

Sharing the future : a unique and personal wedding and civil partnership ceremony for those who live without religion / British Humanist Association.

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Sharing the Future

A unique and personal wedding and civil partnership ceremony for those who live without religion.



Registered charity no. 285987



Why choose a humanist wedding or civil partnership celebration?

Many people who want to enter into committed married relationships feel that the ritual and words of a religious wedding service do not fit in with their outlook on life. On the other hand, the laws governing a Register Office ceremony strictly control what can be said and done and some couples find these civil ceremonies offer no satisfying emotional or personal content.

There are even fewer options available to same sex couples who wish to express their commitment to each other and celebrate their relationship.

Each humanist wedding ceremony and civil partnership celebration is unique, dignified and deeply personal. Humanists look on marriage as an equal partnership and a serious commitment that involves mutual love, support and respect and a humanist ceremony is a time when you can declare all that you feel for each other in a way that is right for you.

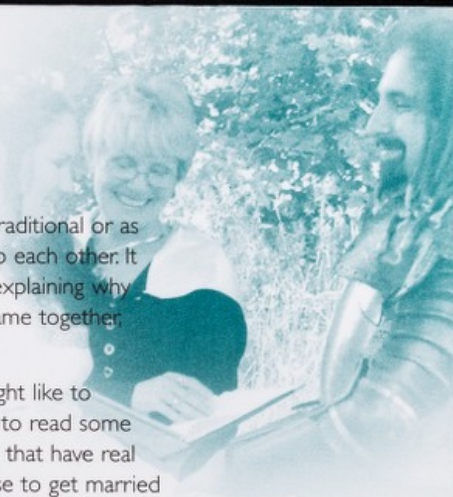




The Ceremony

No two ceremonies are the same and yours will be prepared just for you. It can be as traditional or as unusual as you like. The ceremony will focus on the two of you and your commitment to each other. It will usually begin with the celebrant welcoming everybody on your behalf and perhaps explaining why you have chosen this type of ceremony. You may want something said about how you came together, your views on marriage and the things you specially value in your relationship.

You are free to make all the important choices about words, readings and music. You might like to involve certain friends or family members more closely in the ceremony by asking them to read some prose or poetry. Music can help create the right atmosphere and you can choose pieces that have real meaning for you. Your ceremony can be held at almost any location. Many couples choose to get married out of doors in the summer and we have conducted ceremonies on hilltops and beaches and in more unusual locations.





The legal side

We find that couples look on the humanist ceremony as the moment when they are truly married. After all, it is the real celebration when your friends and family can be with you, and when your deepest feelings can be expressed. However, humanist weddings and civil partnerships do not form a legal marriage or civil partnership contract. Most couples, therefore, also go to a Register Office, perhaps a day or two before the main ceremony, to deal with the legal formalities and obtain a civil marriage or civil partnership certificate.





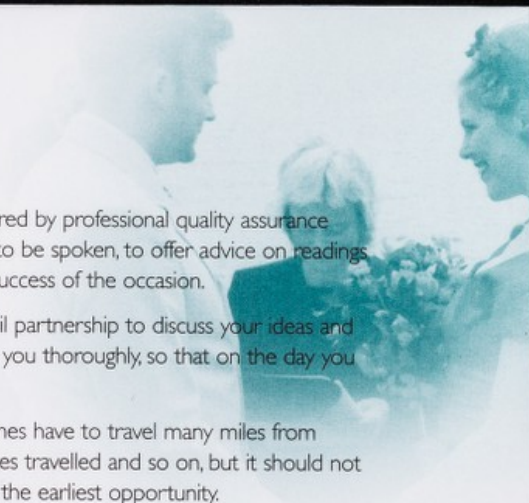
Your humanist celebrant

Our celebrants are fully trained and accredited to conduct ceremonies and are covered by professional quality assurance procedures. They are friendly people who are there to help you prepare the words to be spoken, to offer advice on readings and music and to explain the many small details that make such a difference to the success of the occasion.

Your celebrant will, of course, want to meet with you well before the wedding or civil partnership to discuss your ideas and answer your questions and to plan and rehearse every aspect of the ceremony with you thoroughly, so that on the day you know that it will all go well.

Many hours of work go into preparing a humanist ceremony and celebrants sometimes have to travel many miles from home. The fee charged by the celebrant varies according to the time needed, distances travelled and so on, but it should not exceed the current BHA guidelines. It is best to discuss the fee with the celebrant at the earliest opportunity.

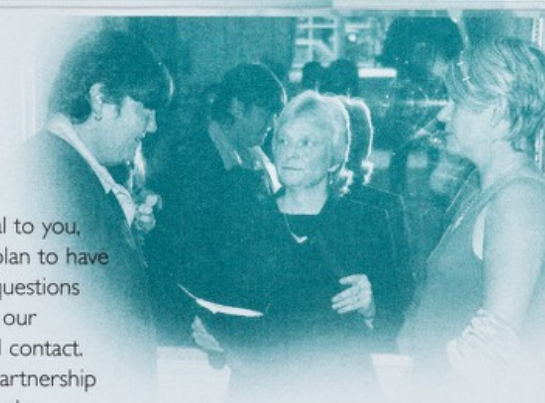
If you wish to confirm the current guidelines on fees or check whether the celebrant you have booked to conduct your ceremony is accredited by the British Humanist Association, please contact our head office at the address on the back of this leaflet.





What to do now?

If the sincerity and freedom of a humanist wedding and civil partnership appeal to you, then you will probably want to speak to a celebrant in the area in which you plan to have your ceremony. He or she will enjoy hearing your plans and can answer your questions and offer suggestions. Many celebrants choose to have their contact details on our website or you can phone our head office for the name and number of a local contact. You may also like to buy a copy of our book on humanist weddings and civil partnership ceremonies, *Sharing the Future*, which is packed with information, ideas and sample ceremonies and can be purchased through our website or by phoning our head office.



Other ceremonies

In addition to wedding and civil partnership celebrations, the British Humanist Association can offer individually prepared ceremonies for other significant times in your life, including a ceremony to welcome and name a new baby, a ceremony to mark the relationship between step children and their new parent, an adoption ceremony, or a ceremony to reaffirm your commitment to each other on a significant anniversary. Contact the BHA or your local celebrant to discuss your ideas and requirements.





The British Humanist Association

The BHA is a membership organisation that exists to support and represent people who seek to live good and responsible lives without religious or superstitious beliefs. It is a registered charity and receives no government funding, so it depends on the generosity of its members and supporters for the money it needs to continue and develop its ceremonies network, and to carry out its education and campaigning work. You can help by making a donation or remembering the BHA in your will.

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Have you considered becoming a member of the British Humanist Association?

