Our fees explained

Register Office Marriages and Civil Partnership Registrations (no ceremony)

Legally, KCC is only required to provide the basic register office marriage and civil partnership registration for the statutory fee of £62. However, this fee does not reflect the true costs to KCC of providing this service and so it is subsidised by the public purse. Furthermore, KCC is only required to provide the basic register office marriage and civil partnership registration on weekdays at the designated register office, which for Kent is Oakwood House in Maidstone; for Bexley it is Danson House in Bexleyheath. However, KCC does go beyond its statutory responsibilities and also provides the basic registration, for the statutory fee, at many of its other offices across Kent and Bexley. At our offices in Canterbury, Dartford, Ramsgate and Tunbridge Wells it is possible to upgrade this type of ceremony. On average KCC conducts in the region of 500 marriages/civil partnership registrations a year.

Ceremonies at Approved Premises (hotels, castles, stately homes etc.)

The Marriage Act 1994 allows local authorities to licence venues where civil marriages and civil partnerships may take place. This is not a mandatory function and so local authorities do not have to do it. The licensing of venues is a discretionary activity only, and so the legislation allows local authorities to recover all of their reasonable costs in providing this service. KCC has embraced this legislation and we now have over 220 licensed venues (hotels, castles, stately homes) across the county including nine of its own. This is at least sixty more venues than any other local authority and reflects the fact that Kent is a beautiful county with a wide range of wonderful venues and locations. In embracing this legislation KCC's policy is to recover all of its costs in providing ceremonies at Approved Premises and not to subsidise them in any way from the public purse. It cannot make a profit from these ceremonies and neither does it charge a 'market rate'. In choosing to license venues, KCC is supporting the Kent economy and the many small business that rely on the wedding industry. On average KCC conducts in the region of 5000 Approved Premises marriages and civil partnerships a year. Of these, in the region of 1000 are for couples who do not live in Kent.

There are many elements to the cost of a ceremony. Some of these are obvious such as the registrar and celebrant, travelling expenses and all the costs associated with our team of Ceremony Officers who work with couples to plan their ceremony.

However, there are many much less obvious costs which nonetheless must be recovered and some of these include the cost of running our offices (rent, rates, utilities etc), our booking systems/software, staff training, website, publications, corporate uniform and service overheads (finance, IT, management, HR support). As these costs vary from one authority to another, you will find that charges for ceremonies also vary widely across the country. Whilst our fees might appear to be higher than some other local authorities, we do have a competitive range of prices to suit different budgets.

The location and the way in which you decide to marry is entirely your own choice and if you decide to have a 'Kentish Ceremony' we are confident they will receive a very professional and friendly service. The Kent Registration Service is very well respected throughout the country and is recognised as one of the best due to the level of attention to detail that we commit to the services we provide, and we are very proud that this is reflected in the many compliments we receive from couples.

Our ceremony fees are derived by breaking down the components of a typical ceremony on a given day of the week, and averaging out the costs incurred. It is based on an inclusive package of services, which applies to all ceremonies.

Fees and Charges

There are three main elements to our charges for a ceremony at an Approved Premises:

1. **Booking fees** - this guarantees the time and location of your choice and covers our costs in setting up the booking on our systems. Similar charges apply for cancelling a ceremony or making amendments. These fees are non-refundable.
2. **Ceremony fees** - This covers all of KCC's costs in providing ceremonies at Approved Premises. Typically prices range between £300 and £800 for a weekday ceremony and £400 and £900 on a weekend. Rather than stipulating the format and content of the ceremony you can tailor make it in exactly the way you wish. This means that with our help you can write your own ceremony (or make selections from our recommended 'Choices'), include live music or family and friends to read poetry or prose or give a message of celebration on behalf of the couple. If you cancel your ceremony the full fee will be refundable less the cancellation fee.
3. **Legal preliminaries** - This is the fee for giving your notice of marriage and is set nationally by the Registrar General. It is non-refundable.

Other options are available to enhance your ceremony experience including commemorative certificates. Our ceremony fees are subject to review each year.