

GUIDANCE NOTE No GN.C176

**RULES FOR MAKING APPLICATION FOR THE
APPROVAL OF PREMISES FOR WEDDING OR
CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance note gives advice on how to make an application for the approval of premises for the solemnization of marriages and civil partnerships under The Marriage Act 1994, The Marriage (Approved Premises) Regulations 1995 and the Civil Partnerships Act 2004.
- 1.2 The above legislation permits marriages/civil partnerships to take place regularly in stately homes, civic halls and similar premises without compromising the fundamental principles of English marriage law and Parliament's intention to maintain the solemnity of the occasion.

2. Making Application

- 2.1 The application form should be completed and signed by the applicant.
- 2.2 The forms together with the appropriate fee should be sent to the address at the top of the application form.
- 2.3 A copy of any plans showing the room(s) for which the approval is sought should also be sent to this Department.
- 2.4 A notice of the application shall be published at the expense of the applicant in a local newspaper. The notice shall be in accordance with the specimen notice SF.C341. A copy of the whole newspaper in which the notice appears should be sent to this Department.

3. The Premises

- 3.1 Having regard to their primary use, situation, construction and state of repair, the premises must be a seemly and dignified venue for the solemnization of marriages/civil partnerships.
- 3.2 The premises must be regularly available to the public for use for the solemnization of marriages/civil partnerships

- 3.3 The premises must have no recent or continuing connection with any religion, religious practice or religious persuasion. Regular religious ceremonies in the rooms following a marriage/civil partnership could similarly breach the requirements of the Regulations.
- 3.4 The room or rooms in which ceremonies of marriage/civil partnerships will be solemnized must be identifiable by description as a distinct part of the premises. Open-air locations, tents, marquees and temporary structures are not acceptable. Similarly a private house is unlikely to be appropriate.
- 3.5 The premises must reach the standard required under Part B of the Building Regulations (Fire Safety) for public assembly buildings.
- 3.6 The premises must reach the standard required under Part M of the Building Regulations (Access and Facilities for Disabled People).
- 3.7 The premises must provide adequate toilet facilities bearing in mind the capacity of the rooms.
- 3.8 The premises must otherwise make reasonable provision for the health and safety of persons employed in or visiting the premises.
- 3.9 You are reminded that the use of the building for this purpose may require Planning Permission and you should consult the Planning Control Division of the Department of Planning & Transportation if you need advice.

4. Decision

- 4.1 The Council will notify you and any objectors as soon as practicable of its decision and give reasons for that decision.
- 4.2 If Approval is granted it lasts for three years from the date of issue. You will be receive a reminder letter from this Department approximately 9 months before the expiry date inviting you to make application for renewal of the approval.
- 4.4 You must remember that the Council may withdraw the Approval.
 - if any of the conditions are not complied with, or
 - the use or structure of the premises is changed, or the premises are no longer suitable.

5. Fees

5.1 Establishments with a current Premises Licence

New application £317 Renewal £188

Establishments without a current premises licence

New application £874 Renewal £521

6. Variation to an Approval

- 6.1 Once an approval has been granted, if there are any changes made to the rooms which are covered by the approval, then the Council shall be notified.

7. Transfer of an Approval

- 7.1 If there are any changes to the applicant who holds the approval then the Council shall be notified.