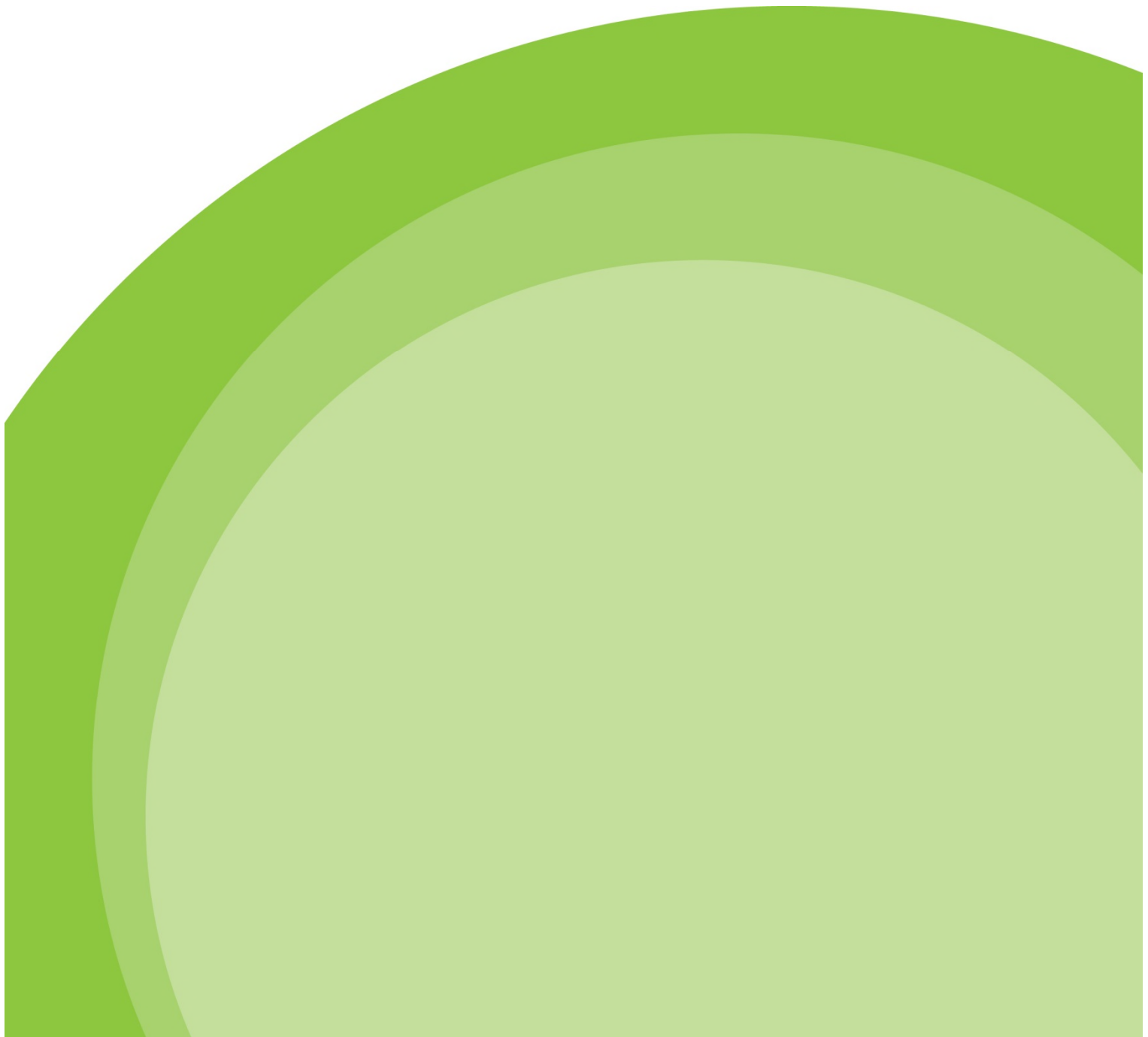




Application for premises to be approved as a venue for marriages

in pursuance of Section 26(1)(bb) of the Marriage Act 1949 and Civil Partnerships in pursuance of Section 6(3a)(a) of the Civil Partnership Act 2004.



Application procedure and guidance notes

1. **Declaration, Application Form and Guidance** - Attached you will find an application form and declaration, both of which must be signed. Before completing the application form, please read the information contained in the following:
 - a) Requirements before an Approval can be granted – Annex A
 - b) Conditions to be attached to Grants of Approval – Annex B
 - c) Additional information – Annex C

Also attached for information: Annex D - Guidance for Those Who Wish to Marry on Approved Premises; Annex E - Guidance for Those Who Wish to Register a Civil Partnership on Approved Premises.

2. Other relevant information

- a. Annex C sets out in more detail the procedure for application.
- b. The attached information is designed to enable each potential applicant to make a real assessment whether approval will be granted to their premises to ensure that the number of disappointed applicants is minimised.
- c. The application must be made by the proprietor or trustee of the premises. If successful, the applicant will be the holder of the approval.
- d. 'Premises' are defined as a permanently immovable structure comprising at least a room, or any boat or other vessel which is permanently moored. The primary use of a building would render it unsuitable if that use could demean proceedings or bring them into disrepute.
- e. Proceedings must take place in readily identifiable and regularly available premises. This will preclude proceedings from taking place in the open air, in a tent, marquee or any other temporary structure, most forms of transport or in a private house
- f. In addition to being satisfied that the requirements relating to the type of premises are met, the authority will want to be satisfied that the fire assessment in place at the premises is suitable for the intended purpose. The authority will also want to be content that no planning permission is necessary for the use of the venue for marriages or civil partnerships.
- g. Public notice of the application will be given by advertisement in a newspaper with a period of three weeks for objections; and the notice will appear on the authority's website for the same period.
- h. If no sustainable objections are received and the premises meet the required **standard an approval will be issued for a minimum of three years subject to further** inspections and possible revocation. The premises will be placed on the List of Approved Premises held at Central Bedfordshire Register Office, The Court House, Woburn Street, Ampthill MK45 2HX. An update of this list is available to all registrars locally and a copy is passed to the Office of the Registrar General (for compilation into a national listing).
- i.. A non-returnable fee in the form of a cheque made payable to Central Bedfordshire Council, must accompany the declaration and application form. We will confirm the amount for the non-returnable fee for this application prior to submission.

3. Completed Declaration and Application Form to be forwarded to:

The Proper Officer
Registration & Coroner Services
Central Bedfordshire Council
The Court House
Woburn Street
Ampthill MK45 2HX

Application form for premises to be approved as a venue for marriages in pursuance of section 26(1)(bb) of the marriage act 1949 and civil partnerships in pursuance of section 6(3a)(a) of the civil partnership act 2004

Declaration

This application must be made by the proprietor or a trustee of the premises. If successful, the applicant will be the holder of the approval. When completed, it should be forwarded to the Proper Officer for Registration Matters at Central Bedfordshire Council, Registration & Coroner Services, The Court House, Woburn Street, Ampthill MK45 2HX together with the appropriate fee payable to Central Bedfordshire Council.

1. I/we apply for the premises named at item 2 overleaf to be approved for the solemnization of marriages and the registration of civil partnerships.
2. I attach 3 copies of a plan of the premises showing all the room(s) in which it is intended that marriages or civil partnerships will take place.
3. I understand that:
 - a) the premises will be inspected for suitability before approval is granted and, if this application is successful, may be subject to subsequent inspection;
 - b) public notice of the application will be given by advertisement in a newspaper with a period of three weeks for objections; and/or the notice will appear on the authority's website for the same period and that the authority may also decide to publish it in other ways if it considers it necessary to do so;
 - c) approval, if granted, will be for a period determined by the authority and will be subject to revocation. It will be for no less than three years; and
 - d) the authority will need to be satisfied that appropriate health and safety provision and fire safety is in place.
4. I declare that:
 - a) I have read and understood the information contained in this form and Annexes A, B and C to this guidance;
 - b) the premises are not religious premises;
 - c) the premises are not a register office (or, where a register office is situated in the premises that is not the room that is the subject of this application); and
 - d) I have consulted the planning authority as to whether planning consent is required and attach evidence that it is content that the premises may be used for marriages and civil partnerships.
5. I further declare that, if approval is granted:
 - a) subject to any exemptions in the Equality Act 2010 the premises will be regularly available for public use for the solemnization of marriages and the registration of civil partnerships; and
 - b) I will comply with both the standard conditions (Annex B of this guidance) and any further conditions that the authority considers reasonable that are attached to the approval.

Signature of applicant:

Date:

Application form

<p>1. Full names and private addresses of applicant. If the application is made by a limited company (or other incorporated business) please give the address of the registered office and where different state also the main trading address of the company.</p>	<p>Name: Address: Telephone No: Main trading address (of Company):</p>				
<p>2. Name, postal address and telephone number of the premises which are the subject of this application.</p>	<p>Name: Address: Telephone No:</p>				
<p>3. Please describe the nature of the premises referred to in question 2 (e.g. hotel, stately home, civic accommodation) and the primary and other uses to which they are regularly put.</p>	<p>Nature of Building: Uses:</p>				
<p>4. Is the person or company named in reply to question 1 the occupier of the premises?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>				
<p>5. If the answer to question 4 is 'No' and there is another occupier, please give their name(s) and address(es)</p>	<p>Name(s): Address(es):</p>				
<p>6. Please state here the maximum number of people permitted by the premises' fire risk assessment to occupy each room in which the proceedings are intended to be held.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="879 1339 1177 1373">Room Name(s)</th> <th data-bbox="1193 1339 1490 1373">Maximum Capacity:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Room Name(s)	Maximum Capacity:		
Room Name(s)	Maximum Capacity:				
<p>Have you identified on the plans attached to this application all rooms including an additional private, separate room which registration staff may use prior to the proceedings to confidentially interview the couple? (Room number or name)</p>	<p>Yes/No Room No/Name</p>				
<p>7. Do the premises currently have the benefit of any licence issued under the Licensing Act 2003 which may be relevant to this application (eg for the provision of regulated entertainment). If so please attach a copy.</p>	<p>Copy of Licence attached: Yes/No</p>				

Can the rooms associated with this application be accessed by people with a disability?	Yes/No
<p>Has the applicant complete control over the internal corridors adjacent to the room(s) and any external areas (eg courtyards, passageways) on which the premises abut?</p> <p>If no please state what other use is made of the corridors and the abutting areas.</p>	Yes/No
<p>Name, address and job title of proposed "responsible person". (NB the responsible/deputy responsible person must be available in person at the time of the proceedings – see Annex B 2)</p> <p>Designated named "deputy responsible person" including job title.</p> <p>NB: If you require more than one deputy responsible person please list them separately and attach to this application.</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Telephone No:</p> <p>Job Title:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Telephone No:</p> <p>Job Title:</p>

Signature of applicant:

Date:

Interest in the premises:

If applying on behalf of a company or other incorporated business please state position in company

Address for correspondence:

Contact telephone number:

Email address:

Requirements for an approval to be granted

The requirements for approved premises are established by the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and Amendment Regulations 2011 (referred to in these notes as the Regulations). It is these that the authority must apply when considering an application for approval.

We will confirm the amount for the non-returnable fee for this application prior to submission. The fee must be submitted with the application to the Proper Officer for Registration Matters at Central Bedfordshire Council, Registration & Coroner Services, The Court House, Woburn Street, Ampthill MK45 2HX together with the appropriate fee payable to Central Bedfordshire Council.

The application must be made by the proprietor or trustee of the premises. When made on behalf of a limited company, or other incorporated business there should be a separate statement of the names and addresses of all the directors.

The premises must fulfil the following standard requirements in the Regulations:

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 the solemnization of marriages and the registration (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 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 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 (marriage or civil partnership) will be held if approval is granted must be identifiable by description as a distinct part of the premises.

The premises must also fulfil the authority's following requirements:

In considering the suitability of premises as a venue, the authority will have due regard to the following guidance from the Registrar General:

1. The law relating to "approved premises" is intended to allow proceedings to take place regularly in hotels, stately homes, civic halls, religious premises and similar premises without compromising the solemnity of the occasion.
2. Premises are defined in the Regulations as a permanently immovable structure comprising at least a room, or any boat or other vessel which is permanently moored. Premises not within the meaning of this definition, such as the open air, a tent, marquee or any other temporary structure and most forms of transport, will not be eligible for approval.

3. The premises must be a seemly and dignified venue for the proceedings, which must take place in an identifiable and distinct part of those premises. The primary use of a building would render it unsuitable if that use would demean any proceedings or bring them into disrepute.
4. The premises must not be any part of a register office on the plan submitted by the authority and approved by the Registrar General under the Registration Service Act 1953. Any rooms in the same premises as the register office that aren't on this plan, e.g. a council chamber in the same town hall, can be approved but a room in a register office cannot be approved. However, an authority can set its fee for attending a marriage or civil partnership on approved premises at the same level as the prescribed fee for a marriage or civil partnership in a register office.
5. The requirement that the premises must be regularly available for use by the public will preclude a private house from being approved.

The premises must also fulfil the following requirements set by Central Bedfordshire Council:

The room or rooms in which the proceedings will be held must be arranged in such a way to allow free access to disabled people.

The premises must have at least one additional private room for confidential interviewing of the bride and groom reasonably adjacent to the room in which the proceedings will take place.

The premises must provide sufficient toilet facilities (including disabled) within a reasonable distance of the room(s) in which proceedings will take place.

Conditions to be attached to grants of approval of premises that are not religious premises

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 under regulation 7(2); 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. (1) Save as provided below, 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.
(2) Non-alcoholic drinks may be consumed prior to the 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.
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.

Further conditions which Central Bedfordshire Council considers appropriate upon grant of approval

15. The premises must satisfy The Council on fire precautions, health and safety provisions and any other pertinent current legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
16. Registration staff to be allowed access to all rooms designated within the approval at least one hour before and during the proceedings without charge.
17. The responsible person or, in his/her absence, the named deputy will ensure that unreasonable noise, emanating from any source will not disturb any proceedings.
18. The responsible person or, in his/her absence, the named deputy to ensure that all reasonable efforts are made that no noise, litter or any other nuisance or disturbance is caused to local residents, neighbours or others.
19. The responsible person or, in his/her absence, the named deputy, will ensure that any person attending the proceedings does not breach the terms of fire, health/safety or other certificates in force.
20. If approved rooms become unusable ie the terms of the approval are temporarily breached for any reason, the responsible person, or in his/her absence the named deputy, must inform the Proper Officer, the superintendent registrar and any couples whose ceremony is due within the timescale of the problem, immediately.

21. The holder must ensure that there is adequate and appropriate insurance cover.
22. Any bar area(s) in a licensed room to incorporate non-transparent screening and to be closed one hour before and during the proceedings. (see Condition 7)
23. Anyone wishing to object to the proceedings must be allowed to enter regardless of the number of guests.
24. At the time of a booking the couple should be made aware of the limitations on numbers of guests, imposed by legislation and the approval relating to the premises.
25. Under no circumstances should the holder make firm arrangements for any proceedings on approved premises without first receiving confirmation from the couple that registration staff are available to perform the ceremony at the stated place, date and time (see Part D)

The approved premises must conform to the following:

26. The minimum standard for furniture is:

Two tables minimum size to be approximately 3.5 ft x 2.5 ft but in exceptional circumstances, by agreement, this can be varied.

Seating – not to exceed the maximum number permitted by this licence

Furniture is to be positioned at the discretion of the superintendent registrar in the room in which proceedings will take place.

27. Lighting:

General lighting levels must be at a level satisfactory to the superintendent registrar. Additional portable lighting may be required in the area where entry is made in a marriage register and where the register or schedule is signed.

Any switches controlling lighting in the licensed room must be under the direction of registration staff during the proceedings.

28. Car Parking:

Two car parking spaces to be reserved for registration staff without charge at least one hour before the proceedings begin. Additionally, disabled bays need to be easily identified, near the venue entrance and suitably signed.

29. Music:

Facilities must exist for playing music of the couple's choice in the room. Such facilities must be under the direction of registration staff during the entirety of the proceedings.

It is the sole responsibility of the holder to comply with all current requirements under the Performing Rights and Phonographic Acts.

30. Telephone:

Registration staff must have access to telephone facilities, for official duties, without charge at all times they are on the approved premises, preferably in an area away from where the public may congregate.

31. General:

A box of tissues, fresh water and four glasses should be available at each ceremony but not on the table where the Registrar will be seated.

Additional information

Granting approvals

The authority may only grant approval if it is satisfied that the application has been made in accordance with the Regulations, that the premises fulfil the requirements set out in Annex A to this guidance and that the premises fulfil any other reasonable requirements which the authority considers appropriate to ensure the facilities provided at the premises are suitable.

The authority may refuse to grant approval, or attach such additional conditions to an approval that it considers appropriate. As soon as is practicable after making a decision the authority must notify its decision in writing to the applicant and any person that has given notice of objection to the application. If approval is refused, or conditions other than the standard conditions (i.e. those set out in Annex B to this guidance) attached to the approval, the authority must notify the applicant of the right to seek a review of its decision.

If the authority has granted approval, it must provide the applicant with the standard conditions contained in Annex C or D together with any additional conditions that it has attached to the approval.

It is for the authority to determine the period of approval, although it may not be less than three years. The period starts on the date on which it is granted, unless it is revoked, extended or reinstated. If ownership of the premises changes then the new owners become the holders of the approval. The standard conditions require the holders of approvals to notify the authority immediately if there is any change to the details that were included in the application, such as a change in holder of the approval.

Immediately after the grant of the approval, the holder of the approval must confirm to the authority the name, address and qualification of the responsible person. The responsibilities of the responsible person are detailed in Annex C or D, but in short he or she is responsible for ensuring compliance with the standard conditions of approval.

Renewal of approval

The renewal process is the same as the approval process but can be commenced when the current approval has less than twelve months left to run. An application for renewal made within this period will if, necessary, extend the approval until that application has been finally dealt with. A renewal should be expressed to take effect from the date on which the current approval expires.

If an approval expires before any application to renew is made but an application is made within one month of the expiry, the approval will be reinstated. The reinstated approval will then continue until such time as the application for renewal is finally dealt with.

Revocation

In general an authority may revoke an approval if the holder has failed to comply with one or more conditions of the approval, or the use or structure of the premises has changed and the premises are no longer suitable for any proceedings. On deciding to revoke the approval the authority must deliver a notice in writing to the holder of the approval confirming its revocation.

The Registrar General for England and Wales may direct an authority to revoke an approval if she considers that there have been breaches of law relating to the proceedings on the

approved premises. Before doing so the Registrar General must write to the holder of the approval stating the grounds on which she proposes that the approval should be revoked and providing the holder with a period of at least 14 days to make representations to her in writing. If, following consideration of any representations received, the Registrar General decides that the approval should be revoked she will direct the local authority (in writing) to do so. The authority must then revoke the approval with immediate effect and notify the holder of the approval that it has done so.

When an approval has been revoked, the holder of the approval must immediately notify any couples who had arranged proceedings on those premises that this is the case. Whilst it is not their responsibility to do so, authorities may also ask the superintendent registrar or civil partnership registrar who has accepted a booking or been given a notice of marriage or civil partnership to notify the couple that the approval has been cancelled and the certificates or schedule for the proceedings will not be issued.

Reviews

An applicant is able to seek a review of a decision made by an authority to refuse an application or a renewal, to revoke an approval (other than when directed by the Registrar General as described above) or to attach conditions other than the standard conditions (Annexes C or D). The application for review should be delivered to the proper office of the authority. The Proper Officer should ensure that the review is carried out by individuals who were not involved in the earlier decision.

On determining whether to uphold the original decision, vary the decision or substitute a different decision the authority must provide notice in writing to the applicant or holder, stating its decision, the reasons for it and, if different to the original decision, the date on which it takes effect.

Registration

Details of approved premises will be held for public inspection by the authority, copied locally and sent to the Registrar General who will publicise them.

Guidance for those who wish to marry on approved premises

1. As soon as a couple have made provisional arrangements for their marriage on approved premises they should be advised to contact the superintendent registrar for the district in which the premises are situated. This contact information should be available on the individual local authority website.
2. Without the presence of this superintendent registrar and a registrar there can be no marriage and any arrangements for the use of the premises depend entirely on their availability. It is, therefore, essential that the couple make an advance booking with this superintendent registrar for their attendance at their proposed marriage as soon as a booking can be accepted.
3. The couple will also have to give a notice of marriage to the superintendent registrar(s) of the district(s) in which they live. This notice must be given in person by each of the couple and is valid for twelve months. The couple should, therefore, attend the register office(s) where they live as soon as notice can be given. There is a twenty eight day waiting period after notice has been given before the marriage can take place.
4. If either of the couple is subject to immigration control, there will be further procedures to take before notice of marriage can be given and which may result in the extension of the twenty eight days mentioned above to seventy days. The local superintendent registrar can advise further on these procedures.
5. The couple should be warned that any arrangements made for a marriage to take place on the approved premises are dependent on:
 - a) the attendance of the superintendent registrar and a registrar for the district in which the premises are situated; and,
 - b) the issue of the authority or authorities for marriage by the superintendent registrar(s) to whom notice of marriage was given.
6. When notice is given in a different registration district from the one where the marriage is taking place, the couple will have to collect the superintendent registrar's certificate(s) for marriage before the ceremony and ensure that it is delivered to the registrar who is to attend the ceremony. Alternatively, once the certificates have been issued by the superintendent registrar of the district where the marriage is taking place.
7. The couple should be advised that only a civil, non-religious ceremony can be permitted by the superintendent registrar. The content of the ceremony must be agreed in advance with the superintendent registrar who will be attending the ceremony.

Guidance for those who wish to register a civil partnership on approved premises

1. As soon as a couple have made provisional arrangements for their civil partnership on approved premises they should be advised to contact the registration authority for the area in which the premises are situated. This contact information should be available on the individual local authority website.
2. Without the presence of the civil partnership registrar there can be no civil partnership registration and any arrangements for the use of the premises depend entirely on his or her availability. It is, therefore, essential that the couple make an advance booking with the civil partnership registrar for his or her attendance at their proposed registration as soon as a booking can be accepted.
3. The couple will also have to give a notice of civil partnership to an authorised person of the registration authority in which they live. This notice must be given in person by each of the couple and is valid for twelve months. The couple should, therefore, attend the register office(s) where they live as soon as notice can be given. There is a twenty eight day waiting period after notice has been given before the civil partnership can take place.
4. If either of the couple is subject to immigration control, there will be further procedures to take before notice of civil partnership can be given and which may result in the extension of the twenty eight days mentioned above to seventy days. The local registration authority can advise further on this.
5. The couple should be warned that any arrangements made for a civil partnership to take place on the approved premises are dependent on:
 - a) the attendance of the civil partnership registrar for the area in which the premises are situated; and,
 - b) the issue of the civil partnership schedule by the registration authority for the area in which the premises are situated.
6. The couple should be advised that only a civil, non-religious registration can be permitted by the civil partnership registrar. The contents of any proceedings should be agreed in advance by the civil partnership registrar who will be attending the registration. If the parties wish to have a ceremony before or after the registration of their civil partnership, this should proceed as discussed and agreed with the registration authority prior to registration. Where the registration is taking place on approved religious premises, the parties should discuss and agree how any religious ceremony can precede or follow the registration. The civil partnership registrar will not be acting as a civil partnership registrar during any such ceremony.
7. Any rights of copyright for music, readings etc permitted at the registration are a matter for the couple and the holder of the approval.



Central Bedfordshire

A great place to live and work

Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 6214

by email: life.events@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to The Proper Officer, Registration & Coroner Service,
Central Bedfordshire Council, Central Bedfordshire Register Office,
The Court House, Woburn Street, Ampthill MK45 2HX