

Civil Ceremonies





Sunset over Ailsa Craig

Wedding. Your day...

Your wedding day will be one of the most important days of your lives and we know that getting everything perfect is your number one priority.

South Ayrshire offers an excellent choice of venues and historic locations, whether you are planning a small, intimate ceremony or the “full works” in a fairy-tale castle.

Our experienced Registrars can help you create a bespoke ceremony as individual as you are. From the traditional to the modern we will be happy to discuss the available options, while guiding you through all the legal requirements on your marriage journey to when you say “I do”.

This brochure is designed to offer useful information about the ceremonies available with South Ayrshire Council’s Registration Service.

Whatever you choose, we are sure you will find everything you need for your special day.

“ *The ring is a symbol of everlasting love...* ”



Arranging your Ceremony

By choosing a civil marriage in South Ayrshire, you are opting to have a unique and personalised ceremony tailored to suit your own individual preferences.

Your marriage ceremony can be held at a registration office, a venue, or at any location other than religious premises agreed between yourselves and the registrar - and can be conducted seven days a week and on public holidays.

When you have confirmed your date, please contact our registration office to check availability, with dates secured by paying an advance booking fee.

The registration team will be happy to assist in the planning of your ceremony, whether you choose a simple intimate ceremony or a larger, grander event - our experienced Registrars are available to help develop your ideas into a tailor-made ceremony.







Culzean Castle



Your Ceremony

A marriage ceremony is a statement of commitment and an expression of your hope, and should reflect your personal values as you move towards a new life and shared future.

For our role in your journey, an authorised registrar from our experienced team will be assigned to conduct your ceremony. We offer a pre-wedding meeting to give you the opportunity to meet with your Registrar to establish rapport and discuss your ceremony requirements.

There are many ways of enhancing your ceremony and making it personal to you. You can involve family and friends by introducing readings (which can include religious content) and traditional symbolic ceremonies such as handfasting and unity candles. Your Registrar will be happy to discuss options with you and provide ideas and examples of wording.

From the minute you book your ceremony we will guide you through the full process leading to the day itself ensuring that you can have your day, your way.

South Ayrshire Council's Registration Service offers you complete freedom and choice to ensure your ceremony is personal and meaningful to you.

Handfasting

In ancient Celtic times handfasting with ribbons was one of the earlier forms of a wedding ceremony and is where the phrase “tying the knot” originates from. In the traditions of Celtic handfasting, the couple’s wrists are bound together using ribbons to signify the joining of two as one.

What you will need:

- Ribbon suitable for handfasting

Unity Candle

Two taper candles are placed on either side of the larger pillar candle or unity candle. The taper candles represent the lives of the couple as individuals prior to their union in marriage. Together they pick up their individual candles and, in unison, light the unity candle, symbolising their two lives becoming one.

What you will need:

- Two taper candles
- A larger pillar candle (unity candle)



The Quaich

The Quaich is a two-handled cup used during a wedding ceremony. From it the couple take their first drink together as a married couple. The Quaich can then be passed around for family and friends to toast their marriage.

Traditionally whisky is served in the Quaich, although some couples choose Scotland's other national drink – Irn Bru!

What you will need:

- A Quaich
- Preferred drink to fill the Quaich

“ *to love and to cherish,
from this day forward...* ”

Oathing Stone Ceremony

The oathing stone is an old Scottish tradition where the couple place their hands upon a stone while saying their wedding vows. Taken from the ancient Celtic custom of “setting an oath in stone”, it is believed that by introducing this symbolic ritual the exchange of their vows was considered more binding.

What you will need:

- A stone suitable for use as an oathing stone
- Engraved stone with couples names and date of marriage if desired

“ *Your day, your way...* ”



Including Children in the Ceremony

You may wish to include children in your ceremony in the following ways:

- Have them bring the ring/rings forward
- Have them recite a reading/poem or sing a song
- Present the child/children with a ring or gift as a welcome to the new family
- Holding the stone in an oathing stone ceremony
- Tie the knot for a handfasting ceremony

Remembering Absent Loved Ones

There are many ways you may like to remember loved ones on your day. You may wish to include one of the following acts of remembrance:

- Light a memorial candle
- Registrar can mention loved ones in your ceremony
- Display a photograph of your loved ones
- Introduce a reading in memory of the person/people
- Include a favourite song of your loved ones with your ceremony music



Other Ceremonies Provided

Along with civil marriage ceremonies we provide a number of other services which you may be interested in exploring.

Renewal of Vows

Any married couple or registered civil partners can arrange a renewal of vows ceremony.

The ceremony can re-capture your special day, mark an anniversary, or provide an opportunity for couples who have had a ceremony abroad to share their celebration with family and friends at home.

For your ceremony you can include personal vows, the rededication of rings or giving of new rings, creating a day to remember.

These ceremonies are non-religious and can be held at the Registration Office or at any venue agreed between the couple and the Registrar.



Naming Ceremony

A naming ceremony is an expression of commitment to your child in the presence of family and friends, the bonding together of those special people who will play an important role in the life of your child.

This unique ceremony can be a separate celebration, or included as an additional part of your marriage ceremony. It is a perfect opportunity to celebrate the birth of a child, make an announcement of chosen names, or to welcome a child (or children) into your family.

You can introduce Parent's Promises and acknowledge the special roles taken on by grandparents or aunts and uncles.

Your ceremony can also include readings, music and involve supporting adults or friends to create your own personalised ceremony.

As part of the ceremony, there will be a signed certificate given to parents as a keepsake of the occasion.

Naming ceremonies are non-statutory and can be held at the Registration Office, or at any venue agreed between yourselves and the Registrar.





Our Venues...

Ayr Town Hall

The Royal Burgh of Ayr is a lively and active town situated in the south-west of Scotland on the Firth of Clyde, with fantastic transport links that make it accessible by road, rail and sea.

Ayr Registration Office is located in Ayr Town Hall on the corner of High Street and New Bridge Street. Seen from miles around, the building is Ayr's most prominent landmark, with an impressive 225ft steeple designed by Thomas Hamilton.

Civil Ceremonies are held in the Royal Burgh Suites. The entrance from New Bridge Street leads through the foyer to the grand staircase to access the Burgh Suites on the upper floor. Disabled access is available from the foyer direct to the upper floor.

The comfortable Burgh Suites are traditionally decorated incorporating an 18ft ceiling, with stunning chandeliers emphasising the open, classic feel of the rooms.

Royal Burgh Suite 1

Accommodates the principal wedding party and up to 40 guests.

Royal Burgh Suite 2

Accommodates a maximum of 10 people.

There are several photo opportunities in the Town Hall, including the popular grand staircase and balcony.



Our Venues...

Girvan Registration Office

Girvan is the largest town between Ayr and Stranraer, and a popular seaside resort.

Girvan Registration Office is situated in Knockcushan Street, on the side of the river facing the harbour.

The comfortable Marriage Suite can accommodate the principal wedding party and up to 30 guests. There is car parking to the rear of the building, and disabled access is available from the foyer direct to the upper floor.

The Aviary and Knockcushan Gardens are adjacent to the office and are ideal for wedding photographs.

Alternatively, Girvan's beach is one of the town's main attractions and offers excellent views of Ailsa Craig and Arran, providing a unique and stunning backdrop to capture your special day.

County Buildings

County Buildings were constructed between 1818 and 1822 by the architect, Robert Wallace.

Civil Ceremonies can be held in the County Hall or in the Maybole Committee Room. The Ceremony rooms are accessed from the entrance hall via two impressive semi-circular staircases, complemented by large stained glass windows. On the first floor, the corridor walls are finished in oak and are original to the building.

The distinctive surroundings are ideal for photographs, offering a unique setting to remember your special day.

County Hall

Accommodates up to 100 guests

Maybole Committee Room

Accommodates up to 40 guests





Requirements for Marriage

Uniquely placed to assist, our experienced registration team will advise on the statutory requirements for marriage, which vary depending on nationality, country of residence, age and any previous marriages/civil partnerships.

We will guide you through all the legal preliminaries, ensuring all relevant documentation is submitted correctly and within statutory timescales.

Marriage Notice Forms (M10) should be submitted by both parties to the registration office approximately ten weeks before your marriage date. These forms must be accompanied with appropriate documentation and payment of the necessary fees.



Let us take care of you

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south-ayrshire.gov.uk/weddings

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