are available.
  - Secondly where the couple may wish to contract their civil partnership in less than 28 days, and
  - Thirdly where one or both of the couple are foreign nationals and
require the approval of the Home Secretary to contract a civil partnership in this Country.

- In the second and third instances approved premises need to speak as soon as possible to KCC’s Civil Partnership team for advice.

**Other Ceremonies**

In addition to civil marriage ceremonies other ceremonies may be held at approved premises:-

These currently include the following:-

- **Renewal of Vows**—this is for married and partnership couples who wish to renew their marriage or civil partnership vows and may take place on anniversaries, where the couple may have had a ceremony abroad (that is recognised in this Country) or at certain events in a couples relationship.

- **Kentish Welcoming**—this is for parents who wish to have a non-religious ceremony to welcome a new addition to the family. This could be a new baby, an adopted child or where the parents are re-marrying or entering into a partnership and wish to welcome the children from previous marriages/relationships into the new family unit. This ceremony can be added to a marriage or civil partnership ceremony.

Further information on these two ceremonies is provided at Appendix 04.

These ceremonies have no legal basis and although the preferred option is to perform them in the room/area agreed for ceremonies they can take place in any other agreed room/area within the venue or in the venue grounds subject to the weather being fine. These ceremonies cannot include any religious content.

**Fees**

Fees for licensing venues and fees for ceremonies are set annually by KCC. The current fees are shown at Appendix 01. In respect of ceremonies the couple or person booking the ceremony is responsible for paying the fee to KCC direct—the approved premises is not involved in this transaction.
Partnership with KCC

KCC's intention is that the licensing of Approval Premises should work as a partnership between the County Council and the venue. Each works individually and together within the partnership to promote being married in Kent, and to provide couples with a range of unique and wonderful venues in which to celebrate their ceremony.

KCC is committed to providing an effective backup and support network which includes:

- Promotion of approved premises through wedding and other fayres
- Promotion of “Getting Married in Kent”
- Leaflet and brochure provision through register offices
- “A Kentish Wedding” and civil partnership information helpline and booklets
- Quarterly and annual magazines promoting “Kentish” ceremonies
- The guarantee of all bookings
- 365 days attendance at approved premises marriages, civil partnerships and other ceremonies
- Working individually with approved premises on specific promotions
- Seeking to continuously improve the approved premises system.

For their part Approved Premises are expected to:

- abide by the conditions and requirements set out in this booklet
- show integrity and commitment in dealing with couples/parents wishing to have a ceremony at their venue
- be fair, responsive and courteous in the delivery of a quality service
- be professional and have well informed employees who take pride in what they do
- inform couples/parents of any limitations or conditions applying to the venue in respect of civil marriage, civil partnership and other ceremonies
- provide written conditions of hire/use relating to rooms/areas that may be used for civil marriage, civil partnership and other ceremonies.
- respond effectively to complaints.
What type of venue is suitable?

- An Approved Premises must be a permanent immovable structure comprising of a least one room, or any boat or other vessel which is permanently moored.
- Marriages and civil partnerships cannot legally be held in the open air, in tents, marquees or any other temporary structure.
- KCC will consider applications which include free standing or “gazebo” structures providing that they are permanent buildings with a solid floor and a roof. The free standing or “gazebo” structure must be part of an overall application involving a building with at least one inside room to be used for marriage and civil partnership ceremonies.
- KCC will also consider applications which include a permanent marquee providing that the local planning authority has given permission for the siting to be permanent. The permanent marquee must be part of an overall application involving a building with at least one inside room to be used for marriage and civil partnership ceremonies.
- Must not be used solely or mainly for religious purposes. Advice will be given at the time of the pre-inspection if there is any doubt
- The venue must be in keeping with the solemnity and dignity of the marriage or civil partnership ceremony.
- The venue should where possible comply with disabled access requirements. However it is accepted that this may not always be possible given the age, construction and style of a building.

**Other Criteria**

- The premises must be regularly available for the solemnization of civil marriages or the formation of civil partnerships. The phrase “regularly available” is not defined in the Regulations. KCC has therefore decided that the licence holder will determine the availability at each premise.
- The public have unrestricted access to witness the marriage or civil partnership, and/or make an objection prior to or during the ceremony. No charge may be made to any member of the public attending a ceremony.

**Within the venue**

- Within the venue an individual room or area will be registered as “the Ceremony Room” and registrations and ceremonies may only take place within this registered room or area. The Licence fee provides for one “Ceremony Room” but a venue may have a number of “Ceremony Rooms or areas” - each
additional room after the first is subject to an additional fee (see Appendix 01). Additional rooms/areas can be added to the licence at any time.

- Whilst the “Ceremony Room” does not have to be separate from other activity at the venue it must not be affected by any other activity happening at the same time.

- There is no required minimum or maximum size of room or area as this will vary between venues. It is suggested that an ideal minimum occupancy of 25, divided between seating and standing, should be considered. However, smaller rooms may be acceptable dependant upon the market that a venue is seeking to attract.

- The proposed room or area should be suitably decorated appropriate to its use for ceremonies and in accordance with the overall décor, age, condition and style of the venue.

- The room or area will need to be provided with a table (size approx. 4’ x 4’) and two chairs at one end where the ceremony will take place. This should also include a comfortable space where the couple, and the celebrant who will conduct the ceremony, will stand. Chairs should be provided for guests. These can be set “theatre style” with a central aisle or as agreed with the couple subject to final approval by the registration staff. Subject to agreement with the couple chairs do not need to provided for all guests.

- A “red carpet” for an aisle may be provided but it is not essential. Where a “red carpet” is provided the venue must ensure that is regular cleaned and maintained, and does not present a health and safety hazard.

- In addition to the “Ceremony Room” a further separate room or area should ideally be available to allow for the confidential interviewing of the ceremonial party prior to the start of the ceremony and such other appropriate ceremony use.

- “The Ceremony Room” and other rooms to be used must be cleaned, set-up and ready one hour before the agreed start time for the ceremony.

**Fire and Health & Safety**

The applicant will be deemed by KCC to be the responsible person (or acting on their behalf) under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, to ensure that a fire-risk assessment has been carried out on the premises.

The assessment is required to reduce the risk of fire, and make sure that all people who might be on the premises can escape if there is a fire. KCC staff may ask the applicant at the time of inspection to produce the fire-risk assessment or confirm in writing that one has been carried out.
The Applicant may be required to provide confirmation of a current Fire-risk Assessment at any time during the life of the licence.

Advice may be obtained from the Fire Authority (see Appendix 05 for details of local Fire Safety Offices).

KCC are also obliged to officially consult the Fire Authority. The Fire Authority may wish to inspect the premises and any recommendations regarding fire precautions, alarms, signage etc. may need to be resolved prior to a licence being approved or become a special condition of the licence.

KCC will also consider the health and safety of both the registration staff and public who visit the premises.

**Planning decision**

Applicants are advised to consult with their local planning authority to check whether use as an approved premises for civil marriages and civil partnerships would constitute development or change of use. A copy of any existing planning decision(s) relating to the venue, and which could affect its use for marriage and partnership ceremonies, should be enclosed with the Application.

KCC reserve the right to contact the planning authority where any doubt occurs.

**Public Liability/Third Party Insurance**

The building or structures to be licenced must have public liability (third party) insurance cover during the three year period of the licence. The Applicant must provide evidence of this insurance when making the application and may, at the discretion of KCC, be required to confirm this insurance cover at any time during the Licence period. Such insurance should normally be for a minimum of £5m (five million pounds) in respect of any one act, unless otherwise agreed with KCC, and subject to advice from the venues’ insurers.

**Car Parking**

Where car parking is available two free or reserved car parking spaces should be provided for the use of the registration staff. These spaces should be near to the main entrance of the building/ceremony room and must allow ease of access and exit so that the registration staff may leave the venue quickly once the ceremony is finished.

The Applicant will be responsible for car parking and access arrangements for the bridal or partners car, and for any car parking provided for guests attending the wedding. Special Licence Conditions may be applied by KCC where it is considered
that car parking or access may cause a nuisance.

**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. In respect of a gazebo or outside structure KCC will agree an area around the gazebo or structure where food and/or drink may not be served or consumed.

Food and/or drink can be served and consumed elsewhere at the venue but the Applicant is responsible for ensuring that no food and/or drink is brought into the ceremony room/area or the agreed area around a gazebo or outside structure. It may be advisable not to serve alcoholic drinks until after the ceremony.

**Guests**

The number of guests that can be comfortably accommodated within the ceremony room/area will be discussed with the venue. KCC may place a restriction on the number of guests dependant upon the size of the room/area. If a venue is seeking to include a gazebo or outside structure within its licence, consideration will need to be given to the number of guests that can be accommodated within an indoors room/area if for any reason the ceremony cannot proceed outside.

It will be the responsibility of the Applicant to deal with inappropriate behaviour by guests.

At the second/final inspection KCC may require that the ceremony room is laid out for a ceremony so that the position and number of chairs, position of table and aisle can be agreed.

**Heating**

Ideally all rooms included within the approval should have suitable heating appropriate to their use, age, construction and location. Any person booking the venue for a ceremony must be informed if heating is not available.

**Lighting**

Lighting levels must be satisfactory, and conditional upon the size and location of the ceremony room.

At the discretion and requirement of the registration staff additional portable lighting may be required in that part of the room where the register and other documentation is completed and signed.
Toilets

Toilet facilities must be available, and should be clean and easily accessible.

Ventilation

Where appropriate all rooms/areas included within the approval should have suitable ventilation to fresh/outside air either by opening windows or air conditioning systems.
Freestanding and Gazebo Structures—Further Information

- The following further guidance is provided in respect of the licensing of freestanding or “gazebo” structures. Please read this carefully. If you are considering including an existing freestanding or “gazebo” structure in your application or building a new structure you are advised to seek advice from the KCC Licensing Team to ensure that it will be acceptable.

- Any venue wishing to construct a freestanding or “gazebo” structure to be used for the celebration of civil marriages and the formation of civil partnerships must have the plans approved by KCC and access must be available to KCC to inspect the construction of the structure. The venue is responsible, where appropriate, for any discussions with, or seeking approval by, the local planning authority.

- The County Council reserves the right to amend, add to, delete or otherwise change these conditions from time to time, and in this respect the decision of the County Council is final.

- A freestanding or “gazebo” structure must be permanent and immovable and in this respect the decision of the County Council on what is considered “permanent” and “immovable” will be final.

- The structure must have a brick, stone or concrete base and ideally this should be raised above the surrounding ground level.

- The structure should have a roof which should be tiled although other coverings, e.g. thatch, will be considered providing they are waterproof and are a requirement of the local planning officer and/or a conservation/heritage decision. The roof should be supported by brick, stone, concrete or wood pillars or walls. The space between pillars may have trellising or other decoration.

- The front should be open and sufficiently wide to enable the ceremony party to enter. Steps may need to be provided if the structure is raised above the surrounding ground level.

- The structure should be of sufficient size (minimum 4 metres square or equivalent) to accommodate the following:-
  - Two Registration staff,
• a table (size approx. 4’ x 4’) and two chairs,
• the Couple (Bride and Groom or two Partners),
• and comfortable space in which the ceremony can be conducted.

The decision of the County Council on what is considered sufficient space will be final.

The structure should be provided with electric light and power.

Consideration should be given to the area immediately in front of the structure where guests may be seated or stand. Soft ground should be avoided and a hard standing may need to be provided. Sufficient room must be available for a central aisle to allow the ceremony party to make their entrance.

The structure must be regularly available to be used for the celebration of civil marriage ceremonies or the formation of civil partnerships.

The structure will only be approved if it forms part of a larger venue which must include either one or a number of other approved ceremony rooms.

In this respect whenever a ceremony is booked within an outside structure another licensed ceremony room must be kept available so that if for any reason the ceremony has to be moved inside, venue staff are able to set up the room at short notice.

Above all the structure must provide a seemly and dignified venue in which civil marriage ceremonies and civil partnerships may be celebrated.

If a freestanding or “gazebo” structure is approved then the following Special Licence Conditions will be applied

• Civil marriages and civil partnerships will normally only be celebrated in a “free standing/gazebo structure” between 1st April and 30th September each year. Any ceremonies outside these dates MUST be subject to the written agreement of the local Ceremonies Manager.

• The “free standing/gazebo structure” and the adjacent area to be used for guests should be roped or barriers erected so as to restrict access one hour prior to and during the ceremony. No food or drink may be consumed in this restricted area one hour prior to and during the ceremony.

• Any other activities taking place in the grounds, especially near to the “free standing/gazebo structure” and the adjacent area to be used for guests, are to be kept separate from any ceremony.
• Whenever the “free standing/gazebo structure” is booked for a ceremony then the premise’s other ceremony room **MUST** be kept available so that it may be used if for any reason the ceremony cannot take place in the “free standing/gazebo structure”.

• The main reason why a ceremony may not take place in the “free standing/gazebo structure” will normally be because of inclement weather. Inclement weather can include wet, cold, heat and other extreme conditions.

• The decision as to whether, because of inclement weather, a ceremony has to be moved into a ceremony room inside the venue will be made by the registration staff after discussion with the couple/partners and the venue.

• **The decision of the registration staff is final.**
Pre-Inspection

KCC offer a free pre-inspection service to all applicants. This provides an ideal opportunity to discuss in greater detail the suitability of the venue and to fully understand the arrangements and commitments required before submitting an application. This can prove invaluable as each venue is individual and may have particular requirements to ensure the licence matches that individuality.

The Application Procedure

All applications must be made on a KCC Approved Premises Application Form.

The form requires the following information:-

- Name and address of Applicant—The Application must be made by a named individual who may be the proprietor, manager or a trustee of the venue concerned. If the Application is made on behalf of a Limited Company a separate statement should be attached detailing the names and addresses of all the Directors.

- Address of the premises to be approved.

- Owner of Premises—if not the applicant.

- Contact person—to arrange inspection of the premises.

- Name and appointment of the person to be appointed as The Responsible Person—this person is the main link between the venue and KCC. They are required to be present at any ceremony and one hour before the ceremony to assist the Registrars with any issues that may arise. (Deputies may be appointed).

- Number and names of proposed ceremony rooms/areas.

- Confirmation of fire-risk assessment.

- Confirmation of Public Liability (Third Party) Insurance.

- Copy of any planning consents which would affect the venues use for ceremonies.

- A Plan (no larger than A3 size) of the venue showing the proposed ceremony rooms/areas. This does not need to be to scale but should show the relationship of the proposed ceremony rooms/areas to the main entrance and other rooms etc..

- Copies of any booklets or information leaflets about the venue.

- The Licence application fee is non-returnable and must be submitted with the
Application Form.

- Payment of the fee can be by cheque (made payable to “Kent County Council”). Alternatively KCC can submit an invoice or payment can be made by Debit or Credit Card.

Advertisement

The application will be advertised in a newspaper circulating within the County. A period of 21 days is available for any person or organisation to make comment on the application. The advertisement will be placed by KCC and the cost is included in the application fee.

Inspection of Premises

All applications may be subject to a minimum of two inspections by KCC before a licence is approved. If a venue has received a pre-inspection this may be counted as one of the two inspections.

The Licence

The licence is valid for a period of 3 years. The licence fee includes the registration of ONE ceremony room/area where ceremonies will take place. Applicants may register any number of ceremony rooms/areas and an additional fee is payable for each additional room/area.

The Licence Notice

The licence notice (A4) size must be displayed prominently and permanently at the main entrance to the venue. Additional copies can be provided for other parts of the venue or for display in the marriage room/area. KCC will wish to agree all display sites.

Comments and Suggestions Notice

A “Comments and Suggestions” notice (A4 size) must also be displayed prominently and permanently at the main entrance to the venue. Additional copies can be provided for other parts of the venue or for display in the marriage room/area. KCC will wish to agree all display sites.

Refusal by KCC to approve a licence
If a Licence is not approved the applicant will be given notice in writing together with the reasons for the decision.

An applicant who is aggrieved in relation to :-

- The refusal by Kent County Council to grant a licence, or
- The attachment of Additional of Special conditions to the grant of a licence.

May seek a review by a Member Review Panel of Kent County Council’s Regulation Committee.

**Promotion of the licence**

The Licence Holder or any person or persons employed or acting on his/her behalf in respect of the Approved Premises may not imply in any advertisement, statement or document that Kent County Council, Kent Registration Service or the Registrar General recommends the Approved Premises as a venue for civil marriages or civil partnerships.

Licence holders may use the following words to describe the grant of a licence as an Approved Premise:

“Approved by Kent County Council as a venue for the solemnization of Civil Marriages and the formation of civil partnerships “.

**Renewing a licence**

The licence may be renewed at the end of its 3 year period.

**Revoking a licence**

Kent County Council may revoke the licence if:-

- Any conditions attached to the grant of the licence have been broken.
- The use or structure of the Approved Premises has changed in that Kent County Council no longer considers the premises as a suitable venue for the solemnization of civil marriages and the formation of civil partnerships.
- If directed to do so by the Registrar General.

The Licence Holder may revoke the licence at any time within the three year licence period.
Transfer of Licence

The licence is not transferable between premises. The licence, subject to the approval of KCC, may be transferred between Licence Holders. This would normally apply on the sale of a venue or appointment of a new Manager.
Licence Requirements

• All applications must meet the following licence requirements:-
  • Statutory Requirements - Schedule 1 of The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005.
  • Additional Requirements set by Kent County Council and applying to all applications.
  • These are set out in detail in Appendix 03.

Licence Conditions

• Once a licence has been issued the Licence Holder must comply with the following licence conditions:-
  • Additional Conditions set by Kent County Council and applying to all approved premises.
  • Special Conditions set by Kent County Council and applying to individual approved premises.
  • These are set out in detail in Appendix 03.
**Acoustics**

Dependant upon the size of the “Ceremony Room or area” a venue may be asked to provide a microphone and amplification system to ensure that all the guests may hear the ceremony.

A microphone and amplification system may need to be provided by the venue where a freestanding or gazebo structure is approved.

**Celebration, Commemoration or Blessing**

Marriages and Civil Partnerships at Approved Premises can be followed by a celebration, commemoration or blessing, providing that it is not (1) a religious marriage ceremony and (2) is separate from the civil ceremony.

Ideally there should be a measurable break between the end of the civil ceremony and the start of any blessing e.g. 30 minutes. However, if a religious blessing were to regularly follow ceremonies at particular Approved Premises, or be considered part of the service being offered, there may well be a religious connection which would be incompatible with the licence requirements and may lead to KCC having to consider revoking the licence.

**Compliance**

Registration staff will comply with any rules and regulations affecting the “Approved Premises” providing that they do not conflict with:-

- KCC’s Requirements and Conditions for Approved Premises for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships
- Regulations and/or Code of Practice issued by the Registrar General
- the various Marriage Acts and Regulations
- the Civil Partnership Act and Regulations
- their statutory responsibilities

**Confetti**

It is traditional for confetti to be thrown at ceremonies. The licence holder will need to decide whether to allow confetti to be thrown. Confetti may cause a nuisance to adjoining properties.
Emergency Callout Service

KCC operates an Emergency Callout Service so that approved premises may contact a duty officer in case of an emergency affecting a ceremony or the non attendance of registration staff. The arrangements and details of the special contact telephone number will be issued to approved premises with their licence.

Flowers

Flowers and floral arrangements will be at the discretion of the venue but should not be sited as to restrict the area where the ceremony is to be conducted.

Music

Couples may choose to have music played before, during and after their ceremony and a venue is required to provide a CD music system which can be operated either by a member of the venues staff or someone nominated from the guests. Alternatively if live music is to be provided space, without compromising the area needed to conduct the ceremony, should to be made available either in the ceremony room or adjacent to it.

Music should normally be of a secular nature although music that contains an incidental reference to religion may be permissible.

The venue is responsible for ensuring compliance where necessary with Performing Rights and Phonographic Performance licence requirements.

Photographs

Ideally facilities should be available either within or outside the “Approved Premises” for photographs.

Rehearsal

With the agreement of the venue the celebrant will attend at the venue to discuss and agree the ceremony with the couple, the Responsible Person and any other person who may also be involved. The arrangements for, and content of the ceremony must be agreed in advance with the local Ceremonies Manager. A separate fee is payable for this service.
Telephone

Registration staff may need access to a telephone.

Ushers

The venue may, subject to the size of the ceremony party and the number of guests, need to provide ushers to control or assist the guests. Any ushers will be under the supervision of the registration staff.

The venue may wish to employee a professional Toastmaster who will work with the registration staff.
These fees apply from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

### Licensing Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee—includes one ceremony room</td>
<td>£1200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee—includes two ceremony rooms</td>
<td>£1600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee—includes three ceremony rooms</td>
<td>£2000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each additional ceremony room</td>
<td>£400.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Marriage Ceremony Fees

The couple are responsible for paying KCC direct. The fees cover the preparation of the *Simply Perfect* marriage ceremony, associated work by the Ceremony Team and the attendance of a celebrant and registrar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday to Thursday</td>
<td>£350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>£380.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>£435.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday and Bank Holiday</td>
<td>£516.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Civil Partnership Fees

The partners are responsible for paying KCC direct. There are two sets of fees:

1. *Simply Perfect* Civil Partnership ceremony—including registration of partnership, the preparation of a ceremony, associated work by the Ceremony Team and the attendance of a celebrant and registrar.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday to Thursday</td>
<td>£350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>£380.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>£435.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday and Bank Holiday</td>
<td>£516.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Registration of Civil Partnership—does not include a ceremony, but does include the attendance of a registrar to complete the registration only.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday to Friday</td>
<td>£38.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>£59.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday and Bank Holiday</td>
<td>£80.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Booking Confirmation Fee (applicable to all ceremonies)* £45.00
Welcoming and Renewal of Vows—Fees

These fees are paid direct to KCC by the person booking the ceremony. The fees cover the preparation of the ceremony, associated work by the Ceremony Team and the attendance of registration staff.

Welcoming fees refer to one child—for each additional child within a related family add £15.00.

Monday to Friday £185.00
Saturday £280.00
Sunday/Bank Holidays £225.00

Where a Welcoming or Renewal ceremony is combined with a marriage or civil partnership the following fees apply:

Monday to Friday £155.00
Saturday £250.00
Sunday/Bank Holidays £195.00

Booking confirmation fee (applicable to all ceremonies) £45.00

Other Fees

• Rehearsals either at Register Office or venue by agreement

By appointment £75.00

• Commemorative Certificates

Additional commemorative Certificate £4.50
**KCC Licensing Staff**

The following KCC staff are responsible for the licensing of approved premises:

- **Miss Sarah Wallis**  
  Management Support Officer  
  Regulatory Services  
  First Floor, Invicta House  
  County Hall  
  Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX

- **Mr Alyn Thomas**  
  Marketing & Licensing Manager  
  Regulatory Services  
  First Floor, Invicta House  
  County Hall  
  Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX
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LICENCE REQUIREMENTS

The following approval requirements as set out in the Schedule 1 of The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, will apply to all licences for “Approved Premises” in the County of Kent. They may be amended from time to time on the instructions of the Registrar General.

These require that:-

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 proceedings.

2. The premises must be regularly available to the public for use for—
   (a) the solemnization of marriages; or
   (b) the formation of 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 [or, in England, fire and rescue 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 not be -
   (a) religious premises as defined by section 6(2) of the 2004 Act [Civil Partnership Act 2004];
   (b) a register office, but this paragraph does not apply to premises in which a register office is situated, provided that the room which is subject to approval is not the same room as the room which is the register office.

5. The room or rooms in which the proceedings are to take place if approval is granted must be identifiable by description as a distinct part of the premises.

ADDITIONAL LICENCE REQUIREMENTS

The following additional licence requirements have been agreed by KCC and will apply to all licences issued for Approved Premises. They may be amended from time to time by KCC.

The Licence Holder must:-

6. Ensure that the premises are covered by an appropriate public liability insurance policy

7. Provide toilet facilities for the use of registration staff, the couple to be married and any guests attending the marriage.
LICENCE CONDITIONS

The following licence conditions as set out in Schedule 2 of The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, will apply to all licences for Approved Premises in the County of Kent. They may be amended from time to time on the instructions of the Registrar General.

These Require that:-

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 “qualification”), indicate that he is in a position to ensure compliance with these conditions.

2. The responsible person or, in his absence, an appropriately qualified deputy appointed by him, shall be available on the premises for a minimum of one hour prior to and throughout each of the proceedings.

3. The holder must notify the authority -

   (a) of his name and address immediately upon him becoming the holder of an approval ... 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 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 the proceedings are to take place;

   (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 made available at all reasonable times for inspection by the authority.

6. A suitable notice stating that the premises have been approved for the proceedings and identifying and giving directions to the room in which the proceedings are to take place must be displayed at each public entrance to
the premises for one hour prior to and throughout the proceedings.

7. No food or drink may be sold or consumed in the room in which the proceedings take place for one hour prior to or during those proceedings.

8. All proceedings must take place in a room which was identified as one to be used for that purpose on the plan submitted with the approved application.

9. The room in which the proceedings are to take place must be separate from any other activity on the premises at the time of the proceedings.

10. The arrangements for and content of the proceedings must meet with the prior approval of the superintendent registrar of the district, or the registration authority of the area, as the case may be, in which the approved premises are situated.

11. (1) Any proceedings conducted on approved premises shall not be religious in nature.

(2) In particular, the proceedings shall not -

(a) include extracts from an authorised religious marriage service or from sacred religious texts;

(b) be led by a minister of religion or other religious leader;

(c) involve a religious ritual or series of rituals;

(d) include hymns or other religious chants; or,

(e) include any form of worship.

(3) But the proceedings may include readings, songs, or music that contain an incidental reference to a god or deity in an essentially non-religious context.

(4) For this purpose any material used by way of introduction to, in any interval between parts of, or by way of conclusion to the proceedings shall be treated as forming part of the proceedings.

12. Public access to any proceedings 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 in pursuance of section 26(1)(bb) of the 1949 Act and the formation of civil partnerships under section 6(3A)(a) of the 2004 Act 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.

The licence holder may use the following words to describe an “Approved
Premises’ licence:-

“Approved by Kent County Council as a venue for the solemnization of civil marriages and the formation of civil partnerships”

14. If a change of name to the approved premises occurs after the issue of the certificate for marriage or the civil partnership document but before the proceedings, the former name of the approved premises as recorded in the certificate for marriage or the civil partnership document shall remain valid for its duration for the purpose of the proceedings.

ADDITIONAL LICENCE CONDITIONS

The following additional licence conditions which have been agreed by KCC, will apply to all licences issued for Approved Premises. They may be amended from time to time by KCC.

A “Simply Perfect” Kent Marriage or Civil Partnership Ceremony

15. The “Simply Perfect” marriage or civil partnership ceremony whereby couples may personalise their civil wedding or civil partnership must be available in all Kent Approved Premises for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships as appropriate and agreed with the licence holder.

The Licence Holder must ensure that :-

16. AFTER booking the hire of the Ceremony Room/area for a civil marriage, civil partnership or other ceremony provided by KCC, that KCC is informed as soon as practicable using the On-line Ceremony Booking System provided by KCC.

17. The Licence Notice issued by KCC is displayed in a prominent position within the main entrance to the building. This will include the name and address of the Ceremonies Manager responsible on behalf of KCC for ceremonies taking place at the approved premises.

18. KCC’s Comments and Suggestions Notice for Approved Premises for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships is displayed in a prominent position within the main entrance to the building.

Any person booking the accommodation for a marriage or civil partnership ceremony must be informed of:

19. Any limitations imposed on the size of the ceremony party by the size of the ceremony room, and

20. Any Special Conditions imposed on the usage of the premises for civil marriages and civil partnerships.

The following will have free and unfettered access to the Approved Premises when required:-
21. Representatives of KCC carrying out inspections in respect of the licence.

22. Registration Staff officiating at a civil marriage or civil partnership.

23. Registration Staff officiating at a civil marriage or civil partnership have access to the ceremony room at least one hour before the ceremony is due to begin.

24. Where possible, access should be available for disabled persons.

**General Conditions:-**

25. The Approved Premises will be subject to inspections by KCC during the second and third years of the approval, and at such other times as appear appropriate to KCC, in accordance with the licence and the requirements, conditions and other terms or approval as set out in this and other leaflets.

26. No smoking is permitted in the ceremony room(s) for one hour before, and during a ceremony.

**SPECIAL LICENCE CONDITIONS**

27. KCC reserves the right to apply special licence conditions, in addition to those set out in this Booklet, to any licence as it considers necessary, and at any time during the three year life of the licence.
A Kentish Welcoming Ceremony

A welcoming ceremony is a very special way of celebrating the birth of a child or welcoming an older child into a family and the wider community for parents who would prefer not to celebrate this event with a religious ceremony.

The ceremonies offer a unique occasion for everyone to feel involved in the child’s future and to pledge their love and support for the child’s development and well being. For parents it offers an opportunity to declare before their family and friends the promise to be as good a parent as possible and for relatives to confirm their special relationship with the child.

A Welcoming Ceremony is a secular ceremony and does not include any religious references. The ceremony offers no legal status to the child but will bring as much meaning to the day as parents wish to bring to it.

There is no age limit for the child to be welcomed. Often couples adopting a child will consider this form of ceremony as a way of celebrating the child’s arrival into their family and share their commitment to the child’s future.

The ceremony can also include more than one child within the same family unit.

A Welcoming Ceremony can either be celebrated on its own or can be added after a marriage or civil partnership ceremony where couples remarrying and entering new partnerships and relationships wish to welcome children from the previous relationships into the new family unit.

The ceremony should preferably be held in the licenced ceremony room/area at the Approved Premise, but may be held in another agreed room, area or within the grounds of the venue provided the weather is fine.

KCC do have a booklet available for parents or more information may be found on the internet site -

www.akentishceremony.com
Renewal of Vows

A renewal of vows ceremony is aimed at couples wishing to renew their commitment to one another in a unique and personal way.

These ceremonies are often associated with a special anniversary or are often held after a couple have married or contracted a civil partnership abroad and their family and friends have missed the celebrations (the marriage or civil partnership must be recognised in this Country). So they do it all over again and have a party.

Renewing of vows can be made at any stage of a couple’s marriage or civil partnership.

There is no legal status to the ceremony and therefore bookings may be taken at shorter notice than a marriage or civil partnership ceremony.

There are no legal preliminaries and no residential requirements to satisfy.

Couples do have to provide proof of marriage or civil partnership to each other.

The ceremony does however provide for a couple to make a public statement of their continuing love and commitment to one another.

The ceremony should preferably be held in the licenced ceremony room/area at the Approved Premise, but may be held in another agreed room, area or within the grounds of the venue provided the weather is fine.

KCC do have a booklet available for couples or more information may be found on the internet site -

www.akentishceremony.com
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## Fire Safety Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Te. No.</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashford</td>
<td>01233 646809</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ashford.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">ashford.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>01227 825530</td>
<td><a href="mailto:canterbury.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">canterbury.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartford</td>
<td>01322 224229</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dartford.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">dartford.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>01304 226886</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dover.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">dover.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepway</td>
<td>01303 227201</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shepway.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">shepway.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravesham</td>
<td>01474 351121</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gravesham.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">gravesham.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maidstone</td>
<td>01622 774126</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maidstone.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">maidstone.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevenoaks</td>
<td>01732 460274</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sevenoaks.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">sevenoaks.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swale</td>
<td>01795 435313</td>
<td><a href="mailto:swale.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">swale.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanet</td>
<td>01843 863015</td>
<td><a href="mailto:thanet.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">thanet.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonbridge and Malling</td>
<td>01732 369429</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tonbridgeandmalling.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">tonbridgeandmalling.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>01892 546840</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tunbridgewells.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org">tunbridgewells.firesafety@kent.fire-uk.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ KCC Application Form

☐ Applicant - named person

☐ Limited Company - separate list of names and addresses of all Directors

☐ Owner agrees (if not applicant)

☐ Nominate Responsible Person

☐ Any planning conditions/restrictions to this application?

☐ Number of ceremony rooms to be approved - to include name of room

☐ Plan (no larger than A3 size) of the premises showing the location of all ceremony rooms

Certificates and licences (copies to be enclosed where applicable):-

☐ Fire-risk assessment

☐ Public Liability Insurance

☐ Planning—Development Control Decision / Application No.

☐ Other Licences—Performing Rights, Phonographic Performance, Premise Licence

☐ Fee - cheque payable to KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
  (does it include additional fee(s) for more than one ceremony room?)

☐ Information booklets/information leaflets about the venue

NO booking for a marriage or civil partnership may be confirmed until the licence has been issued.