**NOTES ON THE REQUIREMENTS BEFORE AN APPROVAL CAN BE GRANTED**

The non-returnable fee for this application is £2,000 and must be submitted with the application to Jacqueline Bennett Superintendent Registrar Bath and North East Somerset Register Office, The Guildhall, High Street, Bath BA1 5AW. Cheques should be made payable to ‘Bath and North East Somerset Council'.

The application must be made by the proprietor or trustee of the premises and it is approved by the Proper Officer for Registration matters at Bath and North East Somerset Registration Service. When made on behalf of a limited company there should be a separate statement of the names and addresses of all the directors.

The premises must fulfil the following standard requirements in Schedule 1 of 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—
	1. the solemnization of marriages; or
	2. the 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—
	1. religious premises;
	2. 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 are to take place if approval is granted must be identifiable by description as a distinct part of the premises.

In considering the suitability of premises as a venue, the local 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.

**Conditions 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—
	1. of his name and address immediately upon him becoming the holder of an approval under regulation 7(2); and
	2. 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—
	* + - 1. the layout of the premises, as shown in the plan submitted with the approved application, or in the use of the premises;
				2. the name or full postal address of the approved premises;
				3. the description of the room or rooms in which the proceedings are to take place;
				4. the name or address of the holder of the approval; and
				5. 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.
	* + 1. 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), the proceedings shall not—

* + - * 1. include extracts from an authorised religious marriage service or from sacred religious texts;
				2. be led by a minister of religion or another religious leader;
				3. involve a religious ritual or series of rituals;
				4. include hymns or other religious chants; or,
				5. 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.

1. Public access to any proceedings in approved premises must be permitted without charge.
2. 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.
3. 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.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**RENEWAL AND REINSTATEMENT**

1. 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.
2. 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.

**REVOCATION**

1. The authority may revoke an approval if the holder has failed to comply with one or more conditions of the approval, or the use of 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.
2. The Registrar General for England and Wales may direct the local authority to revoke an approval if it is considered 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 it is proposed the approval should be revoked and provide the holder with a period of at least 14 days to make representations in writing to the Registrar General. If, following consideration of any representations received, the Registrar General decides that the approval should be revoked the local authority will be directed to do so. The local authority must then revoke the approval with immediate effect and notify the holder of the approval that it has done so.
3. 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.

**REVIEWS**

1. An applicant is able to seek a review of a decision made by the local 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.
2. The application for review should be delivered to the proper officer of the local authority. The Proper Officer should ensure that the review is carried out by individuals who were not involved in the earlier decision.
3. The authority may charge an additional fee for a review of its decision to refuse to grant an approval, to attach local conditions or to refuse to renew an approval.

**REGISTRATION**

1. 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 (Bath and North East Somerset Register The Guildhall High Street Bath BA1 5AW, telephone 01225 477234 for marriage in Bath).
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 essential that the couple make an advance booking with this superintendent registrar for their attendance at the proposed marriage as soon as a booking can be accepted. A fee for this attendance will be payable two months before the ceremony.
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 the couple and is valid for twelve months. The couple should contact the register office where they live, as soon as possible after making the arrangements with the approved premises. 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, 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: -
	* + - 1. the attendance of the superintendent registrar and a registrar for the district in which the premises are situated; and
				2. the issue of the authority or authorities for marriage by the superintendent registrar(s) to whom notice of marriage was given.
6. When notice has been given in a different registration district from the one where the marriage is taking place, the superintendent registrar(s) certificate for marriage will be issued in that district but will be printed in the district of marriage and passed to the superintendent registrar who is to attend the ceremony.
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.
8. Any rights of copyright for music, readings etc permitted at the ceremony are a matter for the couple and the holder of the approval.

**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 district in which the premises are situated. (Bath and North East Somerset Register, The Guildhall, High Street, Bath BA1 5AW, telephone 01225 477234 for Civil Partnership in Bath).
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 their availability. It is therefore essential, that the couple make an advance booking with the civil partnership registrar for their attendance at the proposed registration, as soon as a booking can be accepted. A fee for this attendance will be payable two months before the ceremony.
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, contact the register office(s) where they live as soon as possible after making their arrangements with the approved premises. 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. The local registration authority can advise further on these procedures.
5. The couple should be warned that any arrangements made for civil partnership to take place on the approved premises are dependent on -
	* + - 1. the attendance of the civil partnership registrar for the district in which the premises are situated; and
				2. the issue of the civil partnership schedule by the registration authority for the district 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 must be agreed in advance with the civil partnership registrar who will be attending the registration.
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.