



## Possible Timings for an 'informal' wedding, with a Civil Ceremony at 3pm

'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 the same number of guests for the whole wedding (a later ceremony time works well for this plan). We can seat approx. 100 guests informally in the barns, with the option for more in summer months. Please discuss your guest numbers with us.

- 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 House to our new getting ready room, with plenty of space and mirrors! 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 2.45pm.
- 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 2.30pm.
- 2.15pm** We would expect guests to start to arrive, the bar would be open and they will be invited to take their seats for the ceremony at around 2.50pm.
- 3pm** The ceremony would normally take place in the Courtyard Barn but can be in the Catesby Barn if your guest numbers are below 58.
- 3.30pm** We would normally allow 90 minutes for drinks and photos, giving you enough time to mingle with the guests and have some wonderful photos around the grounds. This would take place at the lawn or in the courtyard during 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 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. During the summer months (and 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 decoration is kept minimal, as there would only be a short amount of time for tables to be set up, the tables would not be laid by the caterers but guests would collect cutlery from the buffet or pots could be set on the table.

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 take their seats.

**5pm** 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 take a seat for the meal.

**5.30pm** Your caterer would serve the buffet, inviting guests table by table to avoid queues. We would not expect two courses to take more than 1 hr 45 minutes but timings could be discussed in more detail when we know your guest number and type of buffet.

**7.15pm** 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 or 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 after the meal rather than before, which would also work well. The bar would become exclusively open at this point as this would be the end of the no corkage period.

**8.30pm** 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 cut the cake outside 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 their sets are (often 2 x 1 hour or 3 x 40 minute), 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.

**9pm/  
9.30pm** You might like to have an evening food option later on, as well as the afternoon meal. This could be something light (even your wedding cake) as you will have all eaten the evening meal so may not necessarily be hungry, but guests can get peckish around 9pm!

This could be hand round food served by your caterers (such as mini burgers and fish and chip cones), or you could even provide packets of non-perishable nibbles to be placed in bowls on tables or at the bar. We can leave some tables set up from the day time meal in the Courtyard Barn to allow informal seating for the evening.

**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 3pm with no additional evening guests, but we can adjust this if you let us know your booked ceremony time, and can also give more specific timings based on whether you will do speeches before or after the meal etc.**