

New Marriage Law

The Marriage (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2020 commenced on 1 March 2021

The new Law replaces the Marriage Law of 1919 which was considered outdated and did not meet the requirements of modern society. The new law will allow much more choice to couples and allow for marriages to take place anywhere in the Bailiwick of Guernsey (including its airspace and territorial waters) provided that this has been agreed with the celebrant and the persons to be married.

The new Law has brought in new administrative procedures to ensure that the necessary safeguards are in place to prevent illegal marriages.

You will be able to marry in a religious or civil ceremony.

To help you plan your wedding please see the decision tree which will help you navigate your way to the ceremony you would like please see the flow chart at the back of this leaflet

Religious Ceremony

If you would like a religious ceremony and if you wish to marry in a Church of England service you will need to contact the parish Rector. The Church of England will take notice of marriage and administer the process for marriages which are to be solemnised by them.

If you want a religious ceremony other than a Church of England service you will need to discuss arrangements with the minister or religious official of the relevant religious organisation.

The religious organisation will have their own fees and pricing structure and you will pay these fees directly to them for the services they will be providing directly.

Once you have set the time date and location with the authorised religious official you will need to apply to give notice of marriage. See below.

Civil Ceremony

If you would like a civil ceremony then these can be solemnised by either a Deputy Registrar or a new category of celebrant called an Authorised Civil Celebrant. These Civil Celebrants will not be employed by the Registrar General, they will operate in a private capacity, either self-employed or through one of the Islands businesses that provide wedding services. You can find their names and contact details at the back of this leaflet

Civil celebrants have a code of conduct which is published on our website and if you believe an Authorised Celebrant has not complied with the code of conduct you can make a formal complaint by sending the details of your complaint to Registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg

Civil Ceremonies

If you would like a non- religious (civil) ceremony you will need to decide where you would like to get married.

Guernsey

If you would like to get married in Guernsey during normal office hours 9am to 4pm weekdays (except public holidays) in a basic legal ceremony to be conducted in the marriage room at the Royal Court building by a Deputy Registrar, you will need to contact the Client Services team on 01481 225 277 or email Wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg to check availability for the time and date you would like and the booking will be entered into the diary and reserved for you. You then need to give notice of marriage. The policy at the Guernsey Greffe is to only conduct marriages in the Marriage Room at the Royal Court Building in normal office hours 9am to 4pm weekdays (excluding bank holidays)

For any other location or time you will need to contact a Civil Celebrant.

Once you have confirmed date, time, place and who will be solemnising the wedding you will need to give notice of marriage .

Alderney

If you would like to get married in Alderney in a civil ceremony during normal office hours 9am to 4pm weekdays (except public holidays) in a basic legal ceremony to be conducted in the Court Building, contact the Alderney Court Office court@alderney.gov.gg or telephone 01481 820050) to check availability for the time and date you would like and the booking will be entered into the diary and reserved for you.

For any other location or time you will need to contact one of the Authorised Civil Celebrants. There are now 3 Civil Celebrants based in Alderney.

You would need to book the venue separately with the owner of the property. If your wedding is outdoors you should ensure you have the permission of the landowner and also book an alternative venue in case of inclement weather.

Once you have confirmed date, time, place and who will be solemnising the wedding you will need to give notice of marriage .

Sark

If you would like to get married in Sark in a civil ceremony you will need to contact the Sark Greffier by email greffier@sarkgov.co.uk or Tel: 01481 832012 Public Opening Times: Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 2.30pm to 4pm to discuss with a Deputy Registrar the locations where and when they are prepared to conduct marriage ceremonies. If you wish to proceed with the marriage a booking will be made by the Deputy Registrar in Sark for the time and date specified. You would need to book the venue separately with the owner of the property.

Alternatively you can contact an Authorised Civil Celebrant and discuss whether they will travel to Sark to conduct the ceremony for you (currently there are no Authorised Civil Celebrants who reside in Sark) Once you have confirmed date, time, place and who will be solemnising the wedding you will need to give notice of marriage.

Civil Celebrant

If you would like your ceremony solemnised by an Authorised Civil Celebrant you will need in consultation with them to decide on a location. If you are intending to marry out of doors you should also specify an alternative location in case of bad weather. You need to ensure that you have the property or land owner's permission to hold the wedding at the location. Your celebrant will discuss your requirements and advise you on the process and draw up a contract with you. Some fees will be payable directly to the Civil Celebrant

Once you have decided and confirmed where when and who is to solemnise your marriage you will need to give notice of marriage. See below.

Giving Notice of Marriage

For those getting married in a Church of England ceremony notice of marriage is given at the Ecclesiastic Court.

For all other marriages in the Bailiwick of Guernsey notice of marriage is given by completing an application form and sending it to Wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg

The Notice of marriage can be given no more than 12 months before the date of marriage and should be given as soon as possible after this date.

You and your partner should fully complete the application form which is available on our website or at the Greffe public counter and ensure you have all the documents that are required before you submit the application. The notice will not be accepted unless the application form has been fully completed and copies of the required documents are attached. You can send the completed application form and attachments to Wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg

Fees payable to the Registrar-General must be paid when notice of marriage application is submitted. We will contact you on the contact telephone number you provide in your application to make payment over the telephone. Depending on the circumstances partial refunds may be available if the marriage does not go ahead. An additional fee may be charged if changes are made to the application.

If any of your documents are not in English you will need to provide the document and a translation which has been provided by a reputable translation company or a qualified translator.

Please note that if you were divorced outside the British Isles you will need to submit a written opinion from a Guernsey Advocate that the divorce would be legally recognised in The Bailiwick of Guernsey.

The address that is given when you give notice of marriage will be the one which appears on all paperwork including the licence and marriage certificate.

If you were born or adopted in the Bailiwick of Guernsey or were divorced in Guernsey or your previous spouse died in the Bailiwick of Guernsey and you do not have a copy of these documents we will be able to check our records to confirm the information required. We are unable to do this for life events which occurred in another jurisdiction.

If you are unable to obtain official copies of relevant documents you can explain the problem by emailing Wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg or ringing 01481 225277 to seek advice.

You may be contacted to provide more information or to clarify the information provided.

If you do not hold a British passport you will require appropriate immigration clearance and your immigration status will be checked before your notice of marriage is accepted. This can take (2 to 4 weeks)

Once all the required information has been received and the Registrar- General is satisfied that there are no apparent impediments to your proposed marriage your marriage notice will be accepted and you will receive an email confirmation.

Publishing Notices of Marriage

For marriages that are to be conducted by the Church of England. The Dean will forward details of marriage notices which have been accepted for publication on the Royal Court website The Dean will be informed once the minimum 21 day notice period has elapsed and can then issue the licence.

Your names the date of your intended marriage and the date that the notice was accepted will be published on the Royal Court website until the date of your proposed marriage (the entry is removed if we are informed that the wedding is cancelled).

The notice MUST be posted for a minimum of 21 days.

Foreshortening the Notice Period

In very exceptional circumstances the Registrar General can foreshorten the 21 day notice period for example where one of the parties to the marriage is ill and would not be able to enter into the marriage if the notice period was not reduced. A request would need to be made to the Registrar General please email Weddings@guernseyroyalcourt.gg or telephone 01481 225277

Objecting to a proposed marriage (Lodging a Caveat)

A person may enter a caveat with the Registrar General at any time before the solemnisation of a marriage in the Bailiwick or the issue of a certificate of no impediment. For further information on this please contact the Guernsey Greffe email Wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg or telephone 01481 225 277

Issuing a Licence to Marry

After the notice has been displayed for 21 days for Civil and Religious (not Church of England) weddings the couple need to make an appointment to be interviewed in person by a Deputy Registrar. You should arrange your interview after the Notice has been posted for at least 21 days and if possible at least 6 weeks before the date of marriage..

For couples resident in Guernsey the interview will take place at the Royal Court building, St Peter Port. Appointments can be made by ringing Tel 01481 225 277.

For couples resident in Alderney the interview will take place at The Greffe in Alderney appointments can be made by ringing Tel 822817.

For couples resident in Sark interview will take place at The Greffe in Sark. Appointments can be made by ringing Tel 832012.

When one or both of the parties are resident outside the Bailiwick of Guernsey

For couples where one or both are resident outside the Bailiwick of Guernsey and are marrying in Guernsey or Herm appointments should be made for the interview with the Greffe office in Guernsey. If you are getting married on the islands of Alderney or Sark you can arrange the meeting with the Greffe office on those islands or at the Greffe in Guernsey whichever is most convenient for you.

Interviews should be booked before you travel and should take place as soon after your arrival in the Bailiwick as possible.

The very latest an interview can take place is the last working day before the date you are due to get married.

It is important to note that travel to the Island can be disrupted due to weather and technical problems and you should ensure that you arrive in the Bailiwick in sufficient time in advance of the wedding day to ensure that all the legal requirements are met.

During the interview the original documents that were submitted with the initial application are checked to ensure they are authentic. You may also be interviewed separately to ensure that you are in a genuine relationship and that you are both consenting to the proposed marriage.

Once this interview has taken place and the Deputy Registrar is satisfied that there are no impediments to your marriage the licence which gives the celebrant the authority to marry you can be issued.

If the meeting is being held more than six weeks before the intended date of marriage the Licence will usually not be issued until 6 weeks before the date of wedding.

The licence will be delivered to the celebrant who is conducting your ceremony prior to the marriage date (usually between 6 weeks to one month prior to the date of marriage).

Changes to the planned wedding

If you wish to change the time date location or celebrant of the proposed marriage this can be done free of charge if it is more than 6 weeks before the original date of marriage and the licence has not yet been issued. If the change is made within 6 weeks of the original marriage date or after the licence has been issued there will be an administrative charge.

Bringing forward the marriage date. If you bring forward the marriage date the new details will need to be published for at least 21 consecutive days on the Royal Court website.

In exceptional circumstances or in an emergency, the venue, time and celebrant can be changed on the day of the wedding provided the persons to be married notify the Registrar- General in writing (Weddings@guernseyroyalcourt.gg) of any such change as soon as reasonably practicable before (if possible) or after the solemnisation of the marriage stating the reasons for the lack of compliance. (section 29(3))

Once that marriage has taken place the celebrant sends confirmation that the marriage has taken place to the registrar General. A certified copy of your marriage certificate will be posted to you at the address given on your notice of marriage. If you move prior to getting married you will need to let the Registrar know your news address by emailing (wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg) there is no additional fee for this.

The certified copy of your marriage certificate will usually be sent within 4 working days. The fee is included in the payment that is taken when you give notice of marriage.

Couples who get married in the Church of England can request a certified copy of their marriage certificate by contacting the Greffe 01481 225 277 and paying the £20 fee.

Certificate of No Impediment

Residents of the Bailiwick of Guernsey who wish to get married in the UK or another country or jurisdiction may be required to provide the authorities where they are getting married a certificate of no impediment.

These can only be provided for people who are currently resident in the Bailiwick.

Application can be made by completing the application form and sending it to Wedding@guernseyroyalcourt.gg

Application forms are available on the website or at the Greffe public counter.

Relevant Fees

Breakdown of fees

Description	Fee
Acceptance of notice of marriage	£85
Publication (also applies to publication of details of marriages to take place in Church of England)	£22.50
Application for reduced period of publication	£45
Issue of marriage licence	£70
Application for and issue of certificate of no impediment (per person)	£115
Entry of caveat	£0
Change to date, time, location or celebrant (if made within 6 weeks prior to original date of marriage or after marriage licence is issued)	£25
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General at office of the Registrar-General during normal working hours	£85
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General at office of the Registrar-General outside normal working hours	£235
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General in another location during normal working hours	£230
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General in another location outside normal working hours	£380

Description	Fee
Registration of marriage	£22.50
Correction of errors in register	£45
Search of register and provision of certified copies of an entry	£20

Examples

A wedding in the Marriage Room at the Royal Court building, Guernsey in normal office hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm excluding public holidays)

A wedding at the Greffe / Court Building Alderney in normal office hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm excluding public holidays)

A wedding at the Greffe /Court Building Sark (Please note that Sark have very limited office hours- Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 2.30pm to 4pm)

Description	Fee
Acceptance of notice of marriage	£85
Publication	£22.50
Issue of marriage licence	£70
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General at office of the Registrar-General during normal working hours	£85
Registration of marriage	£22.50
certified copies of an entry in the marriage register	£20
Total	£305

Fees payable to Greffe for a wedding to be conducted by an Authorised Civil Celebrant

Description	Fee
Acceptance of notice of marriage	£85
Publication	£22.50
Issue of marriage licence	£70
Registration of marriage	£22.50
certified copies of an entry in the marriage register	£20
Total	£220

Fees payable to Greffe for a wedding to be conducted by a Religious Official

Description	Fee
Acceptance of notice of marriage	£85
Publication	£22.50
Issue of marriage licence	£70
Registration of marriage	£22.50
certified copy of an entry in the marriage register	£20
Total	£220

Fees Payable to the Greffe for a Wedding in Alderney or Sark during normal office hours at a location other than the Greffe or Court building (Please note that Sark have very limited office hours- Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 2.30pm to 4pm)

Description	Fee
Acceptance of notice of marriage	£85
Publication	£22.50
Issue of marriage licence	£70
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General in another location during normal working hours	£230
Registration of marriage	£22.50

certified copy of an entry in the marriage register	£20
Total	£450

Fees Payable to the Greffe for a Wedding in Alderney or Sark outside normal office hours at a location other than the Greffe or Court building (Please note that Sark have very limited office hours- Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 2.30pm to 4pm)

Description	Fee
Acceptance of notice of marriage	£85
Publication	£22.50
Issue of marriage licence	£70
Solemnisation of marriage by Registrar-General in another location outside normal working hours	£380
Registration of marriage	£22.50
certified copy of an entry in the marriage register	£20
Total	£600

