

GUIDE FOR WEDDINGS

Version 1	10/07/2020	Simplification of previous guidance; notes for Holy Communion added
Version 2	20/07/2020	Additional note regarding wedding receptions
Version 3	3/8/2020	Guide for receptions changed to reflect Government guidance
Version 4	18/8/2020	Updates on singing, receptions and added links for Scotland and Wales

1. Introduction

This Guide is part of STEP 5: Safety First in the process for reopening and managing your church building. It provides specific guidance for Wedding services, but should be read in conjunction with the **Guide to Using Your Worship Space**.

2. Specific Considerations for Weddings

- The Government has produced additional supporting
 - In England - [COVID-19 Guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships](#)
 - In Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnership-registrations/>
 - In Wales - <https://gov.wales/guidance-marriages-and-civil-partnerships-coronavirus>
- Marriage ceremonies should have no more than 30 people in attendance (20 people in Scotland) (in Wales, the indoor capacity is determined by the risk assessment in keeping 2m apart or if outdoors, 30 people can attend), and social distancing should be strictly adhered to following a risk assessment.
- Note that the **maximum** number (as listed above) as a guide and that Managing Trustees have an obligation to assess if this is a safe number to accommodate. If after risk assessment it is found that a chapel can only accommodate a lower number safely, then this would be the maximum for this particular chapel.
- If possible, ceremonies should be concluded in the shortest reasonable time, and limited as far as reasonable to the parts of the marriage ceremony required in order to be legally binding under the law of England and Wales.
- Face coverings are mandatory (in England and Scotland) and they should be worn in places of worship to help reduce the spread of the virus. However, face coverings should not be seen as a substitute to other measures such as social distancing and good hygiene. As this decision is to be enforced by law, managing trustees have to insist upon the wearing of face coverings in their risk assessments and action plans. Please refer to the [Guide for Face Coverings](#) for more information and exceptions.
- If Holy Communion is to be taken then follow the separate [Guide for the Holy Act of Communion](#).
- In terms of social distancing it should also be noted that this will also apply to those administering the service, the marriage couple or those taking a lead role in the marriage service. Unless of course any are members of the same household or social bubble.
- Where rings are exchanged, those involved should wash their hands before and after and the rings should be handled by as few a people as possible.
- Music and Singing:
 - England

- The use of music is allowed and all musical instruments, including wind instruments (England only).¹
 - Inside and outside - Singing as a congregation is **not** allowed.
 - Inside - Individual or a choir¹ singing is allowed, as long as it can be accommodated safely, ensuring that others are protected from potential virus transfer through increased social distancing, screens or other solutions. This must be assessed for risk.
 - Inside – it is possible for a groups of professional or non-professional singers¹ to perform to worshippers, but this should be assessed for safety and the number of singers limited to suit the space available, while achieving safe social distances.
 - Outside – Groups of professional and non-professional singers¹ can perform to worshippers, but this should be assessed for safety and the number of singers limited to a number suitable for the space available, while achieving safe social distances.
 - Scotland and Wales
 - The use of music is allowed and all musical instruments, except wind instruments.
 - Inside and outside - singing as a congregation is **not** allowed.
 - Inside – An individual is allowed to sing, as long as it can be accommodated safely, ensuring that others are protected from potential virus transfer through increased social distancing, screens or other solutions. This must be assessed for risk.
- All spoken voices should use a PA system where possible or practical. Specifically projecting or raising voices should be avoided.
 - It should be considered how those who fall within a vulnerable group are able to attend safely as it is important that those who wish to attend are able to safely.
 - It is important to liaise and communicate with the parties involved in advance. This will ensure that controls and expectations on the day are managed sensitively:
 - Communication of agreed arrangements in the chapel.
 - Basic arrangement for cleaning and hygiene.
 - Knowledge of numbers attending and potential seating plan.

3. **Considerations for Church Buildings who may provide a Wedding Reception Venue**

- Large wedding receptions are not permitted after a wedding ceremony.
- In England, all wedding receptions will be permitted² -
 - Sit down meals only;
 - No more than 30 people;
 - Dancing is not permitted;
 - To be undertaken in accordance with [COVID-19 Secure](#) guidance.

¹ Please refer to Guidance on Performing Arts (in England) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-wedding-and-civil-partnership-receptions-and-celebrations>

- In Scotland, wedding receptions are limited to 3 households indoors or 5 households outdoors.³
- In Wales, indoor receptions are not permitted but outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people are allowed.⁴
- Refer to the [Guides for Cafes and Other Community Users](#) for more information.

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/gatherings-and-occasions/>

⁴ <https://gov.wales/guidance-marriages-and-civil-partnerships-coronavirus-html>