

# ARGYLL AND BUTE REGISTRARS

Your guide to Civil Ceremonies in Argyll and Bute



# Welcome to Argyll and Bute



## A Stunning Setting for Your Special Day

Life's biggest moments deserve the most beautiful backdrops ~ and here in Argyll and Bute, we offer just that. Whether you're planning a wedding, renewing your vows, or celebrating a new arrival, our incredible landscapes and warm hospitality help make your day unforgettable.



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# Thinking about getting married?

You've come to the right place. Argyll and Bute is home to some of Scotland's most spectacular locations ~ romantic winter weddings in historic castles to barefoot vows on sunlit beaches, or intimate ceremonies with sweeping mountain views, you'll find the perfect place to say **"I do"**. We offer more than just beautiful backdrops ~ we offer experiences that stay with you forever.

Located on Scotland's breathtaking west coast, Argyll and Bute is a place of extraordinary natural beauty. With over 3,000 miles of coastline, 25 inhabited islands, and six welcoming towns, you'll find a location that feels just right for you.



*We got married on 3rd of May at the Helensburgh and Lomond civic centre, the venue is stunning based at the old school house and right next to the water. Jane was our registrar and we couldn't have asked for a better person to marry us. From when we first met her she was warm and bubbly and put our minds at ease. She was on hand to answer any questions on the lead up to our day, and always did so promptly and nothing was ever too much a bother! Jane made our day very personal to us, Thanks again for a fabulous day.*

Carina and Jake | May 2025 | Helensburgh | Registrar: Jane | Photos by BK Photography

Our area is made up of four distinct regions, each with its own character and charm:

- Bute and Cowal
- Helensburgh and Lomond
- Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands
- Oban, Lorn and the Isles



Kayleigh Scott photography



Sean Myles photography



Caro Weiss photography



Ruairidh Galbraith photography

Each offers a unique selection of venues and scenic spots – from traditional to totally off-the-beaten-path. You'll find more about each area later in this guide, to help you decide where your special day could unfold.

This guide focuses on **civil ceremonies**, giving you all the information you need to plan your celebration, including the legal steps required to marry in Scotland. You'll also discover how our dedicated team of registrars help make the process simple and stress-free, to create a ceremony that's tailored for you.

We're so glad you're considering Argyll and Bute for your big day. We can't wait to help you celebrate it. We hope this guide inspires your plans – and we can't wait to welcome you to Argyll and Bute for your special day.

# Getting Married in Scotland

## Who can be married in Scotland?

Any 2 persons, regardless of where they live, may marry in Scotland provided that:

- Both persons, are at least 16 years of age on the day of their marriage – (Unless one or both parties to marriage live in England/Wales/Republic of Ireland they need to be 18 to be married.)
- They are not related to one another in a forbidden degree.
- They are unmarried and not in a civil partnership (any person who has already been married or registered as a civil partner must produce documentary evidence that the previous marriage or civil partnership registration has been ended by death, divorce, annulment or dissolution)
- They are capable of understanding the nature of a marriage ceremony and of consenting to marriage.
- In the case of opposite sex marriage, the marriage would be regarded as valid in the party's country of domicile.
- If you are in a qualifying civil partnership, you can change it to a marriage – a qualifying civil partnership is a civil partnership which was registered in Scotland and which has not been dissolved, annulled or ended by death.



Set up by Argyll Wedding and Events

**To book a Registrar** you can book online at [Argyll and Bute Registration Service – Online Booking & Order System](#) a non refundable booking fee of £90 will be taken (not for Helensburgh) to secure the booking. Once received by the office they will confirm everything by email. The booking portal gives you access to the total fees, ceremony details and a place to upload documents.

## Your Marriage Paperwork

The legal requirement to marriage in Scotland is that both parties to a proposed civil or religious marriage submit marriage forms to the registrar of the district in which the marriage is to take place informing of their intention to marry. If you intend to lodge notice in person, please contact the local registrar before doing so an [appointment](#) will be required.

When sending in your documents by post please send them by recorded delivery and note **PERSONAL** on the envelope so it comes directly to us.

When getting married both parties need to complete [marriage notice forms \(M10\)](#). Forms can be downloaded from our [website](#), [National Records of Scotland](#) or they can be emailed/posted to you by a registrar.

The earliest your paperwork can be submitted is 3 months before the date of your wedding and no later than 29 days before the date of the event. We would advise that you do not leave it any later than 6 weeks before the date to ensure your paperwork is in order and is processed in time.



CIA photography

The forms should be returned with the following documents;

- Both parties have to submit their birth certificates (originals not photocopies and translations if needed)
- Copies of passports to verify nationality
- Proof of residency for each of you (copies of valid driving licence, council tax bill for the current year, utility bill dated within 3 months or a bank statement dated within the month)
- If either of you have previously been married or in a civil partnership we will require relevant documentation to prove you are free to marry e.g. Original Divorce Documents, Death Certificate. (originals not photocopies and translations if required).

**\*Please note:** If submitting foreign divorce documents then a separate questionnaire will also need to be completed.

- Evidence of EUSS status for EEA passport holders (more details below)
- Full names and addresses of your two witnesses who must be over 16 years of age
- The [appropriate payment](#)
- If subject to immigration you should contact the [UK Border Agency](#) (Tel: 0300 123 2241) for advice about entry requirements to the UK under the immigration rules for marriage - [Apply for a Marriage Visitor visa: step by step - GOV.UK](#)



Chloe Jane photography

## The Marriage Schedule

The marriage schedule provides the authority for a marriage to proceed and is produced once the registrar is happy that there is no legal impediment to the marriage.

It is a document that is signed after the wedding ceremony by both parties to marriage, the authorised registrar/celebrant and two witnesses. **The Schedule is a very important document** – no marriage can proceed without it.

## Civil Marriages by a Registrar

If you are having a civil ceremony by a registrar they will bring the marriage schedule with them to the ceremony and then take it away afterwards to register the marriage. This means you don't need to stress about visiting the office on the week of your wedding.



## Religious or Other Belief Marriage (Minister/Priest/Humanist/Celebrant)

- The marriage schedule will be issued by the registrar only to the couple being married. The schedule cannot be issued more than 7 days before the marriage and the registrar will advise you when to attend to collect it.
- An appointment should be made to ensure staff are available
- The marriage schedule must be given to the person conducting the marriage ceremony before the ceremony begins.
- Immediately after the ceremony the schedule must be signed in black fountain pen only, by all parties.
- It must be returned to the registrar within three days so that the marriage can be registered.



*Wow what a day we had!  
We got married at the most perfect setting on the banks of Loch Lomond, The Cruin. Our registrar was Elaine Crichton, who was a superstar from start to finish. She was very calming and made sure that every detail was covered. She made the ceremony very memorable by making it so personal and we couldn't have had anyone other than Elaine marry us.*

Heather and Jonathan | Sept 2025 | Helensburgh  
Registrar: Elaine | Photos by BK Photography

# Why Pick a Registrar for your Ceremony?

## Why should I choose a Registrar from Argyll and Bute?

Our registrars aren't just experienced and knowledgeable – they're also super friendly and here to support you every step of the way. Argyll & Bute Registrars don't just conduct ceremonies – they live and work in the area, making them the perfect choice to help you plan your big day!

If you're dreaming of something traditional, relaxed, or totally unique, they'll help you plan the **ceremony that suits you**.

*And here's a little secret...*

They **LOVE** a wedding.

Big or small, castle or garden, beach or mountaintop – they just love helping couples enjoy their day. And if your ceremony includes a little adventure? That's just a bonus!



*We feel extremely fortunate to have had Catherine as our celebrant. From first getting in touch with her, she put us at ease, answered all our questions, and worked with us to create a beautiful ceremony. Her patience with us planning from another country was greatly appreciated as well. Our wedding was the most magical day and we have Catherine to thank for that.*

Kristi and Thomas | Aug 2024 | Oban | Registrar: Catherine | Dougi McMillan Photography

## And the Practical Magic?

Only a registrar can:

- Process your legal marriage notices
- Bring the marriage schedule to your ceremony
- Take it away, register the marriage
- Issue your official marriage certificate

All of this means you don't need to visit the office the week of your wedding – giving you more time to relax and soak in the excitement.

So when you choose our registrars, you're not just getting a ceremony – you're getting peace of mind, a personal touch, and total support from **“Yes!”** to **“I do”**.





*We are sincerely grateful for Alan officiating our marriage ceremony at the registrar office. He made the experience truly special with his kind and professional manner. Brilliant and brief approach helped made the day enjoyable. Thank you Alan and the entire team.*

Colin and Eunice | Feb 2025 | Oban  
Registrar: Alan | LJF Photography

## Do Registrars have any hidden cost?

**No hidden fees – just peace of mind.**

Our prices are transparent and inclusive. When you book with Argyll and Bute Registrars, your fee covers everything: the processing of all legal paperwork, your personalised ceremony, the Registrar’s travel, and your official certificate. No surprise charges – just straightforward support.

## Are your Registrars qualified?

**Yes – and they bring both expertise and heart.**

Our team of Registrars is made up of experienced professionals who have conducted countless ceremonies across Argyll and Bute. Every new Registrar is officially authorised by the Registrar General and receives comprehensive training before leading a ceremony.

Several members of our team have also completed the Proficiency in the Law and Practice of Registration in Scotland qualification, recognised by the Association of Registrars of Scotland, COSLA, and National Records of Scotland. While this qualification isn’t a requirement, it reflects the dedication and high standards of our team.



*Gemma was great, we are both really happy to have had her perform the ceremony of our marriage. She was very helpful, taking all our suggestions and background, and crafting a ceremony that was exactly what we wanted. Thank you so much.*

Andrew and Katie | Feb 2025 | Islay | Registrar: Gemma  
Hayley Fraser Photography

## Why should I have a Registrar deliver my Ceremony?

**Because your ceremony deserves experience, care, and calm.**

Standing up in front of your loved ones can feel overwhelming – but with Argyll and Bute Registrars, you're never alone. Our professional team will guide you through every part of the process, from the final deep breath before the walk down the aisle to your joyful *"I do."*

We'll help with planning the order of events, ensuring everything flows naturally and reflects your personal style. No need to memorise lines or worry about what to say – we'll gently prompt and support you every step of the way.

With years of experience in a wide variety of settings, our Registrars know how to make your ceremony feel calm, meaningful, and truly unforgettable.



Registrar Nicky



Chloe Jane photography

## Is a Registrar Ceremony just short and basic? Not at All.

**A Registrar ceremony can be whatever you want it to be.**

At Argyll and Bute, our goal is to help make your big day truly personal and memorable – for both you and your guests. Whether you're imagining something simple and elegant or a longer, more detailed ceremony, we're here to bring your vision to life.

To help plan your ceremony, we provide a simple questionnaire that lets you personalise everything from readings and vows to music and symbolic elements. If you'd like more support, we're happy to arrange a Teams call or a face-to-face meeting with your Registrar to discuss your ideas and walk you through the options.

Our motto is: *'It's your day, so we do it your way.'* We're here to make sure your ceremony feels just right – for you.



*Gill and I have been to a few registry office weddings for family and friends and felt they were like production lines with little or no real feeling from the registrars' teams. Gill's daughter Lauren lives in Tobermory and was married by Andrew six years ago, and that's when we realised that the Mull team and Andrew in particular really cared about making the day memorable. So when we decided to join our two families in our civil partnership, we knew there was only one place we wanted to get married – Tobermory on Mull!*



*All the way through the process, Andrew has guided and helped us with suggestions for words and sites for the ceremony. He was very flexible on the site and timings of the ceremony, even printing out our words and vows for us. On the day, Andrew arrived early, met all the families and suggested where we could have the ceremony by the lake. He even helped with the group family photos!*

*If anyone wants a registry office ceremony that feels (and is!) personal for them and their families, and not a rushed production line ceremony, then do what we did, get 19 people up to Mull for a week and got married in a happy joyous unrushed way that everyone will remember for years to come.*

Gill and Gareth | Jul 2025 | Mull | Registrar: Andrew | Photo supplied by couple



*We had a really special small wedding on the Isle of Tiree with our closest family and our dog Midge! Rona our registrar conducted a wonderful ceremony and helped us to make it unique and personal to us.*

Hazel and Hamish | Sept 2025 | Tiree | Registrar: Rona  
Andrew Rae Photography

## What are the differences between a Registrar and other Officiant’s ceremony?

	Registrar	Celebrant	Religious
Be able to deal with the legal paperwork for your ceremony?	✓	✗	✗
Be able to bring your legal marriage schedule to the ceremony?	✓	✗	✗
Be able to include religious content in your ceremony?	✓	✗	✓
Be able to personalise your ceremony?	✓	✓	?
Be able to issue you a marriage certificate.	✓	✗	✗
Have a marriage room facility available.	✓	✗	?
Add a unique part to your ceremony, e.g. handfasting, oathing the stone, quaich, unity candle	✓	✓	?
Fee charged is a complete price to include the legal paperwork.	✓	✗	✗
Needs to be a member of the Celebrant’s organisation before a ceremony can take place.	✗	✓	?



*We had the most extraordinary wedding aboard the Purple Heather, with Dunollie castle as our backdrop. Nicky was absolutely wonderful, she kept in constant communication with us, explained all the bits we didn’t get, and turned up on the day with a beautiful poem she wrote about us that we’ll cherish for a lifetime. She’s a real credit to A&B Registrars.*

Heather and Jonathan | Jun 2025 | Oban | Registrar: Nicky  
 Photos by Eive Photography

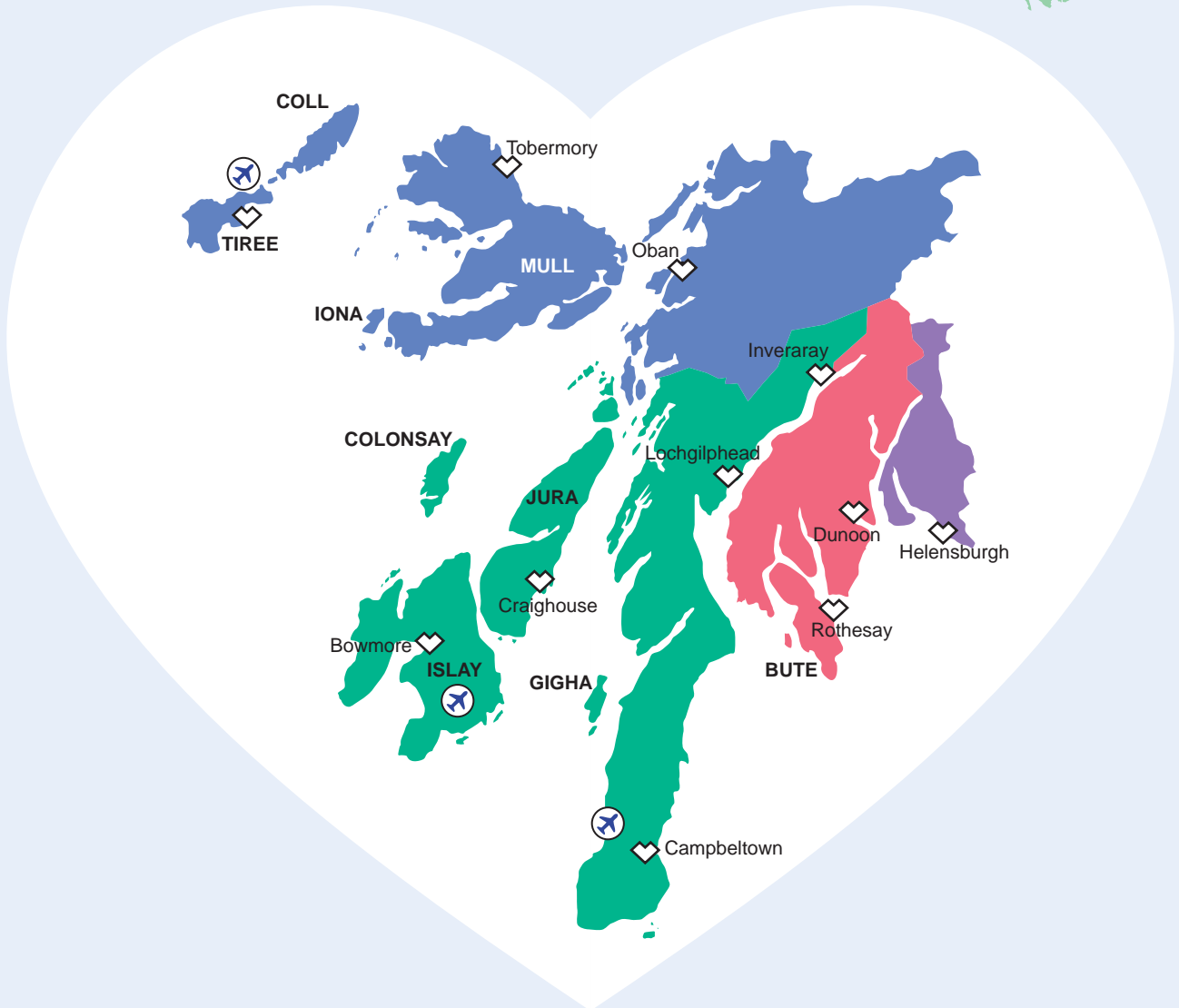


# Our Areas

## Planning your wedding In Argyll and Bute?

We have you covered.

Our area is made up of four distinct regions, each with its own character and charm:



- Bute and Cowal
- Helensburgh and Lomond
- Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the islands
- Oban, Lorn and the Isles

If you are thinking about getting married in Argyll and Bute, whether you are having a civil or a religious ceremony, contact the registrar for your area by calling **01546 605521** and selecting the area you require. You can also email the team on:

[registrationenquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:registrationenquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Or visit our website:

[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/marriage/](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/marriage/)

## Dunoon Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

Toward

Kirn

Hunters Quay

Strone

Blairmore

Ardentinny

Loch Eck

Strachur

Strathlachlan

St Catherines

Carrick Castle

Lochgoilhead

Ormidale

Tighnabruaich

Portavadie

Kilfinan and surrounding villages

### The Team

Samantha Gillies – Registrar

Stephanie Wright – Assistant Registrar

Linda Mollins – Assistant Registrar

Kelly Collins – Assistant Registrar

## Castle House Marriage Rooms, Dunoon

Set within its own scenic grounds, [Castle House](#) in Dunoon offers a romantic and historic setting for your special day. Overlooking the Firth of Clyde, this beautiful 19th-century villa was once a holiday home for Lord Provost Ewing and is now home to the Castle House Museum.

Ceremonies take place on the ground floor, where two characterful rooms provide elegant options for both intimate and larger weddings. Private waiting areas are available for the wedding party.

- The **larger room** accommodates the couple and up to **56 guests**.
- The **smaller room** suits more intimate gatherings of up to **10 guests**.

The surrounding gardens, home to the statue of Highland Mary, offer stunning photo opportunities – especially from the viewpoint at the top of Castle Hill.

Floral displays are included, and you're welcome to bring fresh flowers if you wish or arrange to have the room decorated simply discuss this with your registrar in advance. A Bluetooth speaker is available for your music.



Registrars Steph and Sam



Loraine Ross photography

## Bute Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

- Rothesay
- Port Bannatyne
- Kilchattan Bay
- Ettrick Bay
- Kingarth
- Everywhere on Bute

### The Team

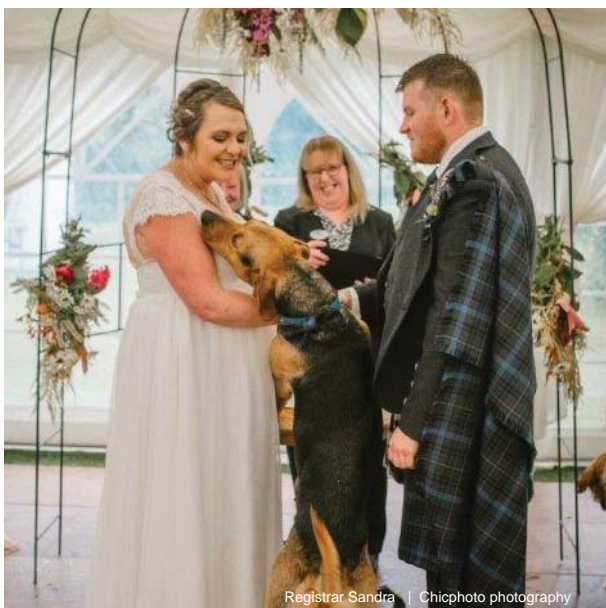
Sandra Cobain – Registrar  
 Dunoon Registrars also cover ceremonies on the Isle of Bute.

## Rothesay Marriage Room

The registration office and marriage room moved on the 1st of November 2023 to 37 Victoria Street PA20 0AN, a refurbished bank. The marriage room can seat 15 people and has limited standing space. The room can be decorated by a couple if they wish, arrangements will need to be made for access.



Registrar Samantha | Pixies in the Cellar photography



Registrar Sandra | Chicphoto photography



*Huge thank you to Sandra Cobain for marrying Innes and I at Scalpsie Bay! We had the most amazing day. Sandra was so great with us from the beginning, keeping us up to date on what was needed running up to the wedding and keeping us both calm. She let us contact her at any time with any questions or worries, and she always got back to us straight away to put our minds at rest. Thank you Sandra, we were so happy it was you marrying us.*

Aimee and Innes | 2025 | Bute | Registrar: Sandra  
 Kayleigh Scott Photography

## Campbeltown Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

Campbeltow

Southend

Machrihanish

Stewarton

Drumlemble

Peninver

Saddell

Torrisdale

Carradale

Kilkenzie

Bellochantuy

Muasdale

Glenbarr

Tayinloan

Isle of Gigha and any other locations on the A83 up to Ronachan

### The Team

Julie – Registrar

Linsay – Assistant Registrar

Nicola – Assistant Registrar

## Campbeltown's Registration Office and Ceremony rooms

[Campbeltown's registry office and ceremony rooms](#) are located in the magnificent A-listed sandstone Burnet Building, designed by Sir JJ Burnet. Situated in the town centre, the Burnet Building also houses a museum and has beautiful views over to the Isle of Arran.

There are two ceremony rooms available, both with many original features and displaying paintings by artists William McTaggart, Archibald MacKinnon and Gregory Robson.

The large ceremony suite accommodates up to 70 people and is beautifully decorated in rustic shades, with a grand fireplace and fabulous wooden beams, overlooking the Lady McCartney memorial garden.

The smaller ceremony room, in cream with dark wood panelling, enjoys views over the loch to Davaar Island and holds smaller, intimate parties of up to ten people.



Andi Watson photography



Registrars Julie, Linsay and Nicola

## Helensburgh and Lomond Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

- Arrochar
- Shandon
- Luss
- Cove
- Rhu
- Cardross
- Colgrain
- Ardgartan
- Kilcreggan
- Rosneath
- Helensburgh and a large area of Loch Lomond

### The Team

- Elaine Crichton – Registrar
- Jane MacGregor – Assistant Registrar
- Christina Byrne – Assistant Registrar

## Civic Centre, Helensburgh

The ceremony suite is located in the heart of the Civic Centre and contains everything you could wish for on your day. Able to hold 80 guests, it has beautiful flower arrangements, music system, permanent ceiling fairy lights, a separate entrance for the bridal party, a dressing room for the bride with an amazing Hollywood-style mirror with lights all round it and there is ample free parking for guests also.

After the ceremony, the landscaped areas at the rear of the building overlooking the River Clyde provide a beautiful backdrop for photographs. The two original wrought iron Boys and Girls entrance arches have been erected within this area which have provided many couples with fun and quirky photograph opportunities.



Registrars Christina and Elaine



Registrar Jane | BK photography



Registrars Jane and Elaine

## Islay Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

- Bowmore
- Port Ellen
- Port Charlotte
- Portnahaven
- Keills (Jura)
- Craighouse (Jura)
- Everywhere on Islay and Jura

### The Team

- Gemma Cameron – Registrar
- Mandy Walker – Assistant Registrar
- Laura Macaffer – Assistant registrar

## The Ceremony Room, Bowmore

The ceremony room located in Bowmore, the island's largest town, is tastefully decorated and can accommodate up to 10 guests. Floral displays are provided and a music system is available to play your choice of music. There is disabled access and free on-street parking nearby.



For larger wedding parties there are various venues on the island able to accommodate including many of Islay's beaches boasting beautiful views across the Atlantic or one of the many historical sites on the island.

## Lochgilphead Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

- Lochgilphead
- Ardkinglas
- Cairndow
- Inveraray
- Minard
- Ardrishaig
- Tarbert
- Portsonachan
- Furnace
- Lochgair
- Auchindrain
- Craobh Haven

### The Team

- Lorna Wilson – Registrar
- Melanie MacLean – Marriage Officer

## Lochgilphead Marriage Room

Twenty-four miles south of Inveraray on the A83 is the town of Lochgilphead, home to Argyll and Bute Council headquarters at Kilmory Castle. The castle gardens are home to many rare rhododendrons and unusual trees and plants offering a stunning backdrop for photographs. The Lochgilphead registration office is based a few miles away at Manse Brae, however the [marriage room](#) will be located in Kilmory Castle as of June 2026. The circular (often described as octagonal) room, is one of the most distinctive and historic features of the building, it dates back to the major 19th-century transformation of the house.



Registrars Lorna and Melanie | Main Fleck Photography



Registrar Lorna



Registrar Mál

## Mull Registration

**Covers ceremonies in:**  
the full Island of Mull, Iona and Tiree

### The Team

Andrew Penny – Registrar

Margaret Birch – Assistant Registrar

## The Old Court House and Prison, Tobermory

Our Registrars are based in [the old Court House and Prison](#), built in 1862, on Breadalbane Street, Tobermory. Couples can be married in the ceremony room here, which is in the Old Court Room and it still has lots of original features. The room can comfortably accommodate up to 44 people and has stunning panoramic views over Tobermory Bay and the Sound of Mull, with the hills of Morvern and Ardnamurchan in the background.



Registrar Andrew | Mairi Fleck photography



Registrar Andrew | Charlotte Wotton photography

## Oban Registration

### Covers ceremonies in:

- Oban
- Dalmally
- Connel
- Taynuilt
- Port Appin
- Loch Awe
- Benderloch
- Bridge of Orchy
- Kilchrenan
- Muasdale
- Ardanaisei,
- Isle of Luing,
- Colonsay and Lismore

### The Team

- Nicola Sturley – Registrar
- Catherine Dods – Assistant Registrar
- Alan MacLeod – Assistant Registrar

## Oban Registration Office

[Oban Registration Office](#) is situated in the town centre and has its own marriage room which can hold up to 20 guests. The room has neutral decor to which a couple can add their own touches if they wish.



# Planning your Wedding Ceremony

The Argyll and Bute registrars are here to help make that moment perfect for you. We're happy to tailor the ceremony to suit your style, add meaningful extras, or remove any elements you're not comfortable with.

Your wedding ceremony is the most important part of your wedding day – it's the moment you officially go from two individuals to a married couple.

While each registrar may have their own personal style, the general flow of the ceremony is outlined below to give you an idea of what to expect.

If you're feeling nervous and thinking of keeping things short and simple, remember – the ceremony will pass in a flash on the day. It's worth taking the time to create something that you and your guests will remember for years to come.

A basic ceremony lasts around 15-20 minutes (depending on the registrar), but by working closely with us, we can personalise it with your chosen readings, involve your guests or family in meaningful ways, and ensure it reflects you as a couple.

To help us plan your ceremony, our online booking system, Zipporah, includes tabs where you can select your ceremony options and share key details about your day. This gives us a helpful starting point to understand your vision.

To help us do that, we'd love to get to know you. We can arrange a Microsoft Teams call with your registrar to talk through your ideas, get to know you better, and help plan your perfect ceremony – wherever in Argyll and Bute you choose to say **"I do"**.

## The Processional

The processional is where the party/parties to marriage make their grand entrance and walk down the aisle.

The registrar will ask your guests to stand for your entrance and take their seats when you're all at the front.

This can happen in a few different ways. Typically, one party will be waiting at the altar for other party to walk down the aisle, with any bridesmaids going first.

Traditionally a bride will be walked down the aisle by her father but of course this can be any loved one or you can walk in alone.

If you're having children/bridesmaids/groomsman, they'll walk down just before the party walking down the aisle

You may both choose to walk down the aisle together or decide it isn't right for either of you.

This part of the ceremony is really completely up to you and you can choose which members of your wedding party and family take part.

You may wish to ask your registrar to make an announcement before this happens if you do not wish photographs taken by guests during the ceremony.



## The Welcome

Once everyone is in place the registrar will open the ceremony with some welcoming words, introducing themselves and their capacity for conducting the ceremony.

They will usually thank your guests for attending and this may be an appropriate time to mention any loved ones who are not able to join you on your special day.

Depending on the registrar they may choose to open the ceremony with a reading or poem, if there is anything specific you would like to open your ceremony please discuss this with the registrar.



Andrew Rae photography

## Words on Marriage

The registrar will now usually say some words about marriage, this is a good time to include a brief story about you as a couple, what marriage means to you as a couple.

You can write this information yourself, ask a family member to do this and read out at the ceremony or download the questions which will help the registrar to put something together for you. We try to include as much as possible from the information provided but may only select specific parts to personalise the ceremony.

They may give an outline of the ceremony and what it represents.



Bill Billie photography

## Readings and Extra Ceremonies

Although these things can be included at almost any time during the ceremony, before you say your vows is a great time to include something a bit different.

It can be very special to include a member of your wedding party or family and friends to read something during your ceremony or to help perform a traditional Hand-fasting so that your hands are bound together as you make your vows to each other.

Readings of your choice and other ceremonies can also be performed by your registrar, please discuss your choices with them.

## The Vows

All marriages in Scotland are formed by vows and these are a legal part of your ceremony however you can personalise them by choosing wording that you feel suits you both or even write your own.

If you choose to write your own vows the wording must include each of you stating that you accept the other as your husband or wife, that you accept the other in marriage, or both.

This is a very special moment in the ceremony where you make your commitment to each other.



Chloe Jane photography

## The Rings

Although it is not a compulsory part of the marriage ceremony in Scotland, most couples will choose to exchange rings or jewellery as the traditional way of sealing your vows.

At this part of the ceremony you will also say some words as you exchange your rings.

Again, these words can be chosen from options available on our page or can be written completely to suit you.

If you are having a ring bearer they will be called forward to hand the rings to you, please ensure you let the registrar know who will have the rings.



## The Signing

Once you have been pronounced as married the registrar will invite you and your two witnesses to sign the marriage schedule.

If you are setting up your venue it is a good idea to have a small table available for this however if you are being married outdoors the registrar will help you to improvise.

For signing the marriage schedule each of you should use your current signature even if you plan to change your name following your marriage.



My Islay Wedding photography



*I can't recommend Lorna highly enough. She is such a lovely lady with a very calming nature. Lorna really put us at ease on our Wedding Day and we shared a few laughs along the way. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for such a lovely day. We will cherish the memories forever!*

**Davey and Nicky** | Jun 2025 | Lochgilphead  
Registrar: Lorna | Chloe Jane Photography

## The Kiss

The registrar will officially declare you married or as Husband/Wife and Wife/Husband, please let the registrar know if there is a certain way you would like to be pronounced.

You will then be told you may kiss. There will be lots of clapping and cheering from your guests as you share your first married kiss.

**TIP:** This is a very important shot for your photographer to capture so try and make sure your kiss lasts for a couple of seconds to give them the best chance.



David Grant Simpson photography

## The Recessional

Once the signing of the schedule has been completed the registrar will invite you back to the head of the aisle to conclude the ceremony.

They will offer their congratulations and ask your guests for a round of applause. If you are having confetti, they will also ask your guests to get prepared.

You will then make your way back down the aisle as a married couple followed by your wedding party as your guests cheer and throw their confetti.



Adam Luto photography



*Thank you very much to Mandy for delivering our ideal ceremony. She made it extremely easy for us to personalize our ceremony so that it really reflected our personalities which made it extremely special. She was easy going and put us both at ease.*

**Kirsty and Calum** | Jun 2025 | Islay | Registrar: Mandy  
Adam Luto Photography



# Ceremony Enhancement

## Hand Fasting

**Required:**  
Cord/fabric

Can include  
family/friends/  
children/guests



Hand fasting is an ancient celtic tradition, it represents the binding together of two people in love and is believed to be where the term 'tie the knot' came from. During this ceremony fabric is tied around your joined hands, representing the joining of your two lives and the vows/promises made to one another. When the couple pull their hands away the fabric remains tied on its own.

The fabric can then be kept as a keepsake of your day. Whether set against Argyll and Bute's stunning landscapes or within one of our charming ceremony rooms, our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include handfasting within your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony and can personalise it to suit your style and story. Examples of wording can be found here: [Hand Fasting – Marriage](#)

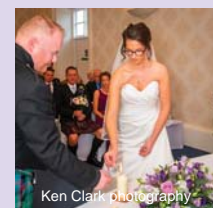


## Unity Candle Ceremony

**Required:**  
1 large candle  
2 smaller candles and tapers to light  
Enough tea light candles for everyone you wish to light a candle.  
Suitable heat resistant container for unity candle  
  
Can include  
family/friends/  
children/guests

The unity candle ceremony is a beautiful way to symbolise the joining of two lives. During this ritual, both partners light an individual candle before together lighting a central 'unity' candle. Family and friends can then be invited to light their own candles from the unity candle in a symbolic act of togetherness and the joining of both families. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include a unity candle

ceremony within your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [Unity Candle Ceremony – Marriage](#)  
This ceremony can also be included in naming ceremonies.





*We wanted to write to express our heartfelt thanks for conducting our wedding ceremony on the beach at Crear on such a cold and wet October day. Despite the weather, you helped make the occasion truly special and memorable for us. Your warmth, calm professionalism, and good humour set such a lovely tone for the day. You made us both feel comfortable and helped us focus on the joy of the moment rather than the wind and rain. We are so grateful for your patience and your willingness to brave the elements to make our ceremony exactly as we had hoped.*



**Alix and Lauren** | May 2025 | L'gilp | Registrar: Melanie | Crear Collective Euan Robertson

## Sand Ceremony

**Required:**

- Container(s) for the sand
- Sand
- One large container capable of holding the sand from the smaller containers



During this meaningful ceremony, each partner pours sand of a chosen colour into one shared container and as the layers blend together they form a striking pattern symbolising your unity and the individuality you both bring to the relationship. The container can then be kept as a keepsake of your day.

You can include children, family or friends making it a wonderful way to celebrate the joining of families. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include this ceremony within your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [The Sand Ceremony – Marriage](#)

This ceremony can also be included in naming ceremonies.



## The Quaich Ceremony

### Required:

A Quaich

Preferred drink



LJF photography

The Quaich Ceremony is a Scottish tradition which symbolises friendship, unity and trust. During the Quaich ceremony both partners take a sip from the traditional two handled cup, sometimes engraved, signifying the sharing of their lives and happiness. It is usually conducted once the signing of the schedule has been completed as their first act together as a newly united couple marking the beginning of their shared journey. The drink you choose, whether whisky, water or something meaningful to you both, reflects your unique story. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include this ceremony within your civil

marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Some couples choose to have family members pour the drink or join in the toast. Examples of wording can be found here: [The Quaich Ceremony – Marriage](#)



Mairi Fleck photography



*Wow – what an amazing experience we had with Argyll Bute, with Samantha being absolutely incredible. The Argyll Bute website was extremely resourceful and provided tips and background which helped us plan the ceremony and add special elements. Samantha was a star! She was on top of every detail and was calming and encouraging. Couples are extremely lucky to have her. Samantha captured our love story perfectly and added extra details which made our ceremony so special. She also included the children in the special moments which made our ceremony extra special becoming an official family. We HIGHLY recommend Argyll Bute for ceremonies and especially Samantha who made our wedding once in a lifetime for us.*



Douglas and Tristen | July 2025 | Dunoon | Registrar: Samantha | Photography Half Light

## Oathing Stone Ceremony

### Required:

Prepared stone



Chloe Jane photography

The oathing stone is a Scottish tradition where the couple place their hands upon a stone while saying their vows believing their promises would be 'set in stone'. During this ceremony you may choose to hold or rest your hands on a stone as you exchange your vows or promises. The stone can come from a place that holds special significance, can be engraved or decorated and creates a

meaningful keepsake of your day. We recommend the stone be washed and scrubbed and treated with almond oil then wiped dry in order to give it a satin sheen. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include this ceremony within your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [Oathing Stone Ceremony – Marriage](#)

## The Rose Ceremony

### Required:

Roses



Pixes in the Cellar photography

The rose ceremony is a simple addition to your ceremony yet is deeply meaningful. The couple exchange single roses, usually red, to symbolise their first gift to one another as a married/civilly partnered pair. Some couples choose to include personal words or readings whilst exchanging the roses and you can also incorporate family members, guests or

children. The roses can be kept as a keepsake of your day. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include this ceremony in your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [The Rose Ceremony – Marriage](#)

This ceremony can also be included in naming ceremonies.

## Ring Warming Ceremony

### Required:

Ring (s)

The ring warming ceremony is a heartfelt way to include your guests in your ceremony. Before the rings are exchanged, they are passed amongst your guests who are each invited to briefly hold the rings and offer a silent wish, prayer or blessing for your marriage. When the couple exchange rings they are then already filled with warmth and well-wishes from everyone present. Our Argyll

and Bute Registrars can include this in your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [Ring Warming Ceremony – Marriage](#)



Kayleigh Scott photography

## Pinning of the Tartan Ceremony

**Required:**  
Tartan



The Pinning of the Tartan Ceremony is a Scottish tradition which symbolises the joining of two families. Following the proclamation that the couple are married/civilly partnered, one partner or a member of their family would present a piece of family tartan to the other

partner welcoming them into their family. This can be for one partner or both. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include this in your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [Pinning of the Tartan – Marriage](#)



*We had an absolutely beautiful day. Linsay put together a fantastic ceremony for us, which was just what we wanted for a small intimate wedding. Linsay and the team couldn't have done enough for us – they were wonderful at every step. Thank you!*

Lynda and Kevin | Apr 2025 | Campbeltown | Registrar: Linsay  
Photo supplied by couple



## Including children in a ceremony



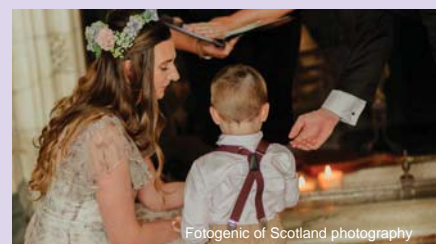
Whitney Graham photography

Including children in your ceremony can make the day even more meaningful. The ceremony becomes not just a union of two people but a celebration of the family that surrounds them.

They can be involved in some of the aforementioned ceremony enhancements, be ring bearers, do a reading/poem. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can also prepare special witness cards

for the children to sign on the day of the ceremony at the same time as the schedule signing.

Examples of wording can be found here: [Including children in a ceremony – Marriage](#)



Fotogenic of Scotland photography

## Love Letter and Box Ceremony

**Required:**

- A lockable box
- 2 padlocks with keys
- 2 love letters sealed in separate envelopes



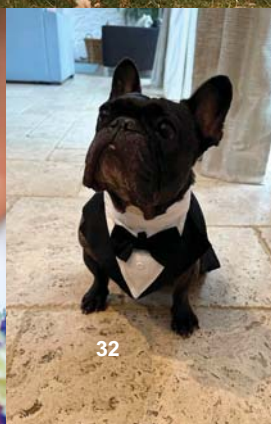
The love letter and box ceremony is a deeply personal addition to your ceremony. Each partner writes a private letter to the other in the weeks before the ceremony which will be placed in a lockable box during the ceremony. The couple can also fill the lockable box with special items if they wish. After their letters are placed in the box the box will then be sealed and locked with two keys, one for each partner. The couple can then agree a date when they

will open the box together and reflect on their special day. Our Argyll and Bute Registrars can include this in your civil marriage or civil partnership ceremony. Examples of wording can be found here: [Love Letter and Box Ceremony – Marriage](#)

This can also be included in naming ceremonies – a letter can be written from the parents to the child and opened on a special birthday.

# Pets at Ceremonies

From wagging tails and feathered friends to the fluffiest alpaca chaperones, our ceremonies are always open to the most loyal members of the family. Because your wedding day should include everyone you love, especially the ones who don't need a plus one. Have a four-legged (or two-winged!) VIP joining your big day? We'd love to see them!



# Elopement Ceremonies

~ Intimate, Personal, Unforgettable

Elopement ceremonies are growing in popularity once again, with many couples choosing to escape the bustle of everyday life to marry in a more personal and relaxed way. Whether you're holidaying with close family and friends, or planning to say "*I do*" just the two of you, Argyll and Bute offers the perfect setting for your special moment.

With its stunning coastline, romantic lochs, historic charm and tranquil landscapes, this region is ideal for couples who want an intimate, meaningful ceremony – without the pressure of a large event.

You can choose to marry in one of our charming ceremony rooms or right where you're staying – from cosy cottages to luxurious lodges or scenic outdoor spots. Our experienced Registrars are here to make the process smooth and stress-free, and if your ceremony takes place on a weekday, some offices can even provide witnesses – creating a perfect, all-inclusive elopement experience.

Whether it's a spontaneous decision or a carefully planned escape, an elopement in Argyll and Bute offers romance, flexibility, and memories to treasure forever.

# Naming Ceremonies



## What a Naming Ceremony is all about?

A Naming Ceremony is a beautiful way to celebrate family, love, and new beginnings.

It's a joyful occasion to welcome a child (or children) into your family and community, surrounded by the people who mean the most to you.

During the ceremony, parents formally announce their child's name and make personal promises of love and support. You can also invite close friends or relatives to take part as Supporting Adults, pledging a special role in your child's life. Grandparents are often included too – a lovely way to honour their bond and guidance.

Each Naming Ceremony is as unique as the family it celebrates – full of warmth, laughter, and special moments you'll always remember.

## Who can have a Naming Ceremony?

Naming Ceremonies are for children of any age – from newborns to teenagers – and can even be a meaningful event for adopted children or step families coming together.

Anyone with legal guardianship of a child can arrange one.

We can also create a special ceremony for someone who has received their gender recognition certificate, celebrating their name and identity with pride and love.

## Where can it take place?

Anywhere that feels right for you!

Your ceremony can be held in:

- A registration office or venue
- A hotel, garden, or community hall
- Or even the comfort of your own home

If you already have a special place in mind, speak with your Registrar – they'll help make it possible.

## Making it Your Own

This is your ceremony – personal, heartfelt, and tailored to your family.

Here are some ideas to make it extra special:

- Write your own promises to your child.
- Choose Supporting Adults carefully and involve grandparents if you wish.
- Include readings, poems, or music that mean something to you.
- Share the story behind your child's name or give a small gift to mark the day.
- Honour absent family and friends with a mention or tribute.
- Add a symbolic touch – like a candle lighting, flower ceremony, or even planting a tree if you're celebrating at home.
- Every choice helps tell your family's story.

## What a naming Ceremony is Not

It's important to note that a Naming Ceremony is a celebration, not a legal event.

It does not replace birth registration, and any documents or certificates from the ceremony cannot be used for identification purposes.



“

*Our Campbeltown Registrar Julie was absolutely fantastic throughout the whole process. Answering countless emails, printing out selected poems for Guide Parents and meeting with us to make sure the ceremony was planned exactly as we wanted. Julie was so professional yet managed to speak with such heartfelt emotion during the ceremony. It really meant the world to us and made the whole experience so special and personal. We loved the idea of a Naming Ceremony – being able to show our appreciation to the important people in our children’s lives in a non religious way. The day went perfectly to plan, would highly recommend this amazing service from Campbeltown Registrars*

Naming Ceremony | 2025 | Campbeltown | Registrar: Julie | Kayleigh McLean photography





*From the initial first email after booking our wedding at Crear, to the wedding day itself, both Melanie and Lorna from Lochgilphead were wonderful. Lorna was our initial point of contact after booking, and she was more than happy to answer our many questions. A couple of months before our wedding, we met with Melanie in person to hand in our paperwork and put a face to the name. Melanie couldn't have been more friendly and helpful – she warned us about how quickly the weather can change in the west coast, and she wasn't wrong. On the wedding day itself we had beautiful sunshine, thick grey clouds, heavy rain, wind and the most beautiful sunset. Melanie was great on the day! From helping Crear staff set everything up, to quickly rushing everyone back inside half way through the ceremony when the weather became unkind, she was great! Thank you so much Mel and Lorna, we would highly recommend you and the beautiful Argyll and Bute district to anybody looking for a pleasant, picturesque wedding venue.*

**Katie and Martin** | 2025 | Crear | Registrar: Mel | Crear Collective Photography



*I cannot recommend Linda highly enough, she was so patient, supportive and helpful throughout the entire process. She allowed us to personalise our service so it was completely bespoke to us, which meant the world to us both. The day went perfectly, and Linda is a real credit to Argyll and Bute. She delivered the service perfectly, and many guests commented on how good she was! Thank you again!*

**Douglas and Lauren** | Aug 2025 | Dunoon | Registrar: Linda | Northern Aye Photography

# Renewal of Vows Ceremonies

## Celebrate your Journey, Together

A Renewal of Vows Ceremony is a beautiful way to celebrate the love you've built together and the journey you've shared. It's a moment to reaffirm the promises you made on your wedding day – with even more meaning, wisdom, and joy.

Couples choose to renew their vows for many reasons.

Maybe you're marking a special anniversary, celebrating after marrying abroad, or simply want to say *"I do"* again – this time surrounded by family, friends, and perhaps your children too.

Whatever your reason, it's your love story that takes centre stage.

## When can you Renew Your Vows?

There's no set time or rule – you can renew your vows whenever it feels right.

Whether it's one year or fifty, your ceremony is a heartfelt reminder of your continued commitment and the memories you've made together.

A Renewal of Vows has no legal standing, but it's a meaningful, emotional celebration – a chance to relive the happiness of your wedding day and create new memories to treasure.

## Designing your Ceremony

Every couple's story is unique – and your ceremony should be too.

You can:

- Revisit or adapt your original vows, or write new ones that reflect your life together now.
- Include children, family, or close friends to take part in readings or special moments.
- Add music, poems, or symbolic touches that make the day truly yours.
- Combine your Renewal of Vows with a Naming Ceremony, to celebrate your growing family.

Your Registrar will guide you through the choices so you can craft a ceremony that feels perfectly personal – an event that you and your guests will never forget.



*Fantastic ceremony. Appreciate the wind on the day didn't make it easy! But Julie was great and adapted perfectly – thank you!*

Miles and Esme | May 2025 | Campbeltown  
Registrar: Julie | Bill Baillie Photography

## Where can it take place?

Your ceremony can be held anywhere that feels special to you – from an elegant venue to a quiet garden, or even your own home.

Popular options include:

- Registration offices and ceremony rooms
- Hotels or country houses
- Outdoor spaces like gardens or beaches

If you already have a venue in mind, speak to your Registrar to make sure it's suitable – or explore our list of approved venues for inspiration.

## The Legal Bit

A Renewal of Vows is a celebratory occasion, not a legal one.

It doesn't replace your marriage or carry legal weight, but it does mark something even more powerful – your ongoing love, loyalty, and partnership.



*We were married in an outdoor ceremony at Castle House in Dunoon, and it was so special; all thanks to the collective efforts of the registry team in Dunoon and Argyll Weddings and Events. As we don't live in the area, our registrar Stephanie ensured there was communication at all times and made an effort to get to know us before the big day, to personalise our ceremony. We were able to tailor and proof read the ceremony beforehand, which allowed us to make it exactly what we wanted. As our ceremony was outdoors, we did worry that some of our guests may not be able to hear things clearly, but Stephanie spoke perfectly and our guests heard every word. We couldn't have been happier with the way things went!*

**Ed and Lewis** | April 2024 | Dunoon | Registrar: Stephanie  
Joanne Clenaghan Photography

# A Timeline to your Marriage

Our guide on what to do and when,  
help with arranging your civil ceremony

## Planning

Making plans for your wedding – Have a look at our website for information on the areas you can be married, registrars information, venues, suppliers and FAQs



## To book

Book your ceremony and pay deposit via [Argyll and Bute Registration Service – Online Booking & Order System](#), local registrar will then confirm the booking and explain paperwork and info details. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram @ abregistrars #abplace2wed  
Contact us on **01546605521**



LJF photography

## 4-6 months to go

Start to think about the documents you will need to provide to support your marriage, if either of you are not British Citizens born in the UK or have been in a marriage or civil partnership before there may be additional requirements.

[Getting Married in Scotland – Marriage](#)



Chloe Jane photography

### 3 months to go

You can submit your marriage paperwork from 3 months prior to your date of marriage.

[Marriage Paperwork – Marriage](#)



It's also a good time to start thinking about what you would like said during your ceremony and anything special you would like to add. There are ceremony tabs within the Zipporah portal to complete or review or website. The Registrar conducting your ceremony may send you a template ceremony to look over as a guideline on how to plan the ceremony.

[Planning your Ceremony – Marriage](#)

### 1 month to go

Your marriage papers must be with the registrar for 29 clear days before the date of your marriage, as well as the relevant fees for your marriage. Fees can be paid in the booking portal, by bank transfer or over the phone.

At this time if you have not heard from the registrar conducting your ceremony they will likely be contacting at this stage so this is a good chance for you to speak to them to discuss the ceremony. This can be organised face to face if you are in the area or a teams call set up.



### The week of your wedding

When you choose a registrar to conduct your marriage ceremony they will bring the schedule on the day and take it away again to be registered, all you need to do is enjoy yourself.



# ARGYLL AND BUTE REGISTRARS

Your guide to Civil Ceremonies  
in Argyll and Bute

[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/marriage/](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/marriage/)

Follow us on Facebook or Instagram @abregistrars #abplace2wed

Contact us on 01546605521



Front cover image: My Islay Wedding  
Back cover image: Camila and Jorge Caitin, Wilder Photography photography



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