



Possible Timings for an 'informal' wedding, with a Civil Ceremony at 2pm

'Informal' style weddings are a fun alternative to a traditional wedding day, allowing you and your guests to enjoy a more relaxed meal with no 'set seating plan'. The meal would need to be 'buffet style' for this type of set up, and this timeline details how you could have a select number of guests for the ceremony and drinks reception, with additional guests joining for the meal. We can seat approx. 100 guests informally in the barns, with the option for more in summer months. Please

- 9.30am** Suppliers are welcome to arrive to set up decorations and start preparing the venue.
- 9.30am** You are welcome to arrive to the Farmhouse Suite to get ready. Please do bring any food and drinks for the morning with you. We have a fridge, cutlery and crockery available to use. You will then need to be fully ready to see the registrars at 1.45pm.
- 12pm** Your partner can arrive to the Dodford Room to get ready, have some photographs, greet guests and be ready to meet with the registrars at 1.30pm in the office of the main house.
- 1.15pm** We would expect guests to start to arrive, the bar would be open and they would be invited to take their seats for the ceremony at around 1.50pm.
- 2pm** The ceremony would normally take place in the Courtyard Barn (but can be in the Catesby Barn if you prefer and the drinks reception would need to be in there too in case of bad weather or in the winter).
- 2.30pm** We would normally allow 90 minutes for drinks and photos, giving you enough time to mingle with your guests and have some wonderful photos around the grounds. This would take place at the lawn or in the courtyard in the summer months. During the winter months (or if there is bad weather), this would take place in the Catesby Barn. We have speakers in the barns and courtyard for your music or you could consider booking a musician for an acoustic set (there is power at the lawn for this!)

During the drinks reception, while you and your guests are mingling, we would set up the seating for the 'informal' style meal. In the summer months (if the weather is good), we can set up tables outside in the courtyard as well as in the barns. We would ask that table decorations are kept minimal, as there would only be a short amount of time for tables to be set up, these tables would not normally be laid but cutlery would be collected at the buffet or placed in pots on each of the tables.

Your caterer would begin cooking during the drinks reception (a hog roast or BBQ in the courtyard is a great feature!), and they would set up the buffet station shortly before guests choose their seats.

- 3.30pm** Additional guests can arrive and join guests in the courtyard. You could offer a welcome drink for these guests, which would be included in the no-corkage fee period.
- 4pm** You may decide to have speeches before the meal, these can be outside in the courtyard or in the barn if the weather is bad. Guests would then be invited to find a seat for the meal.
- 4.30pm** Your caterer would serve the main and dessert from a buffet, inviting guests table by table to avoid queues. We would not expect this to take more than 1 hr 45 minutes but timings could be discussed in more detail when we know your guest numbers and type of buffet.
- 6.15pm** Your caterer could serve tea and coffee (buffet style) in the courtyard or Courtyard Barn, and guests sitting in the Catesby Barn would be invited through for this. This then allows the staff time to clear away any dining tables in the Catesby Barn, and for the DJ or Band to set up for the evening entertainment (alternatively you could ask your DJ/Band to set up on the morning of the wedding, so they're pre-set and ready for the evening, however there may be an additional cost for that).
- You might decide to have speeches at this point, rather than before the meal, which would also work well. The bar would be exclusively open as this would be the end of the no corkage period (after food/speeches, a maximum of 4-4.5 hours after your ceremony start time).
- 7.30pm/
8pm** Guests could be invited back into the Catesby Barn for the first dance to kick off the evening, you could cut your wedding cake on the dance floor ahead of this. In the summer months, you may decide to prolong the time outside in the courtyard in the early evening before moving through for the first dance, while in the winter months, you could have a group sparkler arch instead.
- If you have a band, you will need to check how long they take to set up (usually 60-90 minutes) and how long their sets are (often 2 x 1 hour), we just ask that live music finishes at 11pm but they are welcome to have a DJ set until the end of the evening.
- You may decide to have a photobooth set up on the mezzanine area, this would need to be in place before the dancing starts and stay open for the majority of the evening so that it is not being cleared up during the party.
- 8.30pm/
9pm** You might like to have an evening food option later on, as well as the afternoon meal. Evening food can be served in the courtyard or Courtyard Barn, served from a food van at the entrance to the courtyard, or served as hand round food by your caterer (such as mini burgers or fish and chip cones). We can leave some tables set up from the daytime meal in the Courtyard Barn to allow informal seating for the evening. Or you could just use the wedding cake as a snack later!
- 11.45pm/
12am** Last orders would be called at the bar and the bar and music would finish at midnight, with taxis booked at 12.15am and guests to have left site by 12.30am. You would retire to the Honeymoon Suite and breakfast will be served to you there at 9am the next morning. We ask that you check out of the room by 10.30am the following morning please.

The venue is yours for the day and we are very happy to adjust timings to fit with your plans. We will discuss the specific timings for your day with you at your planning meeting but please contact us if you would like us to build a bespoke timeline for your wedding in advance of this, particularly if you are having an 'informal' wedding. This timeline is based on a ceremony at 2pm, but we can adjust this if you let us know your booked ceremony time, and we can also give more specific timings based on whether you are planning to have speeches before or after the meal etc.